

EXCERPTS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
COLUMBIA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
701 EAST BROADWAY, COLUMBIA, MO
June 23, 2022

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MS. LOE: Any public comments? If you can come up to the podium. We will need your name and address for the record, sir.

MR. FICK: My name is Tom Fick; I live at 2451 North Slick Rock. I'm, I guess, at this stage and since the important stuff is done, I can say it. The -- I'm a nosey neighbor. Okay? We've lived out there for 20 years, and I'm a little concerned by the comments that were made for the earlier case tonight that there was pretty much a lack of notification or a lack of confirmation of notification, let's say, of people in the area. I notice that Somerset Village is probably being developed by the same people that are developing this, since they have the same name, so I would assume that they have almost carte blanche approval by all of those people that built new houses out there in the last five to seven years. And I guess I'm a little bit surprised that there weren't more of those people here tonight to voice some concerns over this kind of changing the population out there from being a nice, new smaller-homed type subdivision right across the street from this. But I know -- you know, we observed the only sign that we saw was the one sticking up along the road that, again, gave no date or anything as far as when the meetings go. I would just like to suggest that you all develop a procedure where you put dates down on these signs to let people that are affected or are interested know what's going on. You know, what I saw here tonight, I think you all do a wonderful job. You get to the bottom of things; you go through the whole thing as best you can with the information you're given and we respect that and I want to thank you for that. But then we hope that we don't start developing stereotypical neighborhoods where now we're going to put multi-family, lower-income, lower-rent prices, and whatever in areas, and we're starting to see that out in our area from when we bought -- we built out there. All the subdivisions that are going in out in our area are getting smaller and smaller, smaller lots, lower expectations of the owners where the stuff we see on the other sides and the quadrants of this town are the opposite. They're just getting bigger and bigger, and fancier and fancier. So I just caution you or ask that you all consider that in your deliberations in the future, that you try to get some equity around the north and northeast side of town. And we thank you all very much for your work and for serving in your jobs as a community. I wouldn't want it. Thank you.

MS. LOE: Thank you, Mr. Fick, and thank you for the feedback. Any additional comments?

MR. RAUCH: Randall Rauch, Tom's neighbor. And also it just seems to me that a multi-family three-story residence next to Battle High School, it just doesn't seem like it fits. That's kind of a rural area, small homes, single homes, single-family homes, and all of a sudden, we're getting three-story, multi-

family. It doesn't -- it just -- common sense dictates it doesn't fit, in my opinion. And, you know, I mean, we floated a bond, what, and spent \$70 million to put up Battle High School, and then do this. It kind of ruins the area, if you ask me. I mean, Battle High School is a nice high school, And then you've got that little elementary school right next to them. That's a nice area. And then here comes this. It doesn't make sense. Any questions?

MS. LOE: Thank you. Any questions for this speaker? Commissioner Carroll?

MS. CARROLL: If I may, I might suggest that very likely the people living in the multi-family apartment building are going to be people with children and students at Battle High School, and that's what draws them to the area, the desire to attend the new high school that is nice and sought after.

MR. RAUCH: Well, they can still get a single-family home. Why do they -- why build a big three-story multi-family -- you know, that -- you can get a lot of problems with that.

MS. CARROLL: How often do you see single-family homes for sale?

MR. RAUCH: Pardon me?

MS. CARROLL: Do you frequently see single-family homes for sale in the area?

MR. RAUCH: Oh, there's a lot of -- tons of them. You can go to all kinds of vacant lots there in Somerset Village. There are lots there. All kinds of lots.

MS. CARROLL: What kind of -- do you think those might meet affordable housing in a way that would make the new high school accessible?

MR. RAUCH: Well, people -- people buy them, so --

MS. CARROLL: Yeah. Would the new --

MR. RAUCH: -- they must be affordable.

MS. CARROLL: Sorry to interrupt you. Would the new high school be accessible to people from various ranges of income, and is that something that you think would be desirable?

MR. RAUCH: I would think that they could afford it, you know. I mean, you know, you've got to be accountable for your own finances. Is this -- is this a low-income thing? Is this what this is -- public assistance?

