Resident's response to Rezoning 2501 Eastwood Dr

Bruce Jackson <bruce@exisjaxn.com>
To: Rusty.Palmer@como.gov

Wed, Jan 17, 2024 at 4:05 AM

To: Russell Palmer:

From: Bruce Jackson
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RE: 2501 Eastwood Dr. Rezoning Request by In2Action

Mr. Palmer:

Thank you for taking the time to respond via email to our questions concerning the rezoning request by In2Action for the property on 2501 Eastwood Dr. I stand in opposition to this request.

I was first exposed to In2Action when they made a rezoning request to turn in a group of houses on Eastwood into dormitories for their parolee project. Their reason for their request: they needed a laundromat in each building. That the rezoning would significantly raise the value of their properties was never a part of the conversation. Even the mayor and our ward councilman were dubious of their claims and voted against their proposal.

In the previous planning/zoning commission meeting I found In2Action vague and not forthcoming with the truth - even blatantly dishonest. They claimed that their plan was to establish half-way houses scattered throughout Columbia so that their ex-inmates could become "part of the local neighborhood." It was clear to all the neighbors in opposition to their request that this was a blatant lie.

In2Action's dishonest approach to informing the residents of their latest intentions has not changed since that first rezoning hearing. I first noticed their intent when a sign was placed on the corner with nothing but a phone number for information. They then sent out a brochure about their rezoning request. As with my previous interaction with In2Action, this slick handout is, at best, misrepresentative of their intentions to the point of dishonesty. I would like to respond to each of their points:

THE FACTS that In2Action commits to:

- *Rezoning abandoned house…* Really? Abandoned? It appeared to me that 2501 Eastwood was sold on the real estate market. Our information indicates that they paid somewhere in the neighborhood of $160,000 for the property. A recent property tax evaluation of my home which is on a much larger property, has a fully fenced back yard, is landscaped by a Master Gardener, and has recently been remodeled from roof to basement was not rated at that high a figure. It appears to me that In2Action has deep pockets and is willing to outbid potential new families in order to continue their plans to take over the neighborhood.
- *Building a new group home…* Another apartment complex is not what this neighborhood needs. Having yet another half-way house with its revolving door will do

nothing but continue to break up a pleasant mixed-race family neighborhood where there are no sidewalks. Further, some of the residents have been told that they plan to establish a rec-center on that property. Did they tell you that? Do they actually believe that local parents will send their young children to a rec-center built for parolees? Their activities rep told me that it would be open to all the local residents. What is the real story here?

- *Raising property values…* I am sorry, but I simply do not believe this. Are they seriously suggesting that when I sell my home, I will receive a better price for it because it is in the middle of a major parolee colony? Really? Again, I believe this evidence of their dishonesty towards the neighborhood residents.
- *Providing off street parking…* This is a problem of their own creation that we suffer all the time – especially on Sylvan. Where are they going to get the space for a parking lot? Are they seriously suggesting that a parking lot will raise the value of my property? Again, this dishonest approach to the neighbors does not surprise us given their propensity to lie.
- *Continue to reduce crime and drug…* At the previous meeting my neighbors complained that they had to pick up beer cans and liquor bottles all the time. I have found that their ex-inmates have no interest in improving the neighborhood other than a place to serve their brief transition. This argument is a tired and outdated sales pitch that is, again, dishonest.
- *Continue to monitor inmate behavior…* This is their problem, not mine.

In2Action will NOT:

- *Decrease property values…* I am sorry, but this is dishonest on so many levels. Do they really believe that having the entire neighborhood of half-way facilities will increase my property value? Do they think that their willingness to overpay on the value of a trashy house will help me sell my much more valuable home? Really? This claim is not only dishonest, it is laughable.
- *Increase crime…* Somehow, they believe that if they continue to suffer us with repetitions of this trope will make it so. Do they really believe that the many apartment complexes surrounding this neighborhood will be made safer because of their extensive presence here? Really? What horse manure!
- *Neglect neighborhood concerns…* We have not found these folks to be particularly good neighbors. As a professional musician I have offered a number of their parolee's opportunities to play music with a real professional with absolutely no success. Never to my knowledge has their transient population ever indicated any interest in the locals.
- *Build apartments…* Excuse me but I see little difference between their proposed housing for a multi-tenant transient population any different from any other local apartment complexes. They have already filled Eastwood Dr. with their "non-apartments." What are we – idiots?
- *Begin serving sex offenders…* That is small comfort to the parents of small children who have lived here for a long time. Their claim that they will self-monitor is no assurance to parents who have very young children waiting on the corner for the school bus every day.

Russell, it greatly concerns me that you state in your post that you are "in support of the rezoning request." It is clear to most of the long-term residents that In2Action is not only well funded, but well prepared to assuage any input we might have in this matter. The manipulative methods In2Action has employed in this situation continues to indicate that they are not operating in good faith in relation to the local residents as their talking points are largely based on lies.

On their brochure I notice that they specifically respond to the concerns we raised earlier in front of the city council to no effect. Only the mayor and our councilman objected to their assertions. At that meeting it was clear that they manipulated some of the council members who were themselves relieved that the Sylvan/Greenwood neighborhood will be the only location for a parolee transition operation in Columbia. After all, why would other councilpersons want half-way facilities in their own neighborhoods?

In their dealings with this resident, it is my testimony that they are poor neighbors, have a much larger agenda than they will admit to, and are willing to manipulate and lie to have their way. I know that Christians claim to hold the high road with folks, but these days honesty appears to be in short supply. This is the primary reason I am not in favor of this rezoning request as they continue to buy up the local properties.

Sincerely,
Bruce Jackson