

# Baker Street from page A1

tiful city and we want to keep it that way. But if you vote yes on this, you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube."

Jack Felsot, who lives in a house just west of the controversial property, concurred with Pfeifer that nothing should be done that could jeopardize the neighborhood's future. He also reiterated what he said during a Jan. 8 public hearing before the planning commission — permitting Baker Street Draperies to move next door would seriously

invade his family's privacy.

"Our rights are definitely being infringed," Felsot said Tuesday. "There will be side access, cars parked in the back and fumes."

City Attorney John Donohue, following the meeting, said the Master Plan is a legally significant document. But residents such as the Felsots still have a sliver of hope.

"If an individual believes he is adversely affected by a zoning decision, they can challenge

that," Donohue explained. "But they have to show they are particularly affected by the decision."

### Two sides

Pfeifer added that two Realtors estimated property values in the surrounding area could drop 5-to-20 percent due to the rezoning. Councilwoman Mary Bush, who is a Realtor, disputed that claim.

Also vocal in opposition of the plan was William Rowe, repre-

senting Salem United Church of Christ, the neighbor east of the property.

Rowe said the proposed drapery studio would take parking away from the church during the week and eventually flood the basement. Topography would be changed after Raymond tears down a garage and paves the backyard for six parking spaces, he added.

Later, Raymond assured that she commissioned an engineering study that there "will not be an adverse impact on drainage" due to the renovations.

With the approval, Raymond will renovate the building and grounds — without disrupting the look of the street — and move from Village Commons. Raymond, following the meeting, promised the low-key, high-end business will not burden neighbors.

"I'm relieved and glad," said Raymond, a Farmington resident. "I hope, when it's all put into motion, that neighbors realize we can be good neighbors."

Only councilwoman JoAnne McShane opposed the rezoning of the property into the Central Business District, allowable in the city's Master Plan for long-

term land use.

"The residential use in the historic district, it's important to stay residential because then it stays historical," McShane said in front of the overflow audience at Farmington City Hall. "It creates families and family use."

McShane, in disagreeing with her colleagues, emphasized that the Master Plan is not "etched in stone," and that the issue should be further studied. She added that the city needs to "find a better way of notifying residents about planning issues that could be contentious."

### Honest disagreement

During last week's public hearing before the Farmington Planning Commission, residents said they had not been properly included in the 1998 revision of the Master Plan, or in meetings early in the rezoning process that concluded Tuesday.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauffert's report to council about the rezoning noted that there were public hearings held then "regarding uses of land areas adjacent to the Central Business District."

When the land use "wish list" was revised, the brick house

where Baker Street Draperies was soon occupied was one of three specific locations, on Oakland and Grand River, that could be zoned residential or commercial.

Another was a home now belonging to Jack and Sandra Felsot. Mayor Bill Hartsock pointed out that many residents of historic downtown Farmington did have a voice in the matter, by participating on various committees and serving on boards and commissions.

"That's important," Hartsock said. "For all the same reasons noted earlier, it's safe to say we all share in the same issues and concerns. It truly is an honest difference of opinion about what everybody feels is best for the community at large."

After the meeting, Pfeifer lamented that the petition of signatures did not carry more clout with the council.

"I'm real upset the council didn't listen, not only to the people here tonight, but (they) ignored the 87 percent disapproval rate that the petition represents."

His wife, Rose Pfeifer, said she is worried that the rezoning approval could lead to "the area disintegrating, especially all of Oakland Street."



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