MS. CARROLL: I don't think so.

MR. RAUCH: No?

MS. CARROLL: But a range of housing styles leads to a range of housing availability.

MS. LOE: Commissioner MacMann?

MR. MACMANN: I'm going to cede my time to Commissioner Stanton.

MS. LOE: Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: An ideal neighborhood is to assist the different densities, different income levels, and I will say this, personally.

MR. RAUCH : Uh-huh.

MR. STANTON: Mr. and Mrs. Battle were instrumental in the integration of both grace and class in Columbia, Missouri, and they would be very proud to see the different mix of housing, both income and

density, around schools that were named after them. Multi-family does not necessarily mean low income, and also, they will be a prime spot, the multi-family that is proposed here, will be a prime spot for people that are first -- first, second year teachers, people that are staff and support staff, as well as teachers that work at Battle. If I was teacher, especially straight out of college, I can't afford a \$300,000 home, which is probably the average home across there, but I could afford to pay rent here while I got my bank account and took -- and took responsibility for my finances, and live in a -- in a moderately priced rental property while I collected my finances and got my finances together so that I can afford a home maybe of that level or somewhere else. But to make the assumption that the multi-family is for low-income people, even if it was, low to moderate income should not be sanctioned into one place in the community, and it works best when it's spread around and is -- and it is mixed use and mixed income and mixed densities, big homes, little homes, multi-family, all those make a perfect neighborhood. So I supported this. I think it is a great idea. I understand where you're coming from, but I think some of your positions may be misplaced, and I think if I were to summon the spirit of the Battle family, Mr. and Mrs., which are named those two schools that you just discussed are named after, they would probably argue differently. But thank you for your input.

MR. RAUCH: You're welcome. I just still don't think it fits.

MS. LOE: Commissioner Wilson?

MS. WILSON: Thank you. Similarly, I echo the sentiments of Mr. Stanton. I did not know Mrs. Battle, but I knew Mr. Battle well, and he was a desegregationist. And so, therefore, I think that it would be his dream and his hope that there would be the opportunity to have diversity in an area of a school that is named for his wife and for himself. And I also agree that, you know, being a single mom of divorce, I had to file bankruptcy after our divorce, doesn't mean that I'm not a good person. I'm an attorney.

MR. RAUCH: Uh-huh.

MS. WILSON: It doesn't mean that, you know, I -- sometimes you just fall on hard times, and it's a difficult time. And at that time, I wasn't able to buy a single-family home, so an apartment would have been what I would have needed. So to judge people in that position so harshly is really not fair. And everybody -- I, you know, have a daughter. She's 19. Fortunately, I've been able to buy a house and now my 19-year-old daughter has bought a house, so you can understand that given the opportunity, people can, you know, do better in life. They can change, but they just need that opportunity. When I was -- you know, when I had her in my home, I wanted to safe place to live. I didn't want to have to live in a bad neighborhood because I filed bankruptcy. I wanted a safe place for myself and my child. So I understand where you're coming from. It's not lost on me. I get it. I just want to also make sure that we understand that everybody is not on the same playing field, and just because they use the term affordable housing does not mean that that's bring degenerates into the area.

MR. RAUCH: What I'm just saying is the crime -- crime, you know --

MS. LOE: Actually, the term affordable housing is being replaced by the term workforce housing because this is the housing that we need that -- for our police and firefighters and teachers, and people in

jobs that can't afford the home prices that are being asked for at this time. So you may find that these are actually the very neighbors you want to have in your community.

MR. RAUCH: Okay. Well, thank you.

MS. LOE: Thank you. Any additional comments?

MS. RAUCH: (Inaudible.)

MS. LOE: Linda, I'm sorry. We need to have you -- at the microphone.

