

Council & Committee Corner



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Developer's Council News

Best Practices with NIMBYs

An acquaintance of mine posted on Facebook her objection to a HBA-member proposed subdivision. She did not like the clustered nature of the development, calling it a "nightmare." Proposed lots were under an acre, while her adjacent lot was 2.5 acres.

She failed to mention in any of her posts the blocks of land slated for conservation and preservation. Instead, she posted several times about City hearings, objections to the proposal, and her desire to "keep her city beautiful". She shared online petitions against the request, published letters opposing the development in her local newspaper, called the proposal "cookie cutter homes on postage stamp-sized lots," and complained it would increase traffic and decrease property values. These are typical NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard") complaints.

The one-sided view adopted by many locals makes it clear that developers must better explain the benefits of cluster

development. The proposed development previously mentioned contains large blocks of land around the perimeter and where wetlands are located; presumably, those blocks will remain untouched, serve as an aesthetic buffer to adjacent neighbors, and preserve trees in their original state - benefits to all. Had the property alternatively been developed as large lots, all of that conserved land could be cleared.

Additional benefits of cluster development include reduced impervious surfaces (even with more units), reduced amount of street for the City to maintain and plow, and increased economic diversity into places with more expensive homes.

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At this year's HBA Education Conference on October 24-25, the Developers Council will present a seminar on best practices to manage NIMBYs, including the use of social media to reduce resistance to site plan approval.