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Wednesday, May 5, 2004

College Hill extension OK'd

By Kevin Aldridge
The Cincinnati Enquirer

COLLEGE HILL - Leo Shuller has been trying to sell his vacant restaurant at Hamilton Avenue and North Bend Road for four years.

He's had offers from Rite Aid, Walgreens and CVS drugstores to buy the property, but those deals fell through. Shuller thought he might unload the restaurant a few months ago, but said plans to extend a development control district around the intersection scared away another potential buyer.

Shuller, owner of the former Shuller's Wigwam restaurant, was one of more than a dozen College Hill residents at a public hearing Tuesday to discuss extending the development control district another nine months. But unlike the rest of his neighbors, Shuller did not support the extension, saying it would make it harder for him to sell.

City Council's Neighborhoods and Public Services Committee voted to extend the district. The full council must also vote on the extension.

"Extending this (district) isn't costing these people one nickel, but it's costing my client a lot of money," said Don Shuller, co-owner and legal representative for the restaurant. "You are asking him to hold on to this property for an additional nine months without the prospect of sale and no income from the property."

The Interim Development Control District was established to temporarily control land-use changes and protect the intersection from prospective developments that could diminish the area. The controls were to expire May 11.

The extension will allow city officials and residents to complete zoning and marketing feasibility studies of the area. Three of the four corners of the intersection are vacant, and residents have drafted a plan to jumpstart redevelopment.

Deborah Barrett, a 10-year resident, said residents' property values could be negatively affected by "scattershot development."

Karen Dudley, president of the College Hill Forum, the neighborhood council, said the controls are a way to protect the vision that residents have for the intersection.

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Dudley has suggested that neighborhood leaders would like to enter into discussions with Shuller to acquire the property.

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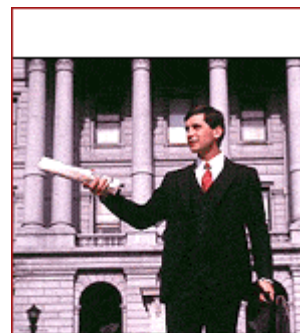
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