

From: [Janice Carter-Lovejoy](#)
To: [Council Liaisons; City Clerk's Office](#)
Subject: Ordinances 2024-180 and 2024-207
Date: Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:41:10 AM

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September 18, 2024

To: Richmond City Council Members

Subject: Ordinances 2024-180 and 2024-207

I am writing to express my concern about a proposed development between Semmes Ave and McDonough St., including W. 22nd Street. The project is on Council's agenda for 9/23/24. I regret that I am unable to attend the meeting due to a schedule conflict.

The developer's plan is to build three apartment buildings as tall as 5 stories, with 130 units and surface lot areas for some parking. The proposed units will be classified as affordable, to give the developer financial incentives for the project.

Frankly, I'm appalled and embarrassed by the project. To allow this project harkens back to times when government practices grouped minorities in undesirable locations, in areas where oppression might be less obvious, and in areas where the "haves" will not share sidewalks with the "have nots". Richmond has been working hard and purposefully to break down prejudiced and classist practices. That must continue!

The property lies in a deep depression that was once a creek bed for Canoe Run. Essentially it is the equivalent of a 2-block x 2-block wide hole surrounded by steep slopes on three sides. The adjacent properties surrounding it are at street grade with Semmes Ave, mostly single family homes, many built over 100 years ago. The feeling I get when I walk past the vacant hole is that anything built there will be viewed consciously, or subconsciously, as substandard, as a "lesser than" place to live, and lower-class dense housing.

I favor developing affordable housing options, not warehousing. I favor accessible public transportation, not requiring seniors and physically challenged persons to walk 4+ blocks to a bus stop half of it up hill, or otherwise climb 30 steps up a steep hill for less distance to traverse to a bus stop. I favor integrating housing developments where diversity can be enjoyed and celebrated, not isolating people in buildings that are looked down upon (literally). I favor helping people build wealth through affordable home ownership, not trapping them in the cycle of renting at costs that leave no way to save money or build equity through ownership. I favor smart decision-making based on adequate research by traffic engineers, school planners, and listening to the community, not the developer's own interests. No recent traffic studies have been conducted, and no impact on the schools has been considered. Furthermore, this developer has made statements and promises that were untrue.

The housing markets in Woodland Heights and Swansboro have demonstrated that people want to buy in the area. These actions have contributed to stabilizing the neighborhoods. That's what I want city leadership to support.

Please vote NO on these ordinances. Voting no is NOT a vote against affordable housing – it is a vote for smart development that can still include affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Janice Carter-Lovejoy.

604 W 19th Street

From: Vaughn Garland
To: Council Liaisons; City Clerk's Office; Councilmembers
Subject: My Address to Richmond City Council – Affordable Housing and 22nd Street SUP
Date: Friday, September 20, 2024 3:06:32 PM
Attachments: 9.5.2024 Semmes Ave Safety Meeting.pdf
SEMMESS AVE SAFETY MEETING - 9.5.2024.pdf
c68908360772A1-4FE8-BE28-B760A180DC14.png

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Greetings, my name is Vaughn Garland, and I have been a proud resident of the 300 block of West 25th Street for almost 20 years. Let me begin by stating clearly: I strongly support affordable housing in Richmond. Too many families face housing insecurity, and it is critical that we all work together to address this. I commend the city for taking steps to help communities develop housing that is accessible and equitable. I also want to congratulate Greta J. Harris and the Better Housing Coalition on this week's groundbreaking in North Richmond. We need more developments like that one.

I love my small community on 25th Street, and I take great pride in Southside. It's a complicated area, but it's filled with people who are kind, genuine, and welcoming. We may seem rough around the corners, but that's because we've learned over the years that if we don't stand up for what's right, we'll be overlooked, forgotten, and often "othered." We know that sometimes we're left to fend for ourselves, so we hustle to make things happen. That's why I'm here today—because I need to continue advocating for Southside.

Let me tell you a little about my neighborhood. My wife and I have made so many memories on 25th Street. It's where we held hands for the first time, planned our wedding, and where our neighbors decorated our house to welcome our newborn daughter home. I'll never forget that day—rounding the corner to find our street full of neighbors celebrating with us. The first person who greeted me the day I moved into my house yelled across his fence "howdy neighbor!" We've built a family and community here, with longtime residents like Ms. Brandon, who has lived here since 1963 and is like a mother to me and to all of us. We take care of each other—that's what our community is all about.

