

Subject: REVISED: Document for this evening's meeting (April 1 2025)
Attachments: (revised) Rob Russell April 1 commission meeting comments.pdf

From: Rob Russell
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:50 AM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Subject: REVISED: Document for this evening's meeting (April 1 2025)

I'm so sorry, I found a factual error in my letter. Can this replace it please?

On Tue, Apr 1, 2025 at 11:27 AM Rob Russell wrote:

Thanks!

Should be a good one tonight, huh?

Rob

My name is Rob Russell. I live at 2004 Crestland St.

Let me preface my comments by echoing many peoples' sentiment: *I am not opposed to increasing density and walkability in Ann Arbor.*

Earlier I learned of an article by our own Councilmember Disch defending the Comprehensive Plan, and I can see where she is trying to convince us to put down our pitchforks and torches, but I still do not agree with her conclusions and I would like to address some of her points right now.

"The Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning ordinance," she says, which we have been reminded of repeatedly. NO, it is not. It is as close to actual ordinance as we will get at this stage, and it will contain suggestions which I have been told are by and large adopted just as recommended. In fact, the entire POINT of the City Council asking a Planning Commission for a Plan is to generate something detailed enough to write ordinances. What we see is what we'll get.

Councilmember Disch included references to articles that suggest the Plan "could end single-family zoning," or embraces "profit-driven development" or will sacrifice the city's tree canopy. She dismissively responds, "These are fear-inducing messages." I actually WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE with that statement - because this plan is terrifying not just to me, but to hundreds of us who have learned about it, having never read these articles. Fear is, in my opinion, *the proper response.*

She notes that rental costs in Ann Arbor are steadily higher than the state average, and climbing. Coincidentally the university's enrollment has increased by 20-30%, with a corresponding demand for student rentals. I hold that allowing for more student rentals will NOT help lower costs in any way shape or form. In fact human greed tells me it will be the opposite.

Moreover, time and time again the University has demonstrated it's an entity unto itself. It demands much from the city with little in return. Let the U account for its own students, or pare back its numbers. We don't need to create any more cash grab opportunities for investment bankers to accommodate this ravenous beast.

Finally COUNCILMEMBER DISCH HERSELF advises "not to equate density with affordability," and the "most effective way to create affordability... is to build it steadily, over time." Spontaneously POOFing our residential areas into a form-based, unrestricted-unit free-for-all is the opposite of "steadily over time." Even the successful Minneapolis study she quotes started pre-pandemic and extends in stages through 2040.

I hope that the vigor with which your community is reacting to this plan will give you all pause. You say you welcome our feedback, I expect you all to show us that includes not just sitting and listening to it, but also incorporating it.

Thank you.