

# Neighborhood Meeting – Oct 18<sup>th</sup>



# The Mentelle Median

*The Mentelle Neighborhood Association Newsletter // Volume 3 Issue II // Fall 2011*

## **Zone Change Requested for North Ashland Avenue Property**

By **Lewis Gardner**, Mentelle Neighborhood Association President, [president@mentelle.org](mailto:president@mentelle.org)

Longtime neighbor Lexington Hearing & Speech Center has moved from North Ashland Avenue to their new home on Henry Clay Boulevard in the former Julia R. Ewan School. As a result buildings they occupied at 154-164 North Ashland Avenue are for sale. This property consists of four parcels:

- 154 North Ashland: A former residence that has been converted to a day care center.
- 158-162 North Ashland: Two former residences that have been combined and expanded into a single occupancy. This is a very unique property and would be difficult to convert back to residences due to a large two story brick addition.
- 164 North Ashland: Currently a vacant lot that is said to be under contract for development as a single family residence. There is no further discussion of this property in this article.

The Lexington Hearing & Speech Center has requested rezoning the first two properties (three lots) from their current zoning of R-1D (residential) to P-1 (professional office). The Lexington Hearing & Speech Center had been a conditional use under R-1D. Currently they have contracts for purchase with Jill Rose, a lawyer, for 154 North Ashland and The Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass for 158- 162 North Ashland.

As a neighbor you should be concerned about this for the following reasons:

- **Our neighborhood has been down zoned twice in an attempt to maintain a residential character.**
- **Placing an island of P-1 in a residential area can lead to expansion in the future to other properties due to proximity.**
- **Changes in use like the proposed law office can alter the character of a neighborhood leading to more zone changes.**

The Mentelle Neighborhood Association wants to be a good neighbor to whoever eventually makes a home on North Ashland, just as the Lexington Hearing & Speech Center was a good neighbor for almost 50 years. It's hard to believe any neighbor would want these properties to sit vacant and possibly deteriorate so finding a new use for the unique property at 158- 162 is in everyone's best interest.

The Children's Advocacy Center is not only a neighbor (current location is on Walton Avenue) but they seem like a good fit for the building. Their proposed use of the property at 158-162 seems consistent with previous use. Unfortunately the staff of the Lexington-Fayette County Planning Commission feels the activities of the Children's Advocacy Center are sufficiently different from the Hearing & Speech Center and a P-1 zone change would be required for the Children's Advocacy Center to use the property.

Going forward there are at least three options:

1. Do nothing and let the properties rezone P-1. This increases rezoning pressure in the neighborhood, especially on the properties between Temple Adath Israel and 154 North Ashland.
2. Support rezoning the properties at 158-162 North Ashland to P-1 but oppose rezoning 154 North Ashland.
3. Oppose rezoning any of the properties. This could lead to long vacancy of the property or an allowed but less desirable use than those proposed.

Previously, the board of the MNA voted to oppose the rezoning and 50 neighbors signed a petition in opposition. At the time, it was unknown who the buyers might be and everything seemed speculative. Now, the proposed use for the properties removes part of that objection. However any rezoning can lead to more rezoning and subsequent changes in the character of our neighborhood.

This issue will be the main item for discussion at the Mentelle Neighborhood Association fall general meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 18. The Planning & Zoning Commission will have a hearing on Thursday, Oct. 20, at 1 p.m. in the Urban County Council chambers to consider this zone change.

Obviously, with the hearing coming only two days following the general meeting, there will not much time to do a lot of organizing if we wait. If you are interested in this issue here are some things you can do:

- Contact [president@mentelle.org](mailto:president@mentelle.org) to ask questions, state your position or volunteer.
- Write letters to:

Chairman Mike Cravens  
Urban County Planning Commission  
101 East Vine Street, Suite 700  
Lexington, KY 40507

- Send email to the Planning Commission using this address: [twade@lexingtonky.gov](mailto:twade@lexingtonky.gov)
- Access the MNA website at [www.mentelle.org](http://www.mentelle.org) for all the documents and latest on what the MNA is doing about this issue.

In short I would encourage each of you to go to [www.mentelle.org](http://www.mentelle.org) and read the documents linked there to see exactly what is being proposed, the R1-D and P-1 ordinances, photos, maps, letters and the rest. If you have any questions please contact me and I will do my best to assist in any way possible.

## **MNA General Meeting on Oct. 18, 7PM, Ashland Elementary**

The fall general membership meeting of the Mentelle Neighborhood Association will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18, at the Ashland Elementary School.

Agenda items include discussion of the zone change request for property on North Ashland Avenue and election of officers and directors for 2012.

