

## Lebanon council OKs South Maple development

More than a dozen speak against apartment complex

BY CHANDLER INIONS  
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Residents from neighborhoods near a proposed site rezone at 940 S. Maple St., took the podium at the Lebanon City Council meeting Tuesday in an effort to stop the change. The city approved it anyways.

By a vote of 4-2, the council opted to allow the rezoning, paving way for the developer to move forward on the project. Councilors Jeni Lind Brinkman and Fred Burton were the no votes.

It was the first in-person meeting for the city council in over a year, and Rick Bell's first in-person one as mayor.

During public comments, for about an hour, residents meticulously laid out their objections to the council.

Previous meetings on the subject had featured similar sentiments, but had not been presented in such a comprehensive and public way until now.

Over a dozen property owners took the podium with their points. Several read letters from neighbors who couldn't attend the meeting. The messaging was the same. Being realistic, they acknowledged that change was inevitable. They made clear their objection wasn't just to losing some bucolic pasture, but to the increase in density.

To accommodate the site's proposed development, the city voted to rezone the property outside of a typical designation, using what's called a "specific plan." Proponents of the method argue it allows



Photos by Chandler Inions/Lebanon Democrat

Lebanon city councilors discuss the agenda with a resident in advance of Tuesday's council meeting, the first in-person meeting in over a year. It was the first in person meeting for Lebanon in over a year. From left, Councilor Fred Burton, resident Jerry Dunn, Mayor Rick Bell, Councilor Chris Crowell, Councilor Tick Bryan and Councilor Jeni Lind Brinkman.

the city more agency in determining development.

For example, with the SP the city could dictate the number of units and compel improvements like landscape buffers or retention ponds.

With a regular zoning, those decisions are left up to the developer, who only must abide by zoning restrictions.

Per the SP, the 2-acre property can become the site of a proposed multi-dwelling apartment complex with up to 42 units, capped out at two stories.

The site is currently zoned as medium-density residential per Lebanon's future land use plan, which says future growth should be "focused in proximity to planned or existing activity centers."

Zoning for medium density residential permits "duplexes, condos, multi-family units, including townhomes, flats and cottage-court style developments, as well as traditionally sized single-family lots." The zoning also limits how many occupants can reside



Susan White states her case against a rezoning on South Maple Street during Tuesday's city council meeting.

on a certain property dependent on its acreage.

Last month, the resolution to approve the rezone met

HOW'D WE GET HERE

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## WCS board rejects effort to drop mask mandate

Contract for demolition of schools damaged by tornado approved

BY MIKE ALEXIEFF  
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Children in Wilson County Schools will continue to wear masks for the remaining 23 days of school after the board of education voted 4-3 to keep the current mandate.

About nine parents — and one sixth-grader — urged the board to drop the mask requirement during the citizen comments portion of Monday's meeting. Several themes were repeated: masks don't work, wearing masks is unhealthy, the district doesn't have the authority to mandate masks, mask-wearing should be up to parents, and mask requirements infringe upon freedom.

Board member Jamie Farough made the motion to "strongly encourage" mask wearing instead of requiring it. Supporting her were board members Kimberly McGee and Jon White. Board Chairman Larry Tomlinson and member Carrie Pfeiffer, Linda Armistead and Bill Robinson voted to keep the mandate.

Farough said that without a countywide mandate and with changing CDC mask guidelines, it is becoming to hard to effectively enforce the requirement in schools. In addition, she said, teachers and staff have had the opportunity to get vaccinated, and with the temperatures rising, wearing masks on buses could be dangerous.

There was little discussion of Farough's motion, with White only asking that if the motion passed that teachers be allowed

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## GOP lawmaker: Three-Fifths Compromise was to end slavery

Comments come during debate over racism curriculum

BY KIMBERLEE KRUESI  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASHVILLE — A Knoxville Republican lawmaker falsely declared Tuesday that an 18th century policy designating a slave as three-fifths of a person was adopted for "the purpose of ending slavery," commenting amid a debate over whether educators should be restricted while teaching about systematic racism in America.

During lengthy debate on the GOP-controlled House floor, several Black lawmakers expressed concerns about the bill's impact on how certain subjects would be taught in schools, specifically highlighting the

Three-Fifths Compromise. The policy was made during the nation's Constitutional Convention in 1787 and classified that three-fifths of a state's slave population could be counted toward its total population when apportioning taxes and states' representation in Congress.

Historians largely agree the compromise gave slaveholding states inordinate power over choosing a president — and decisions of the Continental Congress. That clout eventually faded when Northern state populations began to rapidly rise.

Rep. Justin Lafferty, who is white, stood up and talked at length about what he saw as sparking the compromise. At one point he asked colleagues to note on paper their best guess for the reasons that led to the policy.

"By limiting the number

of population in the count, they specifically limited the number of representatives who would be available in the slave holding states and they did it for the purpose of ending slavery," said Lafferty, from Knoxville. "Well before Abraham Lincoln. Well before Civil War."

None of the other lawmakers in the chamber directly challenged Lafferty's false claims but some applauded when he finished talking.

Rep. Antonio Parkinson, a Memphis Democrat and chairman of the General Assembly's Black Caucus, said in a later statement that Lafferty's comments were troublesome.

"Rep. Lafferty's statement about how the Three-Fifths Compromise was created to end slavery was alarming

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## Initial plans for new Mt. Juliet park unveiled

BY MIGUEL DETILLIER  
FOR THE MT. JULIET NEWS

The Mt. Juliet Parks and Recreation Department has revealed preliminary plans for Hamilton-Denson Park.

Those plans include eight soccer fields, four multi-use fields, a connecting sidewalk to the Town Center greenway and from the Victory Baptist Church parking lot, a playground, a 95-car parking lot, and restrooms. The park, at Tate Lane and West Division Street, is more than 8 acres.

City Parks Director Rocky Lee said the park will not be a soccer complex or game facility, and it will be used for practices.

The project — costing \$650,000 overall — is in its planning stages.

Alisha Eley, a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified and registered landscape architect for Kimley-Horn, a Nashville-based engineering consultant, said the development is one of the key pieces in addressing the lack of multipurpose fields in the

Mt. Juliet community.

Eley, who works on parks and recreational design throughout Tennessee and the rest of the Southeast, explained the city of Mt. Juliet is undergoing a 10-year, systemwide master plan by evaluating its existing parks the current and future demographics of this city.

The city plans to seek grant funding from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for the park. Eley

Resident Jim Hunter was concerned about the traffic issues surrounding the intersection between Tate Lane and West Division Street.

Lee said, "We are not going to build a facility that is going to overrun your road."

Resident Chad Potts asked if there will be any lighting going into this development, to which Lee said that was not in the immediate plans. He also addressed the residents' worries of the park being filled for soccer games and more by saying three or four fields will be occupied at a time.

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