

From: Jenny Friar <jefriar@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2022 6:15 PM
To: Rodney@thewiltonco.com
Cc: Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office
Subject: Thank you so much for your time today and an invitation!

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Dear members of the Planning Commission,

Thank you so much for your time today as my council woman, Stephanie Lynch, my neighbors, and I spoke in support of Resolution 2022-RO33. I am new to this and failed to understand the time limit, and I did feel like the end of the presentation got a bit muddled regarding zoning vs. land use, so I just wanted to add a few things that I believe are germane to the discussion:

1. The neighborhood has been long-requesting this change since the outset of Richmond 300 input, and was advised that it would be best handled through an amendment, thus we are before you now. This is 100% about the unintended (I hope) and very real consequence of developer-driven tear down of historic homes and structures because of changes to height limits - read on!
2. The city planners made a strong and thorough case against the resolution to the City Council last month and had ample time to present their case. After hearing this presentation(which had no time limit - unlike citizen presentations) and asking staff questions, the council voted unanimously to approve the resolution. Hopefully, this is meaningful.
3. The land use designation does make a material difference! While it is technically true that the land use designation does not automatically change the zoning, all future zoning decisions - and Mr. Vonck shared, they would be coming, must be in conformance with land use designation and zoning "down grades" such as from mixed use to residential do not happen, as they are usually considered a violation of rights. The designation represents the intention for zoning- which makes sense.
4. This is not a conceptual or unfounded fear - We already have an SUP filed to tear down a one-story historic school house to build a new 4 story multi-family structure on China Street, which cites the Richmond 300 plan and the new height limits in their request. As you all know better than anyone, and as I witnessed today with the granting of an SUP for a 29th street 5-home project citing Richmond 300, these do get approved in short order and, it seems, by unanimous vote. So this is not a theoretical issue. Developer tear-down of historic buildings is starting. If you are a developer, building an additional two-stories of rooms that rent at \$600 each, makes good sense and prices families out of purchasing those homes.

4. The brush is too broad. I work in housing and believe in housing as a basic human right, but many cities, with longer trajectories of growth, are handling housing shortages without decimating impossible-to-replace historic homes. I know you are very busy, but please consider visiting Oregon Hill with me and walking the grand total of 6-7 streets in question, really just a handful of blocks. You will see that our two B-1 plots are already poised for near-term large-scale development, including the site of the former Mama Zu restaurant, which just sold for this purpose. These two parcels, along with the likelihood of residential adaptive reuse of the historic Pine Street Baptist church (our largest structure), are natural fits for increasing density and commercial spaces in the neighborhood, without demolishing historic homes. These, in addition to the 3 apartment/condo buildings already in the neighborhood. Height isn't the only, nor always the best way to achieve density. We are not against density or businesses, but against a change in height limits that incentivizes people to replace historic 2-story homes with larger structures.

Again, I am naive to this, but I am genuinely curious why civil servants, paid by taxpayers to...serve, and citizen-appointees, would be driven to oppose the will of residents and the unanimous vote of council members elected-by and charged with representing, quite literally, 100% of city residents? I thought we were living into an era in Richmond where citizen voices, even from less-affluent areas, even if you don't live in a stand-alone dutch colonial with a sweeping front lawn, like the examples Mr. Vonck showed of "residential", you still have a voice in the destiny of your community.

Please, come out to see Oregon Hill and draw your own conclusions, or if you can't, I'll try to send pictures to give a better idea. Our neighborhood has seen tremendous grass roots, citizen-lead revitalization over the last few decades, increasing both density and businesses and retaining a stunning historic streetscape that attracts visitors from all corners. Please trust us and support us in thoughtful and continued growth as we all work towards Richmond's shared future.

With much gratitude and some hope,

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Please don't hesitate to reach out anytime! Our neighborhood Association President, Bryan Green is also at your disposal to lead or coordinate tours and we could keep it to 40 minutes.

Thank you!