

Hello Leana,

Please include these comments in the packet for tonight's meeting. I intend to make these comments during the meeting as well.

Thank you,

Brian McNamara

After attending the video conference of the Stevenson City Council Meeting on May 21st, 2020 it is painfully clear that the City Council has a foregone conclusion that Stevenson desperately needs a moratorium against "new" Single Family Detached Dwellings (SFDD) in the C1 downtown area. There was no justification provided that this was somehow necessary to ensure new "affordable" downtown residential opportunities or would somehow increase construction of new businesses. Even after acknowledging that the original emergency moratorium was initiated without due public comment, and to the detriment of property owners, the Council went ahead and approved a new moratorium. The Council flat out said "We have already decided this and it should have already been done". This after a poignant mia-culpa provided by Councilman Paul Hendricks. As noted in last week's Skamania County Pioneer at least 20 constituents submitted comments against renewing the Emergency Moratorium. 11 of those comments were from affected property owners. Stakeholder feedback and public opinion are falling on deaf ears. Many current residents and property owners are still unaware of the moratorium(s).

I highlighted some farcical jargon in the new moratorium below.

WHEREAS, the Stevenson City Council finds that the City's ability to preserve the look and feel of the city as outlined in the adopted Comprehensive Plan will be jeopardized unless this moratorium is authorized; and

The "look and feel" of Stevenson remains the same as it has for over 30 years, including the SFDD. The look of Stevenson will not be enhanced by empty businesses with apartments above them.

WHEREAS, the Stevenson City Council finds that the authorization of this moratorium is necessary to protect the health, welfare, safety and future economic viability of the City;

SFDD actually protect the health, welfare and safety of the City. As for the economic vitality of the City we have a hardware store, grocery store and a few viable restaurants. The rest of the marketplace are basically "dreamer" businesses which rarely survive even in good economic times. The 1991 Comprehensive Plan identifies the fact of "retail drain", which means that residents are spending their retail money elsewhere due to multiple market factors. Walmart, Costco, Home Depot, Safeway etc. offer better selection and prices. Our population will not make a quantum leap to change this.

WHEREAS, the City has not completed the downtown plan to address this issue; and

The City Council and Planning Commission are moving ahead with the Plan for SUCCESS to the detriment of current property owners' rights. In fact, the Ten Year Build Out in the Plan for Success states;

“» Includes concepts for private parcels, with owner knowledge. Does not infer that property owners agree or disagree with each concept. » Existing uses are NOT displaced. Any future change would require owner consent, additional planning, design, and public review”.

WHEREAS, RCW 35A.63.220 requires a City to conduct a public hearing and adopt Findings of Fact supporting the moratorium; and

This is not a true “public meeting” but yet another virtual meeting. And the Council has not shown that the moratorium is an emergency or pressing issue. In fact, it is highly unpopular with affected property owners and the general public. The overwhelming negative stakeholder and public comments addressed to the Council were ignored by the Council when they reinstated the moratorium on May 21st. There were no advocates other than Council members. Unfortunately, the Council does not feel responsible to their constituents. Therefore, the Council will once again approve the Findings of Fact to ensure the continuation of the moratorium until the Planning Commission provides them with their recommendation to make the Council desired Zoning changes permanent.)

The City Council of the City of Stevenson adopts the following findings of fact:

1. The City has listed in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan to, “consider allowing new single family development in the downtown area as conditional uses according to specific criteria such as the presence of lot sizes too small to support new commercial uses.”

What the 2013 Comprehensive Plan actually says is “4.3-1– Protect commercial space from incompatible uses, such as industrial. 4.3-2– Encourage adaptive reuse in the design of new downtown buildings. 4.3-3– Ensure the viability, salability, and re-buildability of existing single-family homes in the downtown area by including zoning provisions such as designating all homes built prior to January 1st, 2013 as permitted uses or incorporating generous continuation policies for nonconforming single-family uses. 4.3-4– Consider allowing new single-family development in the downtown area as conditional uses according to specific criteria such as (inherent property rights granted at the time of purchase) the presence of lot sizes too small to support new commercial uses”.

The City Council needs to grandfather the rights of single family detached dwelling property owners as granted at the time of purchase.

Brian McNamara