

January 24, 2024

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager 

202400287

Subject: Ordinance for the Rezoning of 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood.

Transmitted is an Ordinance captioned:

AMENDING the official zoning map of the City of Cincinnati to rezone certain real property located at 4575 Eastern Avenue in the Linwood neighborhood from the MG, "Manufacturing General," zoning district to the RM-0.7, "Residential Multi-family," zoning district to facilitate the development of approximately 271 apartment units.

The City Planning Commission recommended approval of the designation at its January 5, 2024, meeting.

Summary:

The petitioner, CIG Communities, requests a zone change for the property located at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood. The current zoning is Manufacturing General (MG), and the applicant is pursuing the change to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7). The property currently consists of an abandoned manufacturing facility and is 7.28 acres in size. The surrounding properties include manufacturing businesses, multi-family and single-family residences, and restaurants.

This proposed zone change will allow the applicant to construct an adaptive reuse apartment complex with new construction, which is planned to have approximately 271 residential units and 417 total off-street parking spaces.

The City Planning Commission recommended the following on January 5, 2024, to City Council:

APPROVE the proposed zone change from Manufacturing General (MG) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood.

cc: Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director, Department of City Planning and Engagement 

January 24, 2024

To: Chelsey Pettyjohn, Office of the Clerk of Council
From: Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director, Department of City Planning & Engagement *KJ*
Copy: Stacey Hoffman, City Planning Division Manager
Subject: Scheduling of Ordinance – Rezoning of 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood.

The above referenced ordinance is ready to be scheduled for the February 16, 2024 Committee. We are requesting that this item be scheduled for the **next available meeting of the Equitable Growth & Housing Committee**. This item requires 14-days' notice.

Included in this submission are the following items:

- 1) The transmittal letter to the Equitable Growth & Housing Committee;
- 2) A copy of the City Planning Commission staff report dated January 5, 2024;
- 3) The Ordinance amending the zoning (Transmitted by Law);
- 4) Mailing labels for the notice of the Committee meeting and;
- 5) A copy of the mailing labels for your records.

January 24, 2024

Cincinnati City Council
Council Chambers, City Hall
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Members of Council:

We are transmitting herewith an Ordinance captioned as follows:

AMENDING the official zoning map of the City of Cincinnati to rezone certain real property located at 4575 Eastern Avenue in the Linwood neighborhood from the MG, "Manufacturing General," zoning district to the RM-0.7, "Residential Multi-family," zoning district to facilitate the development of approximately 271 apartment units.

Summary:

The petitioner, CIG Communities, requests a zone change for the property located at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood. The current zoning is Manufacturing General (MG), and the applicant is pursuing the change to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7). The property currently consists of an abandoned manufacturing facility and is 7.28 acres in size. The surrounding properties include manufacturing businesses, multi-family and single-family residences, and restaurants.

This proposed zone change will allow the applicant to construct an adaptive reuse apartment complex with new construction, which is planned to have approximately 271 residential units and 417 total off-street parking spaces.

The City Planning Commission recommended the following on January 5, 2024, to City Council:

APPROVE the proposed zone change from Manufacturing General (MG) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood.

Motion to Approve: Mr. Samad
Seconded: Mr. Weber

Ayes: Ms. Beltran
Mr. Eby
Ms. Kearney
Mr. Samad
Ms. Sesler
Mr. Stallworth
Mr. Weber

THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director
Department of City Planning & Engagement

**Honorable City Planning Commission
Cincinnati, Ohio**

January 5, 2024

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a proposed zone change from Manufacturing General (MG) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Location: 4575 Eastern Avenue, Cincinnati OH, 45226

Petitioner: Danny McKelvey, CIG Communities, Inc.

Petitioner's Address: 525 Vine Street, #1605, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Property Owner: David Bastos, CIG Communities, Inc.

