

Re council meetings regarding zoning changes:

I am writing this letter regarding changes the city is considering for the Irvine/Forksedale and Colletville areas of Merritt. Even though I do not reside in either area, I have concerns about the direction the city seems to be moving in. People say you need to do your due diligence and know the zoning before buying in an area but, I wonder what good that does when the council can just decide to change it?

Regarding the Irvine/Forksedale area, the property in question is designated for single family homes. However, a developer buys up the land and then decides he can't make enough money by building that type of housing and therefore wants the zoning changed. This seems to be an all too common theme in Merritt these days. The people living in this area are expected to just go along with it but the developer, who knew what the land was designated for when he purchased it, has the backing of the city - or at least appears to. At the council meeting where the zoning was discussed (in December) council agreed to ask the developer to reduce the density somewhat but not without expressing concerns that the developer would walk away if they did that. That appeared to me (I'm not saying this is true - I'm just saying it appeared) that a decision had already been made to agree to the zoning changes. Please have the fortitude to do the right thing and advocate for the people of Merritt who elected you.

Regarding the Colletville development, my concern is with the trailer park which is apparently going to be for "seniors only". It will be across from an Elementary school and nowhere near grocery stores, recreational facilities or health care. I'm not sure a lot of seniors want to give up their homes to move into a trailer. At the council meeting in December, these were referred to as "high end trailers" so perhaps that needs some clarification as to exactly what it will look like. We definitely need more senior housing in Merritt but I am not sure this is it. I think more complexes such as at Maxwell Ave and McCallum Gardens is what seniors are looking for or more smaller, one level homes. Perhaps some of these apartment buildings that developers want to build would be better suited for "seniors only".

I also have concerns that one councilor who is a real estate agent here in town is allowed to vote on these issues. It seems like a conflict of interest to me and I feel he should be recusing himself as should any councilor who has something to gain from any decision council makes.

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