

A2D2 EVALUATION INTERVIEW NOTES

Interviewee:	Meeting Date: July 29, 2013
Interviewer: Megan	Place/Room:

Open by asking how familiar the interviewee is with the A2D2 ordinance. Explain as much as possible (D1 and D2, character overlays, emphasis on form, premiums, and explain the intent) to give context and provide the informational handout.

Notes from introductory conversation:

QUESTIONS

1. What was your interaction/experience with the A2D2 ordinance or planning process (as a developer? Property owner? Neighbor? Other interested party?)?

On the DDA in the late 1990's and was recruited by the mayor to be on the Downtown Residential Task Force. He worked with Doug Kelbaugh and Sandy Arlinghouse on the task force. She was a mathematical geographer and did lots of imagery for the project. He stayed involved through the Calthorpe plan.

2. Starting with the big picture: Understanding the intent of the ordinances, overall do you think they are fulfilling that intent? Why or why not?

Generally speaking, the ordinance did what it was supposed to do. Cornerhouse Lofts at Washington and State wanted to put up a one-story building. When the City said no, they went to an 8-story building. He thought the zoning ordinance should continue to as is. He thinks the developer gets to make the decision about the market.

3. Thinking about your specific example/observation, what were the positive things that came of the project (or what positive impacts have you observed, if their experience wasn't a specific project)? Think about things like "Allowable Uses", "Height and Massing", "Floor Area Limits/Premiums" and "Design".

Bringing population downtown has had a positive affect, such as between Main Street and State Street. Restaurants are doing better. It is more lively and urban. People spend huge amounts of subsidies to make a 24-hour community. In Ann Arbor, you don't need the subsidies. You just need to get out of their way and it will happened. It is unique to see a community that has survived as a mixed use community. Anything we can do to encourage mixed use. He worries about a 100% restaurant town, but it would be difficult to change because government would then need to pick winners and losers, which they have not historically done well.

4. What were the negative things? And what do you think needs to change about the ordinance? Again, thinking about things like "Allowable Uses", "Height and Massing", "Floor Area Limits/Premiums" and "Design".

The huge student apartments are something to fix. Generally speaking, there is one parking space per apartment but each student apartment has 6 bedrooms. So, the structure encourages student housing and exacerbates the parking problem. More focus should be put on the mixed audience or limiting the apartments to 2 or 3 bedrooms, the format of a typical mixed apartment.

The height and massing tend to be uniform looking structures. The detail, such as cornices, is more important. The results of design standards were mixed. It is appropriate to have them. Cornerstone Lofts and Ashley Terrace got away with a bait and switch, leaving off details in the end. Washington Square is the same height and shape as the Zaragon buildings, which he felt were some of the best in the City, but in Washington Square they peeled out the little bits of details, probably their last percent of costs to make the bottom line.

In terms of premiums, hard to know whether social consciousness, such as LEED Certification, should be kept. If those are legitimate goals, then maybe you should.

5. Of the things you mentioned, what are the top three priorities you would like the Planning Commission consider?

1. In general, nothing is wrong with the height, massing, etc. between D1 and D2.
2. The number of bedrooms and to what degree that fosters a certain type of design/development and how it affects parking.
3. Strengthen the design review process

4. Have you seen examples of techniques, ordinances or standards in other communities that you think work well?

In Ann Arbor, a developer spends all of his time on how to get an approval. Anything to formalize what you need to get an approval would be good.

He has doubts about how general systems work around stormwater – drainage, run-off, floodplain, etc.

It is outrageously expensive to connect to utilities. That cost might be a factor driving the height.

5. Is there anything else you would like the Commission to know?

He wants our community to be more dense, lively and occupied on a 24-hour basis. He is frustrated by the overemphasis on parks, easiest thing to get approved. If the greenbelt and Allen Creek Greenway were coupled with densification, that is a good trade-off. It is grow or die. We have to allow positive new things to happen.