

SOUTHERN DALLAS

Developers, megachurch ‘pursue peace’

Plan for warehouse near community nixed, sides to find best use for the land

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Days after a civil court sided with a prominent Southern Dallas megachurch to prevent the construction of a warehouse, developers withdrew their plans Thursday and said they will join hands with the church on plans that are agreeable to the com-

munity.

In a joint statement with Friendship-West Baptist Church, Stonelake Capital Partners said though it acquired the property in accordance with the zoning and has the right to build a warehouse, it does not want to conflict with the community's desires for the land.

“Ultimately a warehouse is not what the community wants, and Stonelake does not desire to be in conflict with the community,” according to the joint statement.

The leaders of both organizations,

Senior Pastor Frederick Haynes III and Kenneth Aboussie, said in the statement that they shared a common Christian faith and concluded they “could accomplish more by working together than by working in conflict with each other.”

“In scripture, it is written in Matthew 5, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers,’ and we have both decided to pursue peace rather than pursue further litigation,” the joint statement said. Both parties agreed to withdraw all litigation, according to the statement.

Stonelake Capital Partners, a real

estate investment firm, planned to build an industrial warehouse on Wheatland Road, between Friendship-West Baptist Church and a government facility, and across the road from a high school and residential neighborhood.

City officials denied a building permit for the warehouse Aug. 31, 2023. They said the project lacked a proper traffic plan because the entrances and exits to and from the facility were not connected to Interstate 20 and would have routed the majority of the truck traffic onto

Wheatland Road.

That denial was later reversed by the Building Inspection Advisory, Examining and Appeals Board, a quasi-judicial board of architects and engineers.

The church then filed for an injunction in December to challenge the board's decision and temporarily halt the warehouse construction. In court filings, the church said the project was emblematic of Dallas' history of zoning industrial sites near low-in-

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Faith leads 2 sides to work together



2020 File Photo/Tom Fox

Plans to build a warehouse near Friendship-West Baptist Church (above) are no more.

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come, predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods. They also said the truck traffic congestion and emissions and its proximity to residents would cause “irreparable harm.”

Five days later, Stonelake filed its own legal challenge against the city. The firm said it complied with the law and was building a warehouse on a tract of land zoned for commercial use.

During the three-hour injunction hearing on Feb. 19,

lawyers from both sides defended their positions in what ultimately was a fight between property rights and the ethics of building a warehouse in close proximity to a residential area. Haynes said during the hearing that the land could be better used to address a housing shortage in the city.

Judge Aiesha Redmond granted the injunction Feb. 20, and set a trial date for April 19, 2025. The trial will not take place now that there is an agreement between the church and developer.