

To: Elected officials of City of Stevenson for inclusion in public comments and meeting records.

I am a downtown Stevenson property owner of 17 years (80 & 82 Columbia Ave.) whose property rights will be negatively affected by continuation of the moratorium on construction of new Single-Family Detached Dwellings (SFDD). I oppose adoption of Ordinance 2020-1157. The original moratorium was an example of misguided, arbitrary and autocratic disregard for property rights. It was disturbingly inappropriate of the Mayor and Council to enact the moratorium in the manner it was accomplished. As the Planning Commission noted “There was general agreement the criticism of the moratorium was due to the perception there was no opportunity for public input in the decision making” (Minutes 2/10/ Planning Commission Meeting). That sentiment is growing as more and more stakeholders and the public are made aware of the moratorium and the Council and Planning Commission intention to make it permanent while adding more unnecessary restrictions (ZON2020-01).

I do not feel the moratorium was necessary to the “success” of downtown Stevenson. There have been SFDD in downtown Stevenson since the town was incorporated. Ordinance 2020-1157 will not increase “affordable housing” or “attract businesses” to the downtown area. It will reduce opportunity for both. As then Planning Commissioner Shaun Van Pelt pointed out “... the cost to remove a SFDD by a business seeking to build a commercial entity is prohibitive and makes it hard to attract businesses to the downtown area” (Minutes 2/10/ Planning Commission Meeting). It is noteworthy that Van Pelt resigned after this meeting. The reason that businesses are not flourishing in the downtown area is that Stevenson is an isolated town with only 1500 residents. One road in, one road out. Big box stores are a short distance away, high ticket items can be purchased tax free in Oregon. The marginal small businesses in town are already in trouble. The “business” environment in Stevenson will likely be severely impacted for the foreseeable future.

As a stakeholder, I do not feel I was properly notified while the moratorium was initially under consideration or enacted. I request the moratorium be allowed to expire permanently on May 17, 2020. I also request that the ZON2020-01 Amendment be taken off the Planning Commission agenda until such time as an urgent need be identified. I request written notice of any further meetings or proposed actions pursuant to the moratorium, Ordinance 2020-1156 or the ZON2020-01 Amendment be sent to me by US Postal Service mail via the mailing address the City uses for my water bill.

I also note that any actions at this time by the Council may be prohibited based on PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR AMENDING PROCLAMATION 20-05, 20-28 Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act.

“Subject to the conditions for conducting any meeting as required above, agencies are further prohibited from taking “action,” as defined in RCW 42.30.020, unless those matters are necessary and routine matters or are matters necessary to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and the current public health emergency, until such time as regular public participation under the Open Public Meetings Act is possible”.

Sincerely,

Brian McNamara