MNA members who have paid dues of \$10 are eligible to vote. Nominations for officers and directors will be taken from the floor. The present board consists of:

President: Lewis Gardner

Vice President: Ron Mitchell

Secretary: Liz Reucroft

Treasurer: Richard Coles

Directors: Elaine Cook , Ray DeBolt, Sarah Hall, Isaac Joyner, Tom Lillich and Larry Porter

## **Notes from our Council Member**

By **Diane Lawless**, 3rd District Council, [dlawless@lexingtonky.gov](mailto:dlawless@lexingtonky.gov), (859)258-3222

### 1. Zoning changes

There have been some Zone changes in the District and one is in process now. I have been asked to advocate on behalf of the neighborhoods on several of these. In accordance with State Law I am absolutely not allowed to get involved in Zone change requests going before the Planning Commission. When there is a Zone change that passes or is denied by the Planning Commission it then comes to the Council. Unlike any other function of Council, if Council holds a public hearing it is a quasi judicial function of Council rather than the normal Legislative function. Council Members, are sworn in and much like a jury at a trial, we have to swear we are neutral and have no prior involvement in the matter.

### 2. U3 Ventures and Omar Blaik

All the money has been raised to bring Omar Blaik to Lexington Fayette County as a consultant for better collaboration and community engagement between the Universities and Lexington to leverage the assets of the community, region, and the institutions. Clearly, what is good for one is good for the other. This involves sustainable neighborhoods, economic development, quality of life, and working together.

### 3. Paving

I have the list of streets in the District with a rating of the condition of each. Streets rated less than 65 are in need of paving. Some of these have not been rated for at least 2 years; in addition, due to the extreme winter many that are rated higher are in very bad shape due to asphalt failure. It has presented a very difficult situation in trying to make a decision as to how to spend the very limited amount of money allocated to the District for paving.

### 4. Medical Helicopter

The Helicopters landing at UK were routed to avoid flying over the neighborhoods. Recently, they have been flying over the neighborhoods. I have investigated and am working with UK to resolve this issue. The change is due to a new provider of the medical helicopters and the routing was changed. I hope this will be resolved very soon.

### 5. Legislative Aide

My aide Diana Queen's last day was October 30th. Andrea James started yesterday and I am thrilled to have such an accomplished person who can hit the ground running. Many people contact me via my personal Facebook page. There are times that I just can't keep up with FB. I want to hear from you so please contact my office email [dlawless@lexingtonky.gov](mailto:dlawless@lexingtonky.gov) for any correspondence.

As always, thank you for your continued support. Sincerely, Diane Lawless

## **Mentelle Medians Project Progressing; More Funds Needed**

By Sarah Hall, Mentelle Neighborhood Association Director, sarah.o.hall@insightbb.com

The Mentelle Neighborhood Association made major progress this summer with our Mentelle Medians Grant Improvement Project. We finished most of the major removal of overgrown shrubs and dead/diseased trees on all four medians. We worked on the Burnham garden on the median closest to Cramer Avenue, including planting new coneflowers and iris.

We received several generous monetary donations toward the purchase of new trees for our medians and additional funds would be appreciated. The Lexington- Fayette Urban County Government was instrumental in helping us with our stump removal and removal of debris, so we owe a big thanks to the city.

We are able to extend our grant an additional year until December 2012, which will allow us to continue fundraising during the winter months. We will purchase new trees in the spring with funds we have raised through donations, and the city has agreed to help us plant the trees and label them. Thanks to all MNA members and neighbors who have generously devoted time, donations, and plants to this project. Our major goal this winter for the project will be fundraising for new trees and shrubs.

Please consider a monetary donation, as each donated dollar will be matched by the city. Please send donations to the MNA Treasurer Richard Coles at 118 North Hanover, Lexington, KY 40502. Make checks payable to the Mentelle Neighborhood Association and designate it is for the medians project. We hope you will look forward to our spring tree planting and continuation of the garden cleanup and planting. If you have any questions please contact:

Sarah Hall, 53 Mentelle Park, Phone: (859) 229-3950 Email: sarah.o.hall@insightbb.com

## **More on Zoning**

**My personal opinion, Lewis Gardner, Mentelle Neighborhood Association President**

Since the newsletter had been delayed some more information on the proposed rezoning has become available and my thoughts have become more clarified.

Land use planning is a long term process to reach long term objectives. This process is enabled by zoning. Here in Lexington the Planning Commission has twice made the decision for our neighborhood to be residential in character by downzoning. The R-1D zoning that predominates our neighborhood allows quite a few uses that are not strictly residential. However there is a big difference between uses and structures that are allowed in R-1 compared to a P-1 zone. Many of the neighbors I have spoken to are concerned that if the proposed P-1 zoning is allowed we will see erosion of our neighborhood as a residential area over the next 20-30 years. Some other neighbors are concerned that if we don't accept the two proposed buyers and the required rezoning bad things could happen.

After meeting with a lawyer let me fill you in on a few things that can't happen and a few that can.

- No matter who owns property in a R-1 zone it cannot be a halfway house, or soup kitchen or mission type facility.
- There is plenty of P-1 space available in Lexington right now. In the future this will likely not be the case. Expanding P-1 into our neighborhood will in all likelihood lead to more business and less residential use in the future. There is no place in Lexington that this has not been the case when viewed over time.
- Just because the current structures are residential in nature that does not mean that they will always be that way. Intentional or accidental demolition and consolidation of lots could allow for very different structures than exist now.

*Due to the abbreviated nature of this issue other stories can be found at [www.mentelle.org](http://www.mentelle.org)*