But despite this love and support, Southside is complicated. My family and I have been traumatized by gun violence and screeching cars that are speeding through crowded streets. From our home, we hear gunshots almost nightly. After so many times of ducking for cover as our neighbors' homes are being shot at, I've become numb to it. How complicated is that? We have raised our voices about drug activity, traffic safety, and crumbling infrastructure, but nothing changes. I've witnessed deaths from speeding cars, overdoses, and even flooding in the old trailer park that once stood where this new development planned. We've met with elected officials, city staff, and traffic engineers to talk about these issues, yet the problems persist.

For nearly two decades, we've asked the city to improve the infrastructure along Perry and McDonough Streets between 22nd and 26th, and from Perry to Bainbridge. The roads were never constructed properly, and we desperately need them widened, with curbs and stormwater drainage added. Year after year, we're told there's no money, but maybe it'll be included in next year's budget. We have asked for trees to fight against the heat desert that we all feel daily. And yet, nothing happens.

Meanwhile, the Southside has seen tremendous growth, with developers coming in, buying up properties, and walking away with big profits, while the city's infrastructure and safety problems remain. Now, with this new development, we're expecting 100 more cars on streets that are already too narrow, with neighbors forced to walk in the roadway due to a lack of sidewalks. Our roads flood in storms and we've had multiple hit-and-run incidents because of the poor road conditions. And still, the developers are looking to maximize their profits, with no real commitment to addressing our concerns. Last week, in a virtual meeting attended by 47 neighbors, one resident asked the development's lawyer if a simple fence could be built between their properties to keep her backyard from becoming a cut-through from residents of this development. When Council Member Lynch posed the question to the developer's lawyer, the answer was a flat "no." That was frustrating to watch.

Council Member Lynch will detail the issues with this development, but I want to stress that City Council has a choice to make. You can either prioritize the profit of one developer or listen to the real, urgent needs of a close-knit, diverse, and supportive community. If you choose to support this development, then the city must address the infrastructure and safety concerns we've been raising for years. If you don't fix these issues, then this development's scope and size will only worsen the strain on an already struggling neighborhood.

I understand that the decision is complicated, but for the people who live in this wonderful, diverse community, I ask you to make the right choice. Represent the people, not profit nor lobbying power that comes with this plan.

We need affordable housing. But we need it done right, in a way that prioritizes the residents who live here now, and those who look forward to welcoming.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With Kindness,
Vaughn Garland

McDonough Street between 26th and 22nd.



Perry Street between 22nd and 26th



SEMMES AVE
SAFETY MEETING

SEPTEMBER 5TH, 2024



REPORTABLE CRASHES

2024: 17 CRASHES YTD*

SEMMES/21ST – 1
SEMMES/22ND – 4
SEMMES/26TH – 2
SEMMES/31ST – 2

2023: 15 CRASHES (JAN - AUG)

SEMMES/21ST – 1
SEMMES/22ND – 2
SEMMES/26TH – 3
SEMMES/31ST – 2

*** INFORMATION PULLED FROM TREDS IS
DELAYED, BASED ON MOST UP-TO-DATE
DATA. TOTALS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

CITATIONS BY MONTH

2024

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
JAN	18
FEB	70
MAR	14
APR	83
MAY	13
JUN	15
JUL	11
AUG	17
<u>TOTAL</u>	241

2023

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
JAN	88
FEB	53
MAR	59
APR	48
MAY	26
JUN	19
JUL	19
AUG	19
<u>TOTAL</u>	331

- 114 TRAFFIC STOPS COMPLETED ON SEMMES AVE BETWEEN FOREST HILL AND COWARDIN



From: [Elfreda Anderson](#)
To: [City Clerk's Office](#)
Subject: Affordable Housing Project concerns
Date: Monday, September 23, 2024 11:06:29 AM

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Good morning everyone!

Thank you Vaughan.

I am not able to be present but as you know I'm very concerned about access to my yard from the apartments being built along! That's really huge for me since I'm on the end of where they plan to build. There has to be a retainer wall to built to show consideration for my privacy and security.

There needs to be consideration for the amount of traffic that would now come to the area causing backup and safety issues as we have seen people speeding up and down McDonough. We need speed bumps. Additional space for parking as a homeowner and not have to battle with an apartment complex which will bring an influx of additional vehicles that are not a part of these units.

As stated previously living in the end I have natural sunlight that comes into my home and these apartments will from my understanding tower over my home and complete take away my privacy inside my home and lighting.

Outside of these things, Im concerned about everything that would affect my neighbors who have been here for many years!! There are situations that I am not up to par on that have been longstanding concerns for a really long time, and have not seen a resolve! In essence it would all how we all live and I hope that there can be some type of compromise that will allow us to feel like our community matters.

Praying for compassion and consideration.

2300 McDonough

Elfreda Tyler-Anderson (Monica)

Elfreda Tyler-Anderson (Monica)