What's Next: Zoning In Carrollton

Current land uses in the Carrollton area of New Orleans have their origins in its settlement patterns begun in the mid-19th century. In 1835, the suburb named Carrollton was annexed by New Orleans in 1874. The City of Carrollton was incorporated as a city in 1843, and became the seat of the New Orleans Parish, which has resulted in the incongruence of two primary residential corridors: S. Claiborne and S. Carrollton Avenues. These areas are acknowledged by the neighborhood residents of Carrollton as one of America's most picturesque neighborhoods, the complex of Carrollton, the street is acknowledged as one of America's most picturesque neighborhoods because they pre-exist the 1970 Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance which was mandated by the City Charter to enforce the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. The resulting town is zoned RD-2. The purpose of this district is to provide for retail shopping and personal services use to meet the needs of a relatively small area, primarily nearby medium density residential areas.

Major zoning issues have involved the question of what constitutes a fast-food outlet and bar. The controversy of the Daiquiris/Le Croissant Cafe and the New Orleans' School of Regional Planning and serves as the Program Director of the Metropolitan Area Committee.

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The interior neighborhoods within the boundaries created by the main boulevards of Carrollton consist predominantly of RD-2 zoning districts. However, N-1 neighborhood business districts, such as those along Maple and Oak Streets acknowledge the historic service needs of heretofore independent small towns. Zoning battles in the interior often involve regulations governing side yards, lot area, lot frontage, and parking spaces—all of which is the responsibility of the Department of Safety and Permits. This department is mandated by the City Charter to enforce the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. The Board of Zoning Adjustments hears decisions of the Safety and Permits department on appeal and responds to requests for variances and waivers.

The Carrollton area is at a crossroads in its rich history as a livable urban neighborhood. A balance must be struck between the competing residential and commercial interest. As the father of city planning, Frederick Law Olmsted, once observed, "We are learning something about how to do it or leave undone may have important and inevitable consequences wholly foreign to the motive immediately controlling the decision, but seriously affecting the welfare of the future city; and with our recognition of this is a growing sense of a social responsibility for estimating these results in the perspective of many years and giving them due weight in reaching every decision."

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