

## Housing Plan Advances At Ex-Factory Site

by MARKESHIA RICKS | Nov 16, 2017 7:38 am

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MARKESHIA RICKS PHOTOS

Zone change supporters (clockwise from top left): Foskey-Hill, Williams, Solomon, Winter.

A plan to turn a vacant former factory site in Newhallville into a complex with nearly 400 apartments cleared a regulatory hurdle with the help of supportive neighbors.

That happened at Wednesday night's monthly meeting of the City Plan Commission, which approved a zoning map amendment that would allow the parcel at 201 Munson St. to be rezoned from its existing Heavy Industry, or IH, designation to a General High Density Residence District, or RH-2. The 13-acre site once housed part of the old sprawling Winchester Repeating Arms factory complex and is among a handful of legacy fields sites in the area that are headed for cleanup and a new lease on life.

The request still needs approval by the Board of Alders.

The request for the zoning map changes comes from the site's new owners, Double A Development Partners LLC. Double A plans to build [385 apartments](#) on that site once all the environmental hazards have been remediated. The project is expected to cost more than \$75 million. The owners are counting on the density to make the finances of such an expensive project work.

Though they've nearly completed demolition of the old factory—everything's gone but two small, historic magazine bunkers—the owners need the zoning change to build all those apartments in a heavy industrial zone.

Jim Segaloff, attorney for Double A, noted that the change would be more in keeping with the current state of the neighborhood, where houses border it on the Munson Street and Shelton Avenue sides. The Farmington Canal trail and Science Park abut the property on its other side. Segaloff pointed out that the potential uses under the current zone include a firing range, fuel or hazardous waste storage, the manufacture of poisonous gases and even a junkyard—all likely undesirable to neighbors.

“We’ve been working on this site for the better than a year and a half, and we think what we’re proposing is a great fit for the neighborhood and transitional from Science Park to single-family homes,” on Munson, said Doug Gray, a principal with Double A.

Attorney Segaloff.



HUMPHREYS & PARTNERS LP

Rendition of Munson plan.

After several meetings with both the Newhallville and Dixwell community management teams, the developers had a show of support at Wednesday’s public hearing. The majority of those who spoke before the commission backed not only for the zone change but also the proposed project itself, while some expressed concern about the project’s size. Gray vowed to continue to meet with neighbors and will be present at the Dixwell management team meeting Thursday.

Supporters at the meeting included current Newhallville Alder Brenda Foskey-Hill and her successor in that seat, Alder-elect Steve Winter. Foskey-Hill also had written a joint letter of support to commissioners with Dixwell Alder Jeanette Morrison. Ward 21 Co-chair Rodney Williams also added his support.

Neighbor Patricia Solomon said she supports the zoning change for an area she dubbed “the dead zone.”

“It’s really dark there,” she said. “I think this would be a great step moving forward to the revitalization of the Dixwell-Newhallville neighborhood.”



Gooding: opposed.

Not every neighbor was convinced. Neighbor Crystal Gooding said a development with nearly 400 apartments would significantly increase density in a neighborhood that has never had that kind of scale.



Marchand: Bring alternatives to alders.

Though the commission voted unanimously to support the zone change, Westville Alder Adam Marchand, who also serves as a commissioner, reminded everyone that the commission is not the final arbiter. The next group that needs convincing is to the Legislation Committee of the Board of Alders. That committee, on which Marchand serves, will hold a public hearing before the matter is sent to the full board for a vote. He recommended that neighbors concerned about the density of any potential project look at other zoning options and present any alternatives to that body.

“What is clear to me is having this heavy industrial zone here, nobody is using these blighted properties, and that is not where we want to be,” he said.

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