CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES
May 4, 2021
The City Council met this date in a regular session, via Zoom, which was available to the public via teleconference, at 7:31 pm.

Present at Roll Call:
- Mayor Gerry Welch
- Councilmember Laura Arnold
- Councilmember Pam Bliss
- Councilmember David Franklin
- Councilmember Emerson Smith
- Councilmember Karen D. Alexander
- Councilmember Sarah Richardson

A quorum was present.

Also present:
- Dr. Marie Peoples, City Manager
- Mr. Neil Bruntrager, City Attorney
- Ms. Katie Nakazono, City Clerk

REMARKS OF VISITORS
Farrell Carfield, representative of the Alliance for Interracial Dignity and the Culture of Inclusion and Housing Team, read a statement supporting Ordinance #9145. (Exhibit A)

The Deputy City Clerk and City Clerk read submitted Remarks of Visitor comments received by 4 p.m. on May 4, 2021, into the record (Exhibit B). Submissions were received from:

(Exhibit B)
- Norma Rufkar
- Lisa Mooney
- Pat Benefield
- Kerry DiGregorio
- Carl Valle
- Gavin Ackermann
- Steve and Michelle Hieger
- Katie Niesen Cook
- Jenny Fagan
- Andy Hermann
- Betsy Zorumski
- Leland and Cheryl Curtis
May 4, 2021

- Mary and Bill Neumann
- Tess Thompson
- Linda and David Yates
- Alex Horsfield
- Gayla Hannon
- Jim and Mary Struckel
- Wendell Dodson
- Perrin and Alice Stifel
- Mari Fahrner
- Michael Slusher
- Paul Mayer
- JC Bates
- Steve Braun
- Linda McFarlane
- Joe Grasso
- Thomas L. Weaver
- Alexandra Guillossou
- Dan and Nancy Traum
- Margie Diebel
- Mike Mantia
- James Cunningham
- Richard C. Peterson
- Pat Benefield
- Bruce Eckhardt
- Kathleen Hanrahan
- Kenn Ann Smith
- Millie Eckhardt
- Cheryl Haney
- Betty Sue Hanneke
May 4, 2021

- Dave Buck
- Daniel Bruzzini
- Sheila Noonan
- Jeff Beezley
- Nicholas Nunn-Faron
- Anne Blackburn
- Katie and Lou Bosso
- Sue Darcy
- Brian Bergfeld
- Joan Esserman
- Jim Wienstroer
- J.E. Lerch
- Martin Elkins
- Kent Peccola
- Joan Bates
- Bill and Sally Delabar
- Dan Studelska
- Ginna Hayden
- Hilary Babcock
- Debi Salberg
- John Belanger
- Susan Nordmann
- Deanna Gentile
- Gary W. Schmidt
- Briget Wilke-Grimm
- John McFarlane
- David M. Sterling
- James Seeser
- Joseph H. Weyhrich
Clark Hotaling stated, I think all of you know where I stand on this issue since you've somehow let me into your closed-door meetings over and over. I first wanted to just thank everyone on city council whether you're for this amendment or not, for sitting there and putting up with a lot of misinformation. It really made me sad tonight listening to so much misinformation and I think a lot of it came from two full-page ads in the paper. I would urge everybody if you're still listening to get involved with your government. This has been a stated goal for this council for several years. I've been to some town meetings on this subject but it sounds like that there needs to be more discussion around it because there's obviously a lot of opposition. I participated in a meeting recently that was talking about the history of integrating our pool in Webster and they read letters from when people were against the integration of the pool and this whole last hour I've been thinking about that meeting listening to the tone of some of these letters. I applaud the effort to give more options to more people in our community and I hope you have the courage to vote for this tonight.
Elyssa Sullivan thanked the Council for their time and stated, I'm just coming out of another meeting myself and your meeting is just beginning so I can't even imagine how exhausted you must be. In case it is useful for the record, I wanted to be another voice and strong support of the Plan Commission's recommendation to you. I think this Council has shown such wonderful initiative through many years now in drawing the community into conversation through town halls and other ways of listening to community members who have taken the time to engage with you and other bodies and I think that you have a really strong record of responding to what people are asking for and thinking about and I support you in your decision to vote for this this evening.

David Sterling stated, I listened to the gentleman who just said this has been a topic of discussion in the community for years and that's just not true. I live here, everybody I know lives here. Nobody knew about this until just a few weeks ago. That discussion of this has been a topic for a long time that the community has understood is just not true and all of the discussion we just heard about we're opposed to it. It really has not been in the community. It has not been discussed and we need to discuss it. It needs to be open, and we need to vote on it.