Owner's Address: 525 Vine Street, #1605, Cincinnati, OH 45202

ATTACHMENTS:

- Exhibit A – Location Map
- Exhibit B – Site Photo
- Exhibit C – Zone Change Application
- Exhibit D – Zone Change Plat
- Exhibit E – Legal Description
- Exhibit F – Proposed Development Renderings & Site Plan
- Exhibit G – Coordinated Site Review (CSR) Letter CPRE230048
- Exhibit H – Linwood Community Council Letter of Support
- Exhibit I – Public Comment

BACKGROUND:

The petitioner, Danny McKelvey, on behalf of CIG Communities, is requesting a zone change at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood from Manufacturing General (MG) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7). The subject property is currently an abandoned industrial site that contains some structures dating back to the late 1800s. The 7.28 acre site was most recently occupied by Wine Celler Innovations, which closed a few years ago. The applicant wishes to change the zoning to facilitate the construction of an adaptive reuse apartment complex with new construction, which is planned to have 271 residential units and 417 total parking spaces.

A small portion of the site is located within a Hillside Overlay District, but no part of the site is within a Local Historic District or Urban Design Overlay District. The complex as proposed will need to have a consolidated lot and some variances related to setbacks and driveway widths. The applicant has been made aware that these requests would need to be requested of the Zoning Hearing Examiner.

ADJACENT LAND USE AND ZONING:

The property is currently zoned Manufacturing General (MG). The adjacent zoning and land uses are as follows (also see Exhibit A):

North:

Zoning: Commercial Community Auto-oriented (CC-A) and Manufacturing General (MG)
Use: Commercial buildings, single-family homes, and a manufacturing building.

South:

Zoning: Residential Mixed (RMX) and Manufacturing General (MG)
Use: Single-family homes and a manufacturing site.

East:

Zoning: Manufacturing General (MG)
Use: Manufacturing site.

West:

Zoning: Residential Mixed (RMX) and Commercial Community Auto-oriented (CC-A)
Use: Single-family homes and commercial businesses, including two restaurants.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

The applicant intends to construct an adaptive reuse apartment complex with 271 residential units, onsite amenities, and 417 parking spaces located mostly in parking garages. The complex will preserve some parts of the existing structures, including the historic stone clock tower and one of the warehouse buildings. The southernmost building (Building 1) will be reused, with 185 parking spots on the first two levels and 44 apartments on the upper two levels. In the middle of the site will be Building 2, which will mostly be new construction of 134 apartments, but will reuse the clocktower as a library and a brick building for a leasing office and amenity space. On the north end of the site will be Building 3, which will be a new construction 4-story building with 93 apartments around a 232-space garage. The site will include amenities such as a pool, dog park, and pickleball courts. The applicant also intends to hold a percentage of units as affordable for people making 80%-100% of Area Median Income (AMI). Renderings and the site plan for proposed development are shown in Exhibit F.

COORDINATED SITE REVIEW:

The proposed project was reviewed by City departments through the Coordinated Site Review process. No departments had major concerns about the proposed project, except to ensure utility coordination. The Department of City Planning and Engagement – Zoning Division has specific comments related to variances needed, and the Department of Buildings and Inspections noted that the building is in a FEMA Flood Hazard Zone, which means it requires a Flood Plain Development Permit. DOTE had no opposition to the zone change, but requested a Traffic Impact Study, which the applicant then provided. All department comments are included in Exhibit G and note that the applicant originally intended to subdivide the property but subsequently decided not to, making any comments related to subdivision not applicable at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND NOTIFICATION:

A virtual Public Staff Conference was held on Wednesday, November 29, 2023 to discuss the proposed zone change. Staff from the Department of City Planning and Engagement and the applicant team were present, and eleven members of the public were in attendance. Five members of the public voiced opposition, two were in support, and the rest did not state a position. Members of the public in opposition were concerned about the loss of jobs and lack of commercial space, that the project would skew the neighborhood to be full of renters instead of homeowners, that new residents would not be safe since Eastern Avenue is not bikeable or walkable, that this building is not appropriate on an alternate truck route, and that the development won't work because they believed that other area apartment complexes were not full, among other concerns. Project proponents stated that this project, and associated investments, would help to bring much needed traffic calming to a very dangerous section of Eastern Avenue, and that residents are desperately needed in the area to support local businesses, which have had a lot of trouble recovering after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The applicant met with the Linwood Community Council on October 30th, 2023. The Community Council

voted in favor of the project and provided a letter of support, which is shown in Exhibit H. In addition, nine emails from seven residents were received, with three residents in support, two against, and two asking questions or expressing potential concerns about parking. Some of the residents who sent emails also spoke at the staff conference, and all email correspondence is shown in Exhibit I.

