

Fields, Debbie

From: Nicholas Davies <nbdavies@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 23, 2023 5:30 PM
To: All Alders
Subject: No on 78322 - Employment zones can be for housing too

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Dear alders,

Item 78322 has been narrowed to only carve out an exception to the two-story requirement for community service organizations when the underlying zone is Employment.

This item itself was originally put forward on behalf of a particular organization's plans for a particular site, but it is also a change to city-wide zoning requirements. Or at least parts of the city adjacent to high-frequency transit. Changing overall city policy, consequences be damned, for the sake of one favorite organization is...well...favoritism. But let's set that aside.

What I really take issue with is the justification for making this change apply only to Employment-zoned properties:

"Employment Districts are not where the City is focusing housing development."

This is factually incorrect, or at the very least, an unqualified generalization. Last week I attended a public meeting for 526 Pinney Street. The developers are proposing a mixed use building, mostly housing plus ground floor commercial space.

This is pretty much the only housing development project underway here in Eastmorland, and guess what the zoning code for the property is? Yes. It's Employment, and the mixed use building being proposed is a permitted use in the Employment zone.

So the claim that Employment isn't a zoning district where housing can be built is false. That means the claim that we won't be missing out on opportunities for housing by allowing some property owners to build single-story facilities on these properties is also false.

The Transit Overlay District exists for a reason, to make sure that land along transit corridors with high frequency gets well-used. We should not be handing exceptions to the rules out like candy just because complying with the rules is--bwah!--hard. We should certainly not be codifying those exceptions into city ordinance so that others (who might *not* be our favorites) can take advantage of them without even asking.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
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