

Cottage Housing Ordinance 20:006

From: Billy Brown (bebrownjr@yahoo.com)

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Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 03:34 PM CST

The members of the Northside Coalition for the Betterment of Jonesboro believe that the MAPC, the Jonesboro City Council, City Planner and the Mayor have lost sight of their role as servants to all the citizens of Jonesboro. Over the past several years their actions have shown a greater loyalty to builders and developers than to the citizens who are most directly impacted by the projects brought before them. The MAPC and City Council should act as gatekeepers to the benefit and protection of all residents rather than as rubberstamps for every development that comes down the pike.

The most recent case in point is the Cottage Housing Ordinance. With little or no discussion, the ordinance sailed through the MAPC and two readings of the City Council before the citizens of Jonesboro realized the potential threat that this proposal was to their neighborhoods. As originally presented the ordinance was no more than a brochure with very attractive depictions of lovely cottages with porches surrounding a beautiful green space for prospective buyers in a fancy cottage village. The pictorial representation had nothing to do with the reality of the proposal. The new definition included a Home Owners Association agreement, which controlled the size of the house, the roof pitch, parking, the green space and the spacing of the houses. According to the posting from the MAPC, these were the only restrictions placed on this type of development.

In principle we have no problem with this new definition. The problem lies in the fact that the ordinance as it stood did not go far enough in defining the type of houses that could be built nor did it spell out in a HOA legal document the restrictions on and the rights of the home owners. Furthermore, we definitely needed clarification of the matter of ownership. Were these cottages being built strictly as rental property, or would they be offered for sale to the general public. And if they were offered for sale, then how would the property lines be determined?

After a meeting with the Westend Coalition, City Planner Derrel Smith agreed to amend the ordinance by declaring that at most only two houses within a village may look alike. Although many other issues were brought to his attention, no other revisions were made. In particular, we would like to know how many such villages can be clustered together? If a developer has ten acres, can he build 120 such tiny houses together? How far apart must these villages be spaced within a neighborhood? As stated in an ordinance in another Arkansas city, there must be at least 1000 feet between such villages.

In light of the above actions or inaction, we believe that this ordinance has been left intentionally vague to the benefit of the builders and developers.

Furthermore, the citizens of north Jonesboro have long been victims of developers who view our side of town as a cash cow for building apartments and low-cost housing. For years we have had to be vigilant in watching out for the tell-tale blue signs announcing that a request has been made for rezoning the R-1 property to another zone designation for the construction of apartments. Currently our area is zoned R-1, and we would like to have the assurance from the MAPC, City Council and Mayor that it will remain so. We do not relish the prospect of having to appear before the City Council every couple of years to fight to maintain the quality and value of our homes and the quality of our lives in general.

In conclusion, we respectfully request that the Cottage Housing Ordinance be rejected and be totally rewritten considering the pertinent points suggested above.

Sincerely,

Northside Coalition for the Betterment of Jonesboro

PS: Included is a petition signed at the first meeting by the members of the Northside Coalition for the Betterment of Jonesboro held on Monday, March 8, 2021. Additional signatures will be forthcoming.



Petition Northside Coalition.bmp
11.4MB

PETITION AGAINST ORDINANCE 21:006 Cottage Housing Ordinance

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6 John Colclasure	2021 Alex Dr.	513-776-5585	John Colclasure
7 Sherry Blevins	910 Sylvan Hill Dr	870-897-3044	Sherry Blevins
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9 Michael Blackwood	2505 DAVIS Dr	870 897-5785	Michael Blackwood
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