

Lot Size Reform – Community Meeting at Massey Rec Center

11.15.23

Questions

- Can we see a map that shows all the neighborhoods with covenants or deed restrictions that will protect them from new construction of smaller-lot homes?
- If you have covenants in your neighborhood, how will this be allowed?
- How does this incorporate the needs of students and of builders?
- Do we have the infrastructure to provide the water pressure, wastewater and storm water needs, demands on roadways?
- If there's a house in an existing neighborhood and it burns down, this change would allow the lot to be subdivided?
- Is this going to be a blanket thing like the last zoning change was, or will it be more of a case-by-case basis like a variance?
- Is there a member from GRU to consult on these issues so there is consistent communication between GRU and the City about infrastructure impact and expansion?
- Why wasn't this considered as an option in the past?
- Could you write this ordinance so neighborhoods supportive of smaller lots could simply opt in while other neighborhoods are not changed?
- Who are you addressing? It feels like young families, but what about people who are poor and in need of housing or students in need of housing?
- You are assuming these smaller homes will be affordable but is there any way to guarantee that?
- Why can't you just alter the zoning for lots that request this on a case-by-case basis instead of a blanket zoning change citywide?
- Why can't we think about traffic, infrastructure and walkability all at the same time? Why does it have to be a zoning issue?
- I still wonder who this is for and how it's affordable?
- Can you do anything to disincentivize investors from buying or building single-family homes and renting them to students?

Concerns

- I understood the board reversed course and restored exclusionary zoning, but the current situation still allows a triplex to be built on a single-family lot. This means with the lot size reform you suggest, with development of up to 12 houses per acre, there could be up to 36 dwellings on a single lot.
- This may provide an opportunity for developers to exploit the intent and start constructing ADUs, as there is no requirement that the owner of the property inhabit the property and no prohibition on building triplex structures on lots.

- Deeds to these properties may still override the proposed zoning change. Many properties on which you would want to build a smaller house are in neighborhoods with deeds or covenants that would protect the area by continuing to prohibit these smaller-lot homes.
- With so many neighborhoods restricted by deed or covenant, the city's smaller, older neighborhoods without covenants will take the full impact of all this new infill construction and that is not equitable.
- You should consult land attorneys before proceeding with this plan.
- Gainesville doesn't have the infrastructure of Austin or Portland, which are provided as examples of cities successfully implementing this type of zoning. We don't have the roads, the physical plants, or the walkability for this plan.
- We've had flooding in our neighborhood. When there is a solid rain, the houses flood. One had to be removed. This plan needs a full, broader view. There needs to be a panel or group to think about the future implications of flooding and infrastructure. We need to see data.
- I build affordable housing on infill lots and have not had drainage issues. We are having issues dealing with Public Works and feel the lack of communication between Public Works and GRU leads to unnecessary complications and delays. There are problems other than lot sizes, and the city needs to examine those issues.
- You have to address the ADU question if you hope to make this change. You have to meet that issue head-on and revise the ADU ordinance to prevent exploitation by builders seeking to construct as many units as possible.
- Realtors are supporting this proposal as it addresses problems with low inventory and promotes private property rights. It gives more rights to an individual in areas where there are not limiting deed restrictions and improves flexibility in housing design and construction.
- To have more options in the city, as we grow, would benefit more people—especially young people and newcomers who might otherwise have to buy homes well outside of city limits.
- Pleasant Street has beautiful houses being built on small lots but when considering cost per square foot, these are still expensive houses.
- There are basically two problems: the shortage of housing and the excess of commercial buildings. We should look into federal loans to allow us to finance transitions from commercial to residential structures.
- I'm new to Gainesville and there are not a lot of options to buy here. I do not agree this city can be made walkable. The ability to walk to a grocery store or bar doesn't exist for most neighborhoods and this proposal will not change that. That is a difficult change to achieve and this approach seems haphazard. You are taking away zoning protection and giving developers an opportunity to exploit the situation.
- I think these are good intentions but I don't think the resulting houses will be affordable.
- The citizens have a trust issue with the city right now. Past decisions have damaged trust. We have mega-buildings that should never have gone up. So we should not give up the protections we still have.

Lot Size Reform – Community Meeting at MLK

10.30.23

Questions

- Does this get rid of single-family zoning?
- Do other cities have a single type of residential zone?
- Is there a map that shows Gainesville's four residential zoning types?
- There are certain neighborhoods that have a developer's agreement or HOA. Will this zoning change apply to those neighborhoods?
- This is the issue of deed restrictions—so do those take precedence?
- We want to see data analysis to show if the infrastructure of the neighborhoods likely to have more of this new construction can handle the increased density.
- How does increased density help the environment?
- How will parking work in cottage neighborhoods where some homes don't front the street, or with lot splits that eliminate the traditional driveway/garage combination?
- Are we talking about actual affordable housing for people who need it or starter homes for young affluent professionals?
- Will these denser neighborhoods really be more "walkable" or lead to more walking over driving?
- Is there a safeguard that would limit construction in affordable neighborhoods to only lower-end, more affordable houses?
- Where will excess rainwater go if you build on the vacant lots now acting as reservoirs that absorb runoff?
- You have density requirements that kick in for multi-family buildings, but what about individual homes all in the same area that aren't a single development but equate to that in terms of density?
- Why are we doing it this way? Why not get a variance for my specific lot rather than changing zoning for the entire city?
- Can we have someone from Public Works at the next meeting to issue questions about stormwater runoff and infrastructure?

Concerns

- Older neighborhoods are not protected by deed restrictions or HOAs. The bulk of the new, higher-density construction will take place there and cause problems for those neighbors.
- The infrastructure in these older neighborhoods is not prepared to handle the increased traffic, stormwater runoff and other demands associated with increased construction and higher numbers of residents.
- I do support smaller homes, but we need to do studies on impacts—flooding, for instance. We need to do these in a steady, mindful way. We need data that will make us feel more comfortable with a change like this.

- We need more solid data to make this proposal seem like a reasonable response.
- We need impact studies to predict if our infrastructure can handle the increased density.
- I can see people squeezing in overlarge houses on small lots. Adding all this additional impervious surface will have impacts on environmental heat and flooding.
- Creeks are already used as drainage canals and this is causing associated erosion. The added construction will worsen that impact.
- In east Gainesville, where the land is affordable and there are many open pockets available for building out many small homes, there is a real risk of overbuilding and creating a situation where the existing infrastructure cannot meet demand.
- East Gainesville has no deed restrictions or HOAs to keep that sort of overdevelopment in check, so there is a real risk of overbuilding without any significant level of scrutiny.
- People who are significantly economically challenged can't take the first step toward home ownership and this won't change that.
- We have not attracted developers who will build affordable starter homes in Gainesville.
- Expensive houses on small lots in affordable neighborhoods will not help the people who need to be able to buy a home.
- I'm on a cul-de-sac with large lots where this proposal would make it possible to triple the number of houses.
- I think it would be better to revise the rules to allow for variances on a more flexible basis to avoid opening an unintended zoning loophole that builders can exploit.
- You're solving a problem that doesn't exist.
- Students who graduate from UF and choose to stay in Gainesville to settle with families are not buying homes because they're not available; 70% of Gainesville residents are renters.
- I live in NW Gainesville on a six-acre lot by a lake. A neighboring lot is 11 acres. With all of that developed at 12 houses per acre, that's 144 houses.
- I think this should be done on a case-by-case basis, not a free-for-all.