

From: Jean Henry
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2022 1:46 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Subject: work plan

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I understand you are making your work plan for the upcoming year at tonight's meeting. I know and respect many of you and know the skill sets/expertise all of you bring to bear. I really trust your ability to navigate the tough choices ahead. I'm writing simply to encourage you to push forward to the city we need to be for the health and happiness of current and future generations. I do not see these goals as mutually contradictory.

I love this city and yet, like so many, I feel it drifting away from what drew me to it 35 years ago and what drove me to return to it after having my first child. Unlike many, however, I do not blame 'growth' for the changes I dislike. My people-- by which I mean creative, active, engaged local or MI raised folks who care about where they live and invest their hearts and minds into making those places more lively and inspiring and accessible for all-- 'My people' are leaving the city. Few of my creative friends live here any more. If they do, they are living in family homes, aka living here due to inherited wealth, even while many, like me, have incomes well below the average, often by choice. That's not a sustainable model. Nor does it allow for new energy.

How does one choose to have a below average income in Ann Arbor? Simply, by working in any caring or service capacity that is accessible to all.

Please ask yourselves, what happens to a city that excludes these people?

So the Ann Arbor I want to return to is one which welcomes, cherishes and affordably houses and otherwise accommodates those people ('my people' in the case of this city and my decades here) who are the heart (aka the REAL missing middle) of any city. My kids can live here as adults because I own my home, but it's unlikely they will want to, because no matter what profession they pursue, no one really wants to live in a 'donut city' in which the heart has been cut out.

What happens to a city that is no longer attractive to the kids who were raised there?

- We need to make an accessible city with many kinds of housing in many places at many prices.
- We need to build for a future mostly without cars in urban areas.
- We need to fill the spaces that accommodate cars with people, activity, and liveliness. And housing.
- We need to allow people to form families and live in one dwelling in as many ways as they see fit. (The 4 or more unrelated rule is prejudicial, inequitable and an embarrassment)
- We need to apply an equity lens to every decision.
- We need to apply a sustainability lens to every decision.
- We need to apply an abundance mentality to planning, because big goals like equity and sustainability do not exist in opposition to one another. They support each other.
- We need to stop catering to fear mongers and naysayers who are consistently the loudest people in the room at any given political meeting. Your job is to serve everyone.

- We need to stop applying suburban ordinance standards to urban environments. All one has to do is look at our near downtown neighborhoods, which everyone prizes and one can see they are composed of 'non-conforming' structures and uses (the few of which remain) on non-conforming lots.

How much easier could your work be if the ordinances matched the existing built environment and desired future built environment?

So that's the very personal mandate I ask of you. Make the ordinances match the vision, instead of trying to cobble together progress from a regressive set of ordinances and codes.

Pardon my currently covid-addled brain and my sentimental heart for presenting your to-do list in such broad-stroke terms, but I want you to know this work really, really matters in broad stroke terms.

Please go big this year, go growth, go sustainable, center the future city and the future well being of our city and its people.

Thanks so much for your hard work and the forethought, expertise and heart you bring to it. I truly appreciate it.

Onward,
Jean Henry