

From: Sam Reicks <

Date: Jun 23, 2020, 11:23 AM -0500

To: andrew.rivera@austintexas.gov

Subject: Remarks on the rezoning of 5010 & 5102 Heflin lane

The attempt to rezone this land is frustrating on many levels. I would like to speak vehemently against the rezoning of this lot for multiple reasons.

1. District 1 (this district) was specified in the 1928 Master plan as the “Negro District”... Throughout Austins horrible history of racism and redlining, black people were forced into east side neighborhoods, like this one. Now as the east-side including district 1 have become popular, those people who have been forced to live here, are now being forced to leave through gentrification. Building a development such as this one in this community will accelerate the rate of gentrification immensely pushing out more and more people of color who have spent generations building a community here because they weren’t allowed to anywhere else.
2. The rezoning of this lot has been attempted repeatedly in the past. At each attempt the neighborhood has spoken out against the rezoning. The developers are adamant to push this through in spite of the will of the community. The only reason I can understand that they do not stop is that they assume with enough effort and money they can override the will of the community. This decision needs to be made in the interest of the community and not because the applicant is incessant and can afford good lawyers.
3. This neighborhood is NOT in the center of Austin we are a little bit further out and enjoy the space and speed of living in a smaller neighborhood, with the scale of construction they are applying for, we will lose all of our green space and be packed in in a way that does not fit the neighborhood.
4. 2-3 blocks away is Rob-Scott st, where they’ve been working on a housing development for a decade or so. Progress has been slow as there hasn’t been an appetite for the new housing in this neighborhood. On top of that, with the current covid-19 epidemic there are questions about the future interest in dense-fill housing, now above all is not a time when increased density is needed.
5. Fort branch creek has a history of flooding, and many houses near it, including this site itself are in a flood zone. 1 of the biggest things that prevents flooding is the green grass and woods buffer area that surround the creek improving the watersheds ability to absorb water in flood-events. The entirety of these lots sit in this valuable flood-absorption area and are currently full of grassland and trees. Any development on this land will hurt our ability to absorb floodwaters, but a high-density development as they are proposing will exacerbate it entirely, replacing grass and trees with impermeable concrete and condos.

I implore the council to reject this rezoning. It clearly does not fit this community and the developers are trying to buy their way out of that clear fact.

Thank you,
Sam Reicks
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