

Green salon moving to new digs in Lawrenceville

Zombo Gallery lures a 27-year-old business from Downtown

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Lake Fong/Post-Gazette

Christine Goodis and Michael Devine at the Zombo Gallery in Lawrenceville.

By Diana Nelson Jones Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

After 27 years of cutting hair Downtown, Christine Goodis is moving her business to the neighborhood she fell in love with and moved to in 2009. Lawrenceville will gain a green hair salon in the former Zombo Gallery at 4900 Hatfield St.

Michael Devine, a disc jockey with a weekly radio show who calls himself "the Zombo guy," will find his own transformation in the same building, working with his wife, Julie, in a massage therapy business.

Last fall, when he closed Zombo Gallery, he asked the Lawrenceville Corp. and

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Lawrenceville United to post on their websites that he had 600 square feet in the building for rent.

"Two weeks later," he said, "Christine walks in and boom, she says, 'I want to be here.' "

For the past four years, Ms. Goodis has operated Salon Christine in the Matthias Building on Penn Avenue. Thick in the Cultural District, it has a distinct culture of its own.

The space is 1,800 square feet of what she calls "Bohemian Casbah," a cozy, chic cave of warm and colorful decor, with old furniture reused in new ways, quirky chandeliers and a wooden door hung horizontally on wheels to slide shut and keep her 2-year-old pug, Lord Oliver, from running into the reception area.

Moving to one-third of the space and after so long Downtown is "a really big transition for me," she said. "But it feels so right.

"Lawrenceville is a neighborhood that supports artists, and I can walk to work or ride my bike."

She plans to open April 5 and is already booked for the entire month. Her salon products are "97 percent plant- and flower-based, environmentally safe and recyclable," she said.

The collaboration between Ms. Goodis and Mr. Devine will become official when the Zoning Board of Adjustment approves the change in usage. The two went before the board earlier this month, accompanied by supportive representatives from the Lawrenceville Corp. and Lawrenceville United.

The board has to consider whether the building could switch from one to another non-conforming use. Non-conforming properties predate the zoning

code and were grandfathered in.

Zoning administrator Susan Tymoczko said the board typically approves use changes when there is no opposition, when neighborhood representatives support them and when the new use is "no more intensive than previously," such as hours of operation and number of employees.

Matthew Galluzzo, executive director of the Lawrenceville Corp., said his organization believes the use is compatible.

Mr. Devine opened Zombo Gallery in 2007.

"For the first few years," he said, "it was always really crowded." Over time, "it was the same people there for free food and drink. It kind of got old. And a pretty decent amount of artists didn't promote the events, so I felt frustrated."

An Ohio native who met his wife here in the early 2000s, he said he followed her to jobs in several cities before they returned in 2005. She is an occupational therapist and both are licensed massage therapists.

"This city gets in your blood," he said. "I call it the city where you can afford your dreams."

Mr. Devine is known throughout Lawrenceville for the black tattoo over his skull that looks like a buzz cut and for taking part in its social and cultural events such as Art All Night and the Accordion Pool Party. He also has a T-shirt printing business, a disc jockey service and is host of "Zombo's Record Party" every Friday on WRCT-88.3 FM.

"I do a bunch of things to keep from getting bored with anything," he said. "But with Christine, I'm proppin' my feet up and saying to her, 'Whatever you want to do, make this your home.' Whatever works for her works for me."

