

April 2nd, 2017

STEPHEN AND MARY RAINS

7412 NE 119th Place

Edmond, OK 73013

RE: **Protest** Adoption of Norman City Center Form Based Code, new zoning districts, and rezoning for an approximately 42 block area (Case # PD17-6 dated March 9th, 2017)

Protest redevelopment of a parking garage on Boyd and Debarr Avenue

TO: City of Norman

201 West Gray, Bldg A

Norman, OK 73069

Please accept this as our formal notice of protest for the adoption of Norman City Center Form Based Code and redevelopment of a parking garage. The proposed new zoning codes, rezoning and redevelopment should not be approved.

My wife and I purchased a home in January of 2015 at 783 Debarr Avenue in order to restore and refurbish for our boys attending the University of Oklahoma. At the time of the purchase the house was a 13 bedroom, dilapidated home where the homeless routinely slept. The home was a complete eyesore to campus corner. Although the property was very expensive for the state of the house it was in a prime location, zoned appropriately for a duplex and had adequate parking. At the time we submitted our proposal to the city they seemed elated to have the 13 bedroom, 2 bathroom location being renovated. I continually got feedback from the previous Holmberg house owners and neighbors at how appreciative they were that the home was being refurbished.

Fast forward to today and now the City of Norman wants to approve a Norman City Center Form based code that caters to a less than 10% ownership in the area that seeks to destroy the value of my families' home and investment. I'm told that over 90% of homes on Debarr Avenue are non-owner occupied and serve the students at the University of Oklahoma. Students want to live in this area, they live there now and want to continue to live in the area. This change to a form based code would be discriminatory towards students and homeowners who want to continue to live in a university setting, want high quality housing, close to campus and close to campus corner. In the case of my home it existed for students when it was originally constructed in the 1930's. It has parking out front (with a curb cut) and alley parking and is zoned for a duplex. I didn't seek to scrape the lot and rebuild something new but instead wanted to preserve the character of the 1930's era home with a large front porch. That was our preference.

FILED IN THE OFFICE
OF THE CITY CLERK

IN 4/3/17

Stephen and Mary Rains

Approving this change in zoning will only serve to ensure that the homes on Debarr never get re-developed and over time will be "just maintained". If by some chance any new "brownstones" are built it will destroy the charm of the existing 1930's homes that still exist in this area and will serve to price all but the very elite out of living in this area. Imagine you are sitting on the front porch of the Holmberg house or my porch across the street and you look to the south and look into a brick wall of a 3 story brownstone that's built up to the sidewalk. Not exactly a streetscape that I'm supporting. If you want to make sure homes in the area get re-developed and maintain the existing charm of the area then set some additional standards that require maintaining the charm and architecture of the existing structure. The proposed form based code will destroy value for the existing owners and drive the students further away from campus. To implement this plan you will have to force out existing property owners and take their existing curb cuts away. Perhaps this is the idea – lets drive the current student population out of the area and then allow for the building of a parking garage in close proximity to campus corner so they can return during class and the weekend and generate revenue for a new parking garage and at the same time drive down values in order to seek the desired outcome for "preferred" developers. This certainly appears to be an effort by a very loud and influential minority to affect changes that seek to cater to a very small segment of the population to further their own personal and financial interests. As Susan Connors stated to me in a conversation on March 17th, "This change is being driven by a very vocal minority". That certainly doesn't sound like a will of the people decision. Let's ask the existing property owners and those that live there now what they want.

Additionally there appears to be some confusion even at the Norman planning department on the ultimate outcome. Two separate scenarios have been shared with me when I've asked the question about my existing home and parking all within the same 12 minute call. The first response when responding to my question regarding my curb cut parking was "could take that away in the future" and "that is not a guarantee forever". Later in the same phone conversation it was stated that implementation of the form based code would "cause your property to become a non-conforming use" and "would not be impacted unless you went to re-develop." Any zoning change to my existing home and current parking would serve to devalue my home. If you want to implement positive change then ask the people who live and own in the area now. Don't ask a small minority who have their own personal and financial interests in mind. This proposed change to zoning would serve to:

- Discriminate towards existing students and their housing choices
- Devalue land and property and the charm of the existing 1930's homes that still exist

Regards,

Rusty and Mary Rains

Rusty Rains
Mary Rains