

Developer's Council Update

Housing & Zoning Symposium

On October 1, 2021, the Developers Council, in conjunction with the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at CSU, hosted a Housing & Zoning Symposium focused on Cuyahoga County.

Speakers included August Fluker from Fluker Consulting LLC, Andrew Gotlieb



Aaron Evenchik, Esq.
Hahn Loeser & Parks
Developers Council
Chairman

of Keystate Homes, Bo Knez of Knez Homes, Allison Lukacsy-Love from the City of Euclid, Kyle Reisz from the City of North Royalton, Professor Robert Simons from CSU, Professor Alan Weinstein from CSU, and Aaron Evenchik of Hahn Loeser & Parks as moderator. It was an excellent mix of builder/developers, city planners and development directors, and academics and lawyers.

Participants shared their current perspectives, challenges, and suggestions on land use, zoning processes, and equitable distribution of tax incentives. Nearly 50 people were in attendance.

Builders and city representatives explored how form-based zoning codes can transform subjective enforcement into more uniform and objective approval criteria. Participants shared that form-based zoning results in a better equity outcome, relative to redlining and other historical impacts to minority populations.

Several audience members asked questions about how tax abatements can have an unintended but detrimental impact on long term residents, causing increased property values (and increased taxes) to adjacent (often minority) property owners who cannot afford the property tax increases. Ideas were shared including extending the tax abatements to adjacent properties to help mitigate and reduce suddenly inflated taxes.

Panel members also focused on the City of Cleveland zoning code, including its age (from 1919, last updated in 1948) and the need for a complete re-write. Members complained that the different city wards and community development corporates have inconsistent processes and policies, slowing development.

Looking county-wide, the panel focused on the often competing municipalities who develop to the detriment of neighboring cities, competing for the same revenue by offering incentives. All agreed a regional approach is necessary, but unlikely given the required compromises.

Finally, all shared best practice tips to obtain plan approvals, avoid litigation, and satisfy neighbor concerns. We look forward to the next Developers Council event.

Aaron Evenchik is the chair of the HBA Developers Council and can be reached at 216-274-2450 and aevenchik@hahnlaw.com.

Interested in joining the Developers Council? Contact Stephanie at the HBA at sfrench@hbacleveland.com to join the mailing list.



HBA Past President, Bo Knez of Knez Homes, addresses the audience.



The sold out crowd takes notes as panelists discuss zoning issues in Cuyahoga County.



Architect August Fluker of Fluker Consulting presents to attendees.