Notice of the Public Staff Conference, as well as the January 5, 2024 City Planning Commission meeting, was sent to all property owners within 400 feet of the property, the Linwood Community Council and the Columbia Tusculum Community Council.

CONSISTENCY WITH PLANS:

Plan Cincinnati (2012)

The proposed zone change is consistent with the Live Initiative Area of *Plan Cincinnati (2012)* and the goal to “provide a full spectrum of housing options and improve housing quality and affordability” (p. 164), in the strategy to “to provide quality healthy housing for all income levels” (p. 165) and the focus area to “improve the quality and number of moderate to high-income rental and homeowner units” (p. 165). This project is also consistent within the Sustain Initiative Area, and the goal to “Preserve our natural and built environment” (p. 193) in the strategy to “Preserve our built history” (p. 197). The project is proposing to provide new rental housing on a former industrial site, while also preserving key historic aspects of the existing buildings and holding some units as affordable, which aligns it to *Plan Cincinnati*.

Linwood Neighborhood Strategy (2002)

The proposed zone change is consistent with the *Linwood Neighborhood Strategy (2002)* in the goal to “enhance and preserve existing community assets” (p. 12), the objective to “preserve architecturally and historically significant structures” (p. 12) and the strategy to “seek adaptive reuse of Linwood School and all large vacant buildings” (p. 12). It is also consistent with the goal to “increase homeownership for mixed incomes and encourage infill and rehabilitation opportunities”, the objective to “preserve the character of the neighborhood”, and the strategy to “identify and market parcels suitable for building. Target sites for infill and appropriate larger developments” (p. 14). The project will preserve valuable architectural history, and as well has convert an existing large abandoned industrial site into housing.

ANALYSIS

While there are no RM-0.7 zoning districts adjacent to the subject property, a zone change to a higher density residential use for this project is appropriate. Although this site is currently zoned for manufacturing, there are multiple other residential districts adjacent to the site. The neighborhood has many residential homes, and so changing the zoning to a residential district is not incompatible with the surrounding uses. Additionally, there are major nearby recreational amenities that would be attractive and beneficial to new residents, amenities which include Otto Armleder Memorial Park, Lunken Playfield, Reeves Golf Course, Alms Park, Ault Park, and the newly extended Little Miami Scenic Trail/Ohio River Trail.

Also, Linwood contains a variety of businesses, including two directly adjacent to the site, that would benefit from additional customers. Multiple people at the Public Staff Conference, including an adjacent businessowner, said that the Linwood business district was struggling due to the aftereffects of the pandemic and specifically called out for the need of new residents. Adding 271 units of housing will help to increase the customer base and the vitality of the business district.

Finally, large industrial sites can be challenging to redevelop due to complicated required environmental remediation, and the sheer size of the project. These industrial parcels often sit vacant for years waiting for a new tenant or use. The proposed development to reuse existing buildings is a context-sensitive and thoughtful approach that preserves Linwood's important history, while also providing needed housing. This method of historic preservation and housing creation is very much in line with *Plan Cincinnati* and the *Linwood Neighborhood Strategy*.

CONCLUSION

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement supports the proposed change in zoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed zone is similar in intensity to the surrounding area zoning.
2. The proposed use is consistent with Plan Cincinnati's Live and Sustain Initiative Areas, as well as the Linwood Neighborhood Strategy.
3. The proposed use will benefit the neighborhood's local businesses, provide needed housing, as well as preserve parts of old industrial buildings.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

APPROVE the proposed zone change from Manufacturing General (MG) to Residential Multi-family (RM-0.7) at 4575 Eastern Avenue in Linwood.

Respectfully submitted:



Andrew Halt, AICP, PE (PA), City Planner
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Approved:



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director
Department of City Planning and Engagement