

NORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING GROUP

I first want to thank each of you for the thoughtful and interesting discussions. All of us are grateful and pleased to live in a community with dedicated individuals.

The following are my comments on the various discussed issues.

1. One unexpected result of the Normal Plan has been the bonding of our neighborhoods: Chautauqua Trace, Ashland Meadows, MPE, Wingspread, and the residents of the Dollarhide, Clay and Normal St. locations. We are a community of homeowners, taxpayers, and voters that have one or two story homes, and would like to see similar homes in the new Plan. Please, like for like.
2. During the June 19th meeting, someone commented that it's hard to know what families in the future will want in terms of housing and density. One thing I've learned by attending Meadowbrook Park HOA meetings is that young families with small children want space to play and garden. I've listened to parents discuss the hazards of their kids playing in streets, and they don't know where to place athletic equipment such as moveable basketball hoops. When suggested that their children could use parks or playgrounds, all the parents said no, that they wanted the kids supervised and in their neighborhoods. All the existing communities were built without consideration for the young families.
In MPE, we have seen families leave to buy in Oak Knoll or up behind Bi-Mart where they have a yard for play.
3. I support reserving a zone for a community garden, bee hives, and a place for hoops and other equipment for children. You have the opportunity to have at least one family friendly neighborhood on this side of Ashland. The housing density of our communities did not take the needs of families into consideration, and they consequently move.
4. A centralized community gathering place would help visually transition the area from the railroad crossing to East Main and the agricultural and farming properties.
5. Please consider approving the parcels of land for single family homes, cottages, and cluster homes. High density benefits none of the residents, and should be reserved for semi-commercial areas, and land closer to the city center. High density is certainly fitting along Ashland Street proper, the railroad district, out North Main, and downtown.
6. I understand the grid proposal for roads, but wherever there are straight lines, drivers speed. All the existing neighborhoods have curved roads that slow traffic and protect small children and pets. Grids are convenient for drivers, but that's the only user that benefits.
7. Curved roads promote the feeling of connectivity among the neighbors, and provide for a quieter neighborhood. I honestly think that MPE, where I live, would have had child fatalities without the curves to alert drivers to kids.
8. Those of us who own homes facing Cemetery Creek or Clay Creek paid more for those view lots, green belts and wildlife corridors. The Normal Plan encompasses both wetland areas, and hopefully the roads will not be placed on the creek sides, but instead allow residents to have their homes facing these areas.

*Thank you
Jan Vidmar
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