



The Blue Grass Trust
for Historic Preservation

Monday, October 22, 2012

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Mr. L. Michael Owens, Chairman
Planning Commission
LFUCG Division of Planning
200 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Mr. Owens and members of the Planning Commission:

The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation (BGT) writes this letter of support for the expansion of the South Ashland Historic District.

The members of the BGT Board and its Advisory Committee, listed on this letterhead, support the expansion of the South Ashland Historic District. We ask you to consider the following background and our perspective as to why it is vitally important the Commission approve the proposal.

As a starting point, the Planning Commission has an ongoing affirmative duty to fulfill the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2007. Specifically, the Plan states:

the success of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan will be measured in part by the application and practice of the principles that form its foundation-the Mission Statement and Goals and Objectives-as well as the implementation of programs and projects identified throughout all the elements... the theme of preservation, both in literal and figurative terms, is repeated in many of the 2007 Plan's Goals.

The staff report documenting the Ashland Park expansion and prepared by the office of Historic Preservation further lists Goal 3, Goal 5, Goal 15 from the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as your directive to encourage the protection and enhancement of existing neighborhoods. The report goes on to note the adoption of Goals and Objectives for the 2012 Comprehensive Plan which specifically call for "*Growing Successful Neighborhoods*" and "*Improving a Desirable Community*."

Article 13-6 (5) of the LFUCG zoning ordinance states: "*the Planning Commission shall consider the recommendation of the Board of Architectural Review at a public hearing.*" And, "*before considering the establishment of a historic district or landmark, the Planning Commission shall review and consider studies, reports and/or other information prepared by the Historic Preservation Office staff.*"

The report prepared by the staff is exhaustive in its analysis, thorough in its review of the criteria for inclusion of an area into an existing historic district and is in our view indisputable. It historically and accurately tells the importance of the South Ashland Historic District. It showcases the Clay family, the McDowell family, the work of the Olmstead brothers and a variety of architectures in this

unique neighborhood. It also explores the important aspect of property values in a historic district. We can confidently predict that no one in attendance at the hearing set for October 25, 2012, will factually dispute any of the findings presented by the Historic Preservation Office staff.

But, you will hear objections to an H-1 overlay by a few mis-informed (but sincere) individuals who incorrectly believe it to be an undue burden on them as property owners. The concerns raised at the most recent Zoning Committee meeting include:

- The H-1 will dictate the color of tulips that can be planted in the front yard. Obviously this is hyperbole and not correct. As you know, the Design Guidelines do not regulate in any way plant color or material. They only address land features, land formations, view sheds, archeology and hard landscape elements such as pools, hot tubs, gazebos and pergolas.
- The H-1 will require the replacement of a costly tile roof with like materials – This is equally incorrect. The staff at the meeting cited numerous examples of property repairs done with great regard for the budget and can offer specific examples of replacing tile with dimensional shingle.
- The H-1 would prevent someone from adding the recent porch detail/side entrance to 311 Desha Road – This statement is simply not true, and the opponent has been advised of this by the Historic Preservation staff.
- The H-1 would require me to replace my vinyl windows with wooden windows – Not True, the overlay guidelines take into account changes over time and staff looks for reasonable solutions to all projects.

The South Ashland Historic District and expansion area is a pristine neighborhood with most of the architecture being developed around the early 1900's. Unlike the other 13 Historic Districts, this one begins with over 90% of its historic fabric present and in impeccable condition. If you grant the H-1 zoning overlay, you guarantee the preservation of this neighborhood for generations. The citizens supporting the expansion recognize the fabric of their neighborhood as special but more importantly they see it as their cultural and social responsibility to preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood. They want to do this for the good of the whole community.

Over the years, as evidenced by the report, the adoption of a historic overlay has contributed significantly to the economic value of historic neighborhood and has preserved them from inappropriate development that only serves to decrease the value of the neighborhood. The BGT asks every member of the Planning Commission to vote in favor of this expansion. By so doing the planning commission can add to the measurement of success of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan by adopting the expanded H-1 overlay for the Ashland Park neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Linda Carroll, President



Tom Meng, Vice President

cc: The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation Board
The Blue Grass Trust Advisory Committee