

★ Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

396

Date March 26, 2007

Report from Beaverdale residents-Land Use Principles as applied to Development of Rice School.

Moved by _____ to receive and file.

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
HENSLEY				
KIERNAN				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
VLASSIS				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED			APPROVED	

CERTIFICATE

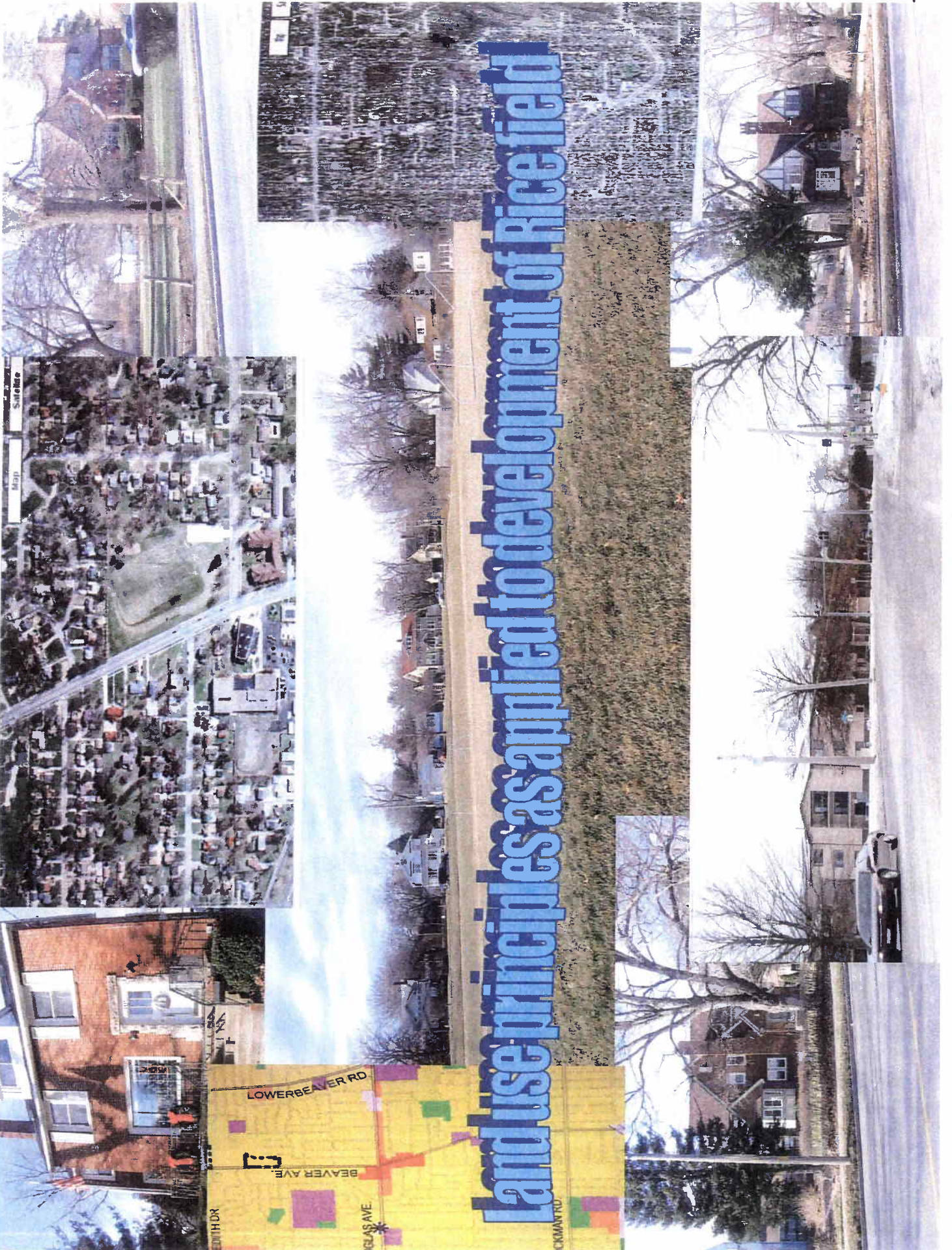
I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk

Land use principles as applied to development of Rice field





INTRODUCTION: By Bruce L. Butler.

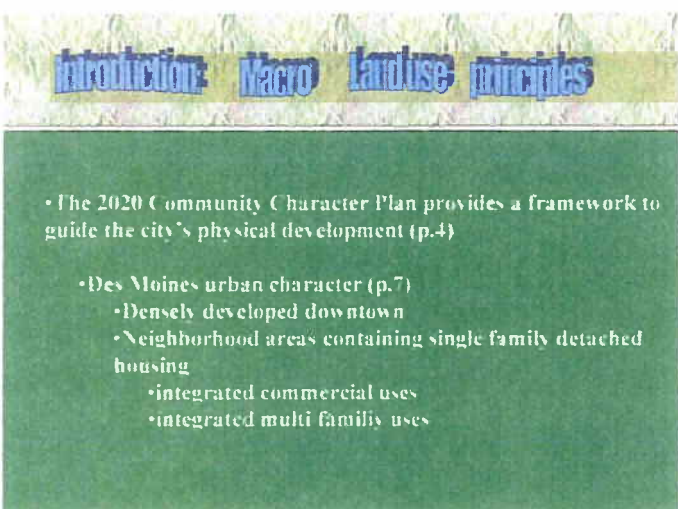
I, and the group of Beaverdale residents I am appearing with tonight, have come to speak in opposition of rezoning the old Rice School site. Our comments will be supplemented by a power point presentation, which I will attempt to synchronize with the speakers.