MS. RAUCH: Linda Rauch, and I live at 8020 Payette Drive. We're just east of Battle High School. I think where my husband is coming from is, we were sent this by one of the people in our neighborhood, Cooper Creek neighborhood, and we didn't even know about it until she sent this to us. And what it says here, and this is what he's talking about, I'm sure, it says this is what this is about, this whole Somerset Village thing is, it says right here, the developer has indicated that they plan to place 48 units. These units will be targeted to lower-income tenants, and that's -- that's what we're concerned about. Is that -- that's where -- that's where Randy is coming from with this, I'm sure, and that is what we're concerned about is mixing more expensive homes with less expensive homes, lower income homes that people would -- would do. That's -- and I know what you're saying, too, and I appreciate that so much. But that -- this is -- when we read this notice, that's the first thing that we thought about when we read this.

MS. LOE: And I would just like to reiterate that lower income includes our school teachers, nurse's aides. That is who we're trying to find affordable --

MS. RAUCH: As well as others. As well as others.

MS. LOE: Correct.

MS. RAUCH: Yeah.

MS. WILSON: I have a question.

MS. LOE: Commissioner Kimbell, first did you have a comment?

MS. KIMBELL: I would say I would be in agreement. It would be nice to have single-family development in that area. It would be great to have it throughout community -- throughout our community, but we're just not at a point that we can do that. We don't have the workforce, and that's a great term. We don't have the workforce that can afford to do that yet. I think there's a stagnation, there's a bad reputation to the word affordable housing. I think that needs to be reframed.

MS. RAUCH: Well, and I agree with you. I do agree with you because with this notice that we -- that we got, and that we read, I mean, that's the thing that you think about, you know, where people don't want to take care of their homes, their yards, that sort of thing, and that's -- that's our concern.

MS. LOE: Commissioner Wilson?

MS. WILSON: I would like to ask what is your -- because, you know, without a baseline, everything is relative. What is your definition of lower income?

MS. RAUCH: I really have no definition of lower income. My concern is you can have a very low income as long as you keep- your property up, maintained. That's -- that's my concern. That's what

we're concerned about. Because it reflects on our property out in that same neighborhood.]

MS. WILSON: That's fair.

MS. RAUCH: I mean, you can make \$200 a week, but you can still keep your home really nice and your property really nice, and that's -- that's -- that's our concern.

MS. WILSON: Maybe I should follow up. When you said that's what it makes you think of, what did it make you think of -- the term lower income?

MS. RAUCH: People that -- that can afford those places, but those high rises or multi-family places to live, but they don't keep -- keep their yards or their homes nice. And I think that does something to the rest of the neighborhood. I mean, it affects your property, as well. That's how I feel about it.

MS. LOE: Any additional questions for this speaker? Commissioner Placier?

MS. PLACIER: Yeah. I assume that if you do notice anything about this new development that concerns you, that you can go to the property manager or somebody like that. I mean, it -- this is not a high-rise. Three stories is not a high-rise.

MS. RAUCH: Right.

MS. PLACIER: This is not Cabrini-Green or something like that.

MS. RAUCH: Right. Right.

MS. PLACIER: This is affordable apartments for probably working people or people who may be seniors or anybody else with -- with reduced income, it looks like will be -- a certain number will be designated for that. I -- I just wanted to go back to something that the first speaker on this said, and that was about your area of the north side being targeted for this kind of a multi-family development. I do think there's something in that. One member of City Council used to propose something called inclusionary zoning where these mega-mansion areas -- I should think of a better -- very affluent areas would also have to have some areas of multi-family or smaller homes included. And I do think there is an issue of when we -- when we decide to concentrate affordable housing in certain areas. And it's good if you are noticing that and bringing it to our attention or to the City's attention. There are things that we could do about that that would make that more equitable. I don't know your area well enough to know that that is happening. You would have to present a lot of evidence to show that that is happening if that's your perception.

MS. RAUCH: Yeah. Uh-huh. yeah.

MS. PLACIER: But we do need to look at that. We look at how do we make all areas more inclusive.

MS. RAUCH: Okay.

MS. LOE: Any additional questions for this speaker? Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: Battle High School is one of the most high-tech modern high schools in the state. Number two, I'm assuming you live in those houses around those -- (inaudible). Right? And --

MR. KELLEY: Mr. Stanton, could you just speak into your microphone.

