

From: Candace Bonner [<mailto:candace.bonner@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2015 2:52 PM
To: Andreades, Debra
Subject: LU 15-0017

EXHIBIT G-3
LU 15-0017

I did read the staff report as you suggested, but I am not sure I digested all the details. Also as you suggested, I wrote the comments below to email to you. I would like to be notified about the next hearing on this, as I probably will not be able to attend the Monday hearing. Thank you for your help,
Candace

From:
Candace Bonner
Owner of 16560 SW Maple Circle

Lake Oswego Planning Department
Iris McCaleb
Debra Andreades

RE: Proposed amendment LU 15-0017 regarding substandard lots

I am concerned about the effect of the proposed amendment on the value of my home at 16560 SW Maple Circle. I do not remember whether I was aware that it is on a substandard lot when I bought my home in 1991.

My home is a 1930 summer cottage. I bought it because I like old houses with character. It has had aging problems, and I have had to do a lot of work on it to keep it in good condition. I raised my children there, and when they were out of the home, I moved to Corbett and rented out the house (at a loss, due to ongoing mortgage payments) as it is too big for me as a single person.

I did not sell the house for two reasons: First, because it is intended to go to my daughter, so her family will never have to have the experience I had growing up, always moving from one rental house to another. Second, because I feared that the house would end up in the hands of someone who would tear it down and build yet another big new house, as has happened repeatedly with the older homes on Maple Circle. I love my house. The plan and hope is for my daughter to move back in to start her family when she is ready. If she and her husband find their jobs cause them to settle somewhere else, the plan is for her to sell the house and use the proceeds to buy a house where they need to settle. The proposed amendment will greatly reduce the value of this home, and limit the second option.

Buying a house was a very big deal for me, as my mother was never able to buy a home for us. I do not understand how the City can legally change the status and value of my home. The lot was defined as a legal lot when I bought the house. I do not own contiguous lots, or any other Lake Oswego property. I cannot do a property line adjustment. There is a wonderful big basement for storage, but no garage, just a single car carport. It does not seem either just or appropriate to betray the homeowner who bought a house in good faith that both house and lot would remain as legal as the day it was purchased.

Another attraction to buying this home in 1991, was the charming neighborhood, with charming older Lake cottages across the street on the waterfront. Since I bought my house, much of the character of the neighborhood has been destroyed. The charming cottages, a beautiful old willow tree, much has been bulldozed to make way for very expensive and very large homes. Overdevelopment on undersized lots has not been the cause of loss of neighborhood character, but filling the big lots with huge homes without any history or character has. I do not see how this amendment would prevent loss of the charm and character of older neighborhoods. Wealthy new owners are just as likely or more likely to bulldoze the smaller and older Lake Oswego homes on big lots as on small ones, and to fill any space to the maximum— and gain exemptions and variances to make sure each lot is filled with the maximum square footage of new home. It seems every new home on our street gets permission to come closer than the standard distance from the property lines. Focusing on the small lots in terms of preserving neighborhood character seems to discriminate against the less wealthy homeowners.

My home is a major lifetime investment for me. Perhaps smaller lots should not have been permitted in the first place. That does not make it acceptable to destroy an existing home's value as an afterthought. If my daughter is able to settle here, the house will not be torn down and replaced unless, as a 1930 house, it finally is no longer possible to keep it in good condition. However, if she needs to sell it to buy a home elsewhere, the amendment will markedly decrease the value of the home and her choices for buying another home.

If the Planning Commission's goal is to preserve the character and charm of Lake Oswego neighborhoods, the focus should be on that goal as it applies to all lot sizes. It is inappropriate to discriminate against those of us who purchased homes in good faith on smaller lots, not having any idea that the lot size might ever be the subject of discriminatory ordinances.

Thank you for your consideration,
Candace Bonner