We believe that the development is so out of character with the neighborhood, that it violates the City's land use planning guidance. It is important to remember that the developer is asking for a land use change as well as a zoning change. It is also important to note from the outset, that "neighborhood character" is a policy consideration, which you are called upon to judge and advise the City Council. It is not a rule of law subject to the authority of City lawyers, nor is it a specification capable of calculation by city engineers. It is up to you, not the staff, to decide whether this PUD is consistent with land use principles. All we are asking from you is sound the judgment, which our land use principles compel.

Lets start by defining our terms. Webster's dictionary instructs us that the term "character" means a **distinctive or typical trait**.

"Character" is the central theme of the City of Des Moines' land use plan, entitled DES MOINES 2020 COMMUNITY CHARACTER PLAN.

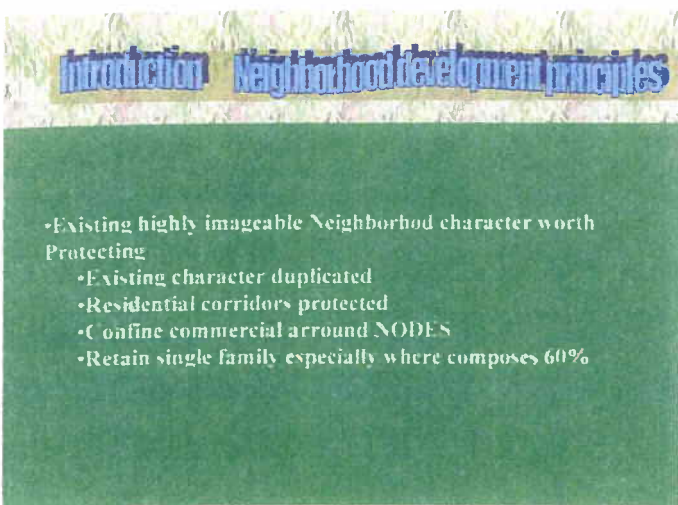
We concede that a City of Des Moines size is capable of supporting quite a few characters. And, we caution anyone from using land use principles out of context. When we met with the developer and questioned the conformity of his plan to the Des Moines 2020 Character principles he, the architects and lawyer were left nonplussed. I now notice that the only change to the developer's application since the meeting, is the inclusion of 2020 land use phrases. I have studied the entire document, and I think our arguments against the development are





well supported, and the developer has taken principles out of context.

So, lets start with an overview of the Planning guidance: Some of the general principles which support the developer's plan include:



BUT: A large portion of this document is devoted to protecting the existing character of our neighborhoods. The discussion about neighborhoods starts with a history of the architectural development, fully explores the reasons for decline in residential areas, and formulates a plan for protecting neighborhoods.

In this document we are told that Des Monies traditional neighborhoods have an existing character worthy of PROTECTING.

Beaverdale is identified by the City as a specific DISTRICT, which according to this document is a "HIGHLY IMAGEABLE neighborhood" that upon entry, you know that you are there.

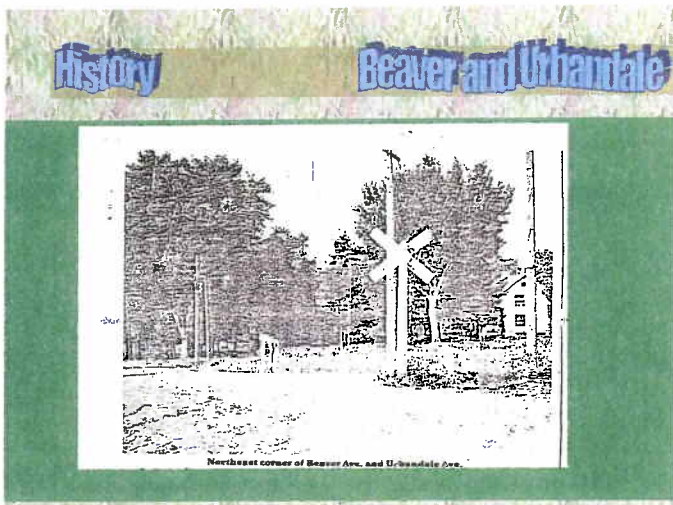
According to our land use plan, efforts to protect community character like that found in Beaverdale is central to the City "remaining a viable community."

We are told that physical elements combine to give Beaverdale, and the rest of the city, its character. Desirable qualities of neighborhoods should be RETAINED.

The planners warn us that residential corridors should not lose their character due to traffic patterns and commercial opportunity.