MR. STANTON: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Let me get to the point. I was raised in the military --

military kid. My father was an officer, and the military has a great way of integrating neighborhoods. So even though my father was major, which is not too far from a general, I lived around privates, enlisted families, as well as generals. The reason why that is and the reason why neighborhoods work great that way is because if I'm paying -- and I'm going to back up. The applicant didn't say these were low-income subsidized homes. What he said they were affordable, which means that they probably fit within the mean income of this -- of this community, which is around \$50,000-something, and they're probably running around \$800 to \$900 a month, probably.

MS. RAUCH: Okay. But this did say -- that's what -- that's what --

MR. STANTON: Well, I know what they said. I'm telling you what the reality and I'm telling you what the applicant said, and he didn't say this was subsidized, low income. This is not Housing Authority or any of that. This is not HUD funded.

MS. RAUCH: I wonder who -- I wonder who wrote this that I was reading to you?

MR. STANTON: I know. But what I'm telling you is that the applicant didn't present that kind of information. So my point is this. My point is this.

MS. RAUCH: Okay.

MR. STANTON: As an African American, I felt like I heard a lot of profiled and a lot of stigmatized, stereotypical things about people that make a certain amount of money that are unable to take care of their homes or whatnot. Number one, this is multi-family, so I don't have a yard. That's number one. Number two, it's all upon the landlord who built these to put people in there that are responsible and can pay rent. If you can't pay rent, you won't be there. I am predicting, and don't have any facts, but I'm predicting that these multi-family homes built here are for working class people, people that would work at Battle, which probably has an extensive staff. And I bet you before they were even finished being built, I'll bet you they're full of teachers and technical support staff from Battle High School. I would almost bet a paycheck on it. But we have to really be careful how we stigmatize because for real, what I was hearing was really kind of -- ooh, it was kind of scary.

MS. RAUCH: No. I didn't --

MR. STANTON: -- because what you're saying to me is, okay, if I can't afford where you stay, I don't have a right to stay where you stay. I'm not going to disclose my income, but that's how I took it.

MS. RAUCH: Well, I apologize if you think that that's what I was saying. I don't care if you're African American or if you're Caucasian. As long as you maintain your property, that is my concern. That's what I was talking about. And I don't know if people will in that kind of a setting.

MS. LOE: Any additional questions? Commissioner MacMann?

MR. MACMANN: Thank you. Just a statement. I live in a neighborhood with a medium income. I just did the numbers on this, Anthony. These -- Mr. Stanton. Commissioner Stanton. Pardon the familiarity. The target income in that area, he said less than median, is probably going to be in the \$48,000 range, \$50,000. So the rents could be as high as \$1,200. My neighborhood? My neighborhood, one mile over there, the rents are \$700 to \$950. We pick up our trash. We mow our lawns. The

individuals who move in there will not be responsible for either one of those things. I would suggest if you all have issues, if those things do occur, there will be a company that owns that -- a management company, that you address those concerns to them.

MS. RAUCH: We will. We will. We will do that.

MR. MACMANN: Thank you for your time.

MS. LOE: Commissioner Wilson?

MS. WILSON: I definitely appreciate where you're coming from, and I hear you. And it sounds to me that your concern is an issue of character. It should be noted that character and integrity is not an issue of income. It's just an --

MS. RAUCH: I agree with you, absolutely. Absolutely.

MS. WILSON: Yeah. It's a human trait. Right?

MS. RAUCH: Yeah. Uh-huh.

MS. WILSON: And so we can have people who have lots of money, but bad character and no integrity.

MS. RAUCH: Absolutely.

MS. WILSON: And we can have people who have no money, but they have great integrity, and they care.

MS. RAUCH: Exactly, yes.

MS. WILSON: So keep that in mind.

MS. RAUCH: I will. Thank you very much.

MS. LOE: Commissioner Kimbell?

MS. KIMBELL: I just wanted to say thank you for coming forth and sharing your thoughts with us and your concerns.

MS. RAUCH: Thank you.

MS. LOE: Any additional comments? If there are none, I'll close public comments.