

Don't Make Royal Oak the New San Francisco

Response to a Public Comment at the May 8, 2023 Royal Oak City Commission Meeting

As Royal Oakers, we were very concerned to hear a public comment at the May 8, 2023, city commission meeting regarding the proposed conditional rezoning at the former convalescent home at 718 W. 4th Street which would have 25 micro-sized apartments inserted into a neighborhood zoned single family.

The speaker said, "Zoning laws have in fact been characterized as the replacement for racial redlining." This led us to believe that she is accusing the neighbors who oppose the project of being racist. Racism is abhorrent and won't be tolerated. Simply being opposed to an egregious apartment project that does not follow the Master Plan and has literally a dozen deviations from zoning and ordinances isn't racism.

To be clear:

- The proposed apartment project is NOT affordable housing.
- It is NOT designated senior housing.
- It is NOT a LEED-certified environmental success story.

It is curious that the speaker mentioned that she lives approximately two miles away from the apartment project proposal she so strongly supports. Is it easier for her to support it because it isn't in her backyard? It also is curious that that the speaker commented at a commission meeting for which the project wasn't on the agenda. Is she unaware of the countless voices in opposition from the neighbors during previous meetings regarding this proposal. The neighbors spoke of opposition to the project due to legitimate parking concerns, cited documentation of the current owner's environmental violations from EGLE, previous instances of property neglect by the current owner, further evidence that this isn't the right project for the property and suggestions for more appropriate projects including less-dense townhomes. Anyone unfamiliar with the property can visit the site themselves to witness the blight Royal Oak has allowed to occur to justify their "something is better than nothing" argument in support of the project.

We love our Royal Oak neighborhoods with their green yards, well-maintained character-filled homes and tree-lined streets. Others are lucky enough to now call Royal Oak home after escaping overcrowded cities like San Francisco. Let's continue to protect Royal Oak neighborhoods.