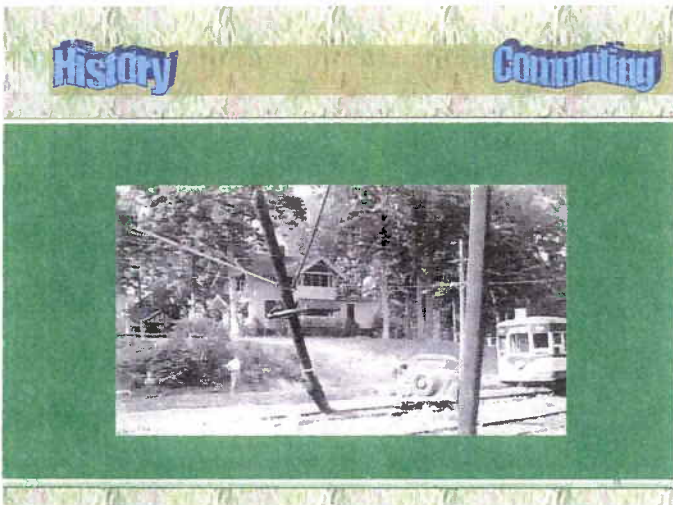
I, and the ten people who follow me – all of whom are residents or business owners in Beaverdale – believe that the proposed PUD has its own character, and while interesting -- with some individual aspects even pleasant -- it is, as a whole, obtuse to the character of Beaverdale. It is a **micro** mix of commercial and residential which is combined into one dense multi-use spot.

Furthermore, we believe that rather than protecting the residential corridor existing on Beaver Avenue, it is a step toward combining the north and south business districts, leading to a commercial corridor.



HISTORY: By Jack Holveck. In order to understand the character of Beaverville, we need to review the history of its establishment and development.

By the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, housing development had begun in the northwest area of the city, and beyond. By and large, the new residents neither farmed nor developed independent commercial activities. Their livelihoods were connected to city by a commuter rail/trolley, known as the Urbandale Line, which was completed in 1906. The residents took the name 'Urbandale' to describe their neighborhood and way of life. A brand new way for middle class workers to live – by commuting – was instituted. So the character of Beaverville arose as an original, progressive comfortable, new way of middle class living.

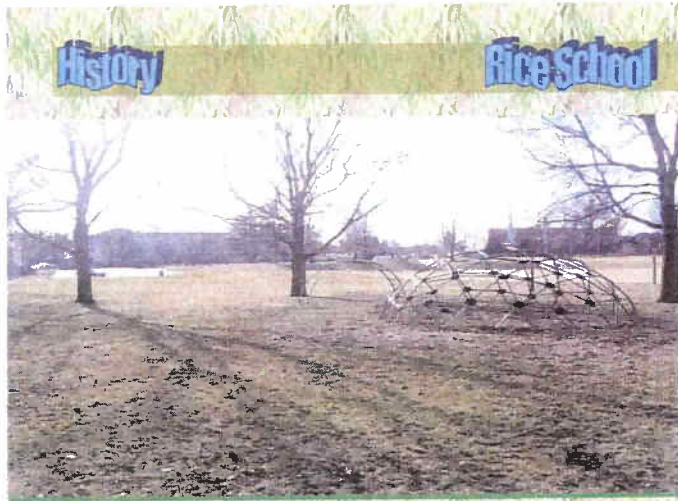


Prior to 1907, Des Moines did not have one school district. There were many small districts created by the neighborhoods they served. During 1917, the Iowa Legislature provided grants to any community, which incorporated an independent school district. The legislation prompted more school districts to be established. Northwest residents outside the city limits incorporated a school district and named it "Urbandale". Those residents within the city, living about the Urbandale train line, met at Rice School and adopted the name

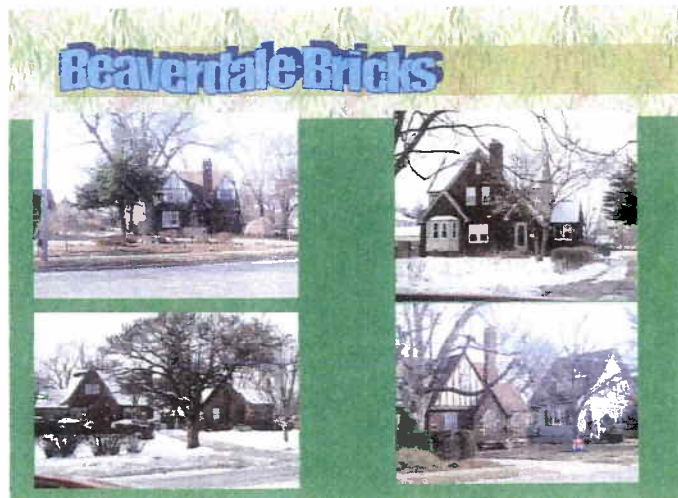


“Beaverdale” for their community.

One or two wooden school buildings had previously served the community as a school, but upon consolidation of the Des Moines Independent Community School District, the parcel at issue was immediately purchased, and in 1909, the brick building we all remember as Rice School was erected. The first classes were held in 1910.



The neighborhood flourished around this school and its playing field.



What are now described as “Beaverdale brick” housing and other substantial housing stock sprung up in pure detached single-family housing developments.