NEW BUSINESS  –  MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS, CITY ATTORNEY, CITY MANAGER
No New Business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
BILL #9145 THIRD READING
On motion of Councilmember Smith, seconded by Councilmember Arnold, BILL #9145 ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 53, THE ZONING CODE OF WEBSTER GROVES, BY AMENDING THE USE AND DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS FOR SINGLE FAMILY ATTACHED AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLINGS IN THE “A4” SEVENTY-FIVE HUNDRED SQUARE FOOT RESIDENCE DISTRICT IN SECTIONS 53.070 ET. SEQ. 53.100 AND AMENDED DEFINITIONS RELATED TO THOSE USES IN SECTION 53.020 AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO, having been introduced and read twice on April 20, 2021, was taken up its title read a third time and placed upon its passage to become Ordinance #9145.

Councilmember Smith asked Ms. Perry if the current Zoning Code allows the building of duplexes in the “A4” District. Ms. Perry stated that it does. It is a permitted use with restrictions. It was approved in 1956.

Councilmember Smith asked about the definition of a duplex dwelling in the Code. Ms. Perry read the definition.

Councilmember Smith asked about the current restrictions for duplex housing. Ms. Perry showed the restrictions from the 1956 ordinance.

Councilmember Smith asked about the proposed definition for duplex. Ms. Perry showed the proposed language. The proposed language would tie into the building Code.
Councilmember Smith asked if all houses in the “A4” zone would be reclassified from single-family to duplex housing if this is approved. Ms. Perry stated that they would not. When St. Louis County assesses a property, they assess what is on the property. If it is a single-family home, it is a single-family home.

Councilmember Smith asked about the criteria for building duplex housing in the “A4” area. Ms. Perry stated that there will be a minimum square footage and setbacks for the lot, maximum size, and the only setback that is changing is allowing a shared party wall. The lot has to be 60 feet average all the way around. In 2020 we had about 22 tear downs for new homes. Of those, 12 would not have met the minimum size or width. Maybe ten of them, if properly designed could have been built as duplexes.

Prior to the vote, Mayor Welch and Councilmembers made statements/comments related to Bill #9145. (Exhibit C)

Mayor Welch called for the vote on Bill #9145.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: ARNOLD, BLISS, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON
NOES: FRANKLIN, WELCH
Mayor Welch stated that Bill #9145 was approved.

BILL #9146 THIRD READING
On motion of Councilmember Smith, seconded by Councilmember Bliss, BILL #9146 ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 53, THE ZONING CODE OF WEBSTER GROVES, BY AMENDING THE DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS TO CLARIFY LOT COVERAGE AND HEIGHT REGULATIONS IN SECTIONS 53.043, 53.053, 53.063, 53.073 AND 53.202; AND AMENDING DEFINITIONS RELATED TO THE DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS IN SECTION 53.020 AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO, having been introduced and read twice on April 20, 2021, was taken up its title read a third time and placed upon its passage to become Ordinance #9146.

Mayor Welch called for the vote on Bill #9146.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD
NOES: NONE
Mayor Welch stated that Bill #9146 was approved.

NEW BUSINESS
Brentwood Boundary Request – Mr. Bruntrager stated that the City has worked with the City of Brentwood on their Brentwood Bound project. Recently, Brentwood has been purchasing locations within the Webster Groves portion of the Breckenridge Industrial Court, removing them from the tax rolls. They are also requesting another boundary adjustment. Mr. Bruntrager recommends not doing so. They have also suggested we give them the rest of the Industrial Court. I wanted to make you aware of these requests. Beyond that, there is nothing formal before you, but I recommend you take no action on the boundary request.
May 4, 2021

Council and staff discussed revenue implications. They can’t use eminent domain to cross our lines. They own the property and can use it.

CONSENT AGENDA
A motion was made by Councilmember Bliss, seconded by Councilmember Arnold, to approve the Consent Agenda.
Mayor Welch called for the vote on the Consent Agenda.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: FRANKLIN, SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD, BLISS
NOES: NONE
Mayor Welch stated that the Consent Agenda was approved.

The following consent agenda was approved:
- Approval of Minutes – April 20, 2021

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
- Paul Barrs was appointed to the Sustainability Commission.

EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION
Councilmember Arnold made