

I would like city council to establish a task force with a limited assignment: to gather community input and measure public support for any residential building code reform, and recommend next steps, if any. I would expect the task force to have public hearings, do outreach and opinion surveys, and report back to council whether the public supports any further action.

When I ran for city council last Fall, I heard from many in the community who were concerned about a few houses in the community what seemed to be overbuilt for their lots. Some developers have built to the setback lines and to the maximum height to maximize square footage – maximizing their profits at the expense of their neighbors. It's only been a few houses, and the problem has generally not been residents building their dream home, but developers building houses on speculation, hoping to sell them at a profit.

When I was first elected I believed that a majority of the community wanted us to address these concerns and do so quickly. After being elected I proposed that city council quickly pass ordinance to limit impervious cover as a way of addressing overbuilding. I learned building heights and setback incursions into setbacks were already being considered by planning and zoning commission. The planning and zoning commission had a few hearings and received very little public input. The issues are finally getting more attention, and we are hearing more from citizens with opinions on both sides of the issues.

After getting some feedback, it is clear to me now that there is some division in the community about whether we should even consider changes to our residential building codes. Rollingwood has traditionally been a place with relatively little development regulation, which has its benefits. Many are worried that the pendulum could swing too far and we could end up over-regulating development. Some worry that any new restrictions would lower the redevelopment value of their land. Some worry that changing the building heights are calculated would be unfair to people who have sloped lots.

People opposed to a quick fix have suggested that we slow down, and get more community input and consensus before making any changes to the building code. Some have suggested that we create a residential code review task force to take a comprehensive look at how all these codes work together. For example, an unintended consequence of height limits could be that developers may build more flat-roofed houses to maximize square footage. Developers may not build any roof overhangs if overhangs are not allowed to encroach on the setbacks. Should swimming pools be allowed in the setbacks up to the property line? The tree ordinance is an issue. Privacy in the setbacks is enhanced by trees, yet developers are allowed to clear cut lots, even the largest, oldest oaks, even in the setbacks.

Others have expressed concern that developers will continue to overbuild while we study the issues. They believe that over development is a bigger threat to their property value than over regulation would be As one of our neighbors said in an email "The neighbor behind me built a huge house right on the property line with a balcony and windows peering into my backyard...Its too late to save my privacy and property but I encourage you to do everything you can to make people respect their fellow citizens and to protect others from my fate".

Some are opposed even to the creation of a task force, cynically suggesting that any task force would be a sham, stacked with people who are anti-development to push a push a pre-determined outcome. That's why I am now proposing a that the scope of the the proposed task force be limited: to investigate what issues are of greatest concern to our citizens; to measure public support for any changes; and report their findings back to council with a recommendation of next steps, if any.

The proposed task force is made up of very capable professionals with lots of relevant experience and diverse perspectives. Nobody could fairly say that this group is either anti-development or anti-regulation, they are a diverse group of highly qualified, fair minded people with a history of service to the community. Given the fact that the mission of the task force is to limited, to gather public input and gauge the community's interest in code reform, it would be open and inclusive. The task force could add members as they see fit.

Jeff Marx

Ryan Clinton

Tom Ferrell, Chairman

Dave Bench

Alex Robinette

Duke Garwood

A Council Representative

I'd like to get the residential code review task force established at the next council meeting. Council Member Phil McDuffee has worked with me to study the issues and to make this

proposal for a task force, We cannot speak for the other council members or the council as a whole. Open meetings laws prohibit more than two council members discussing an issue outside of the public meetings. I have posted this on the City of Rollingwood council message board so that other council members could see it and reply. You can see the message board here:

<https://councilforum.rollingwoodtx.gov/threads/residential-code-task-force.7/>

Many of you have sent emails about the subject, which is much appreciated. Your emails are all being saved and tabulated. They do make a difference. If you want to send an email that will get to the city council, the planning and zoning commission, please send your email to:

dadair@rollingwoodtx.gov

Thanks for your patience as we try to figure out the best way for the community to study and address these issues.

Kevin Glasheen

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