

Nov. 4 ballot to include trash initiative, rezoning issue

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Two local initiatives will be on the Nov. 4 ballot in Upper Arlington.

Residents will have an opportunity to vote whether to overturn two recent decisions by Upper Arlington City Council: to uphold the Board of Zoning and Planning's decision to rezone a Tremont Road site from residential to commercial and to privatize solid waste collection.

Council voted May 11 to uphold BZAP's decision to rezone a .92-acre parcel at 3371 and 3381 Tremont Road for a proposed medical office building. Voters will be asked to support or overturn council's decision.

Organizers submitted a petition with 2,100 signatures -- well above the 1,387 necessary to place the rezoning issue on the Nov. 4 ballot -- to the city finance director's office on June 11, said Fort Merullo, a Pemberton Road resident who lives near the Tremont Road site and helped organize the petition drive.

The petition was certified by the Franklin County Board of Elections on July 11, Merullo said.

"We're waiting on the ballot number and exact verbiage," he said.

If the rezoning is overturned, the Tremont Road site will revert to its original residential zoning, city attorney Jeanine Amid Hummer said.

Developer Bob Long said he and property owner Centro Inc. are waiting to see what happens with the vote before developing the Tremont Road site. Other than demolishing the two existing rental homes that occupied the site, Centro plans to wait for the outcome of the vote before taking any further action, Long said.

"There's due process in place and I think the community's got to decide whether they want the site to be commercial zoning," he said.

Voters will also be asked to decide whether they want to overturn council's decision last December to dismantle its solid waste division and contract with Texas-based Inland Service to collect trash and recycling. Inland took over solid waste collection at the beginning of April.

Petitioners submitted the solid waste initiative petition to the city finance director's office on July 25. The petition contained 2,000 signatures and the Board of Elections certified that more than 1,800 signatures were valid, said Mike Schadek, an attorney and one of the petition organizers.

"Not only will this vote allow us to go back to the old system, it will also end the \$30 (annual service) fee," Schadek said.

Hummer said there is no language in the initiative that would result in a refund of the \$30 service fee to residents. Regardless of the outcome, the initiative will not force the city to void its contract with Inland and reassemble its solid waste division because legal precedents protect municipalities' rights to provide essential services, Hummer said.

The initiative "is clearly an impairment of the city's right to provide services," she said.

Organizers of the trash initiative will hold an informational meeting tonight (Aug. 28) at 7 p.m. in the main shelter of Thompson Park. For more information, visit www.uatrash.org or e-mail uatrash@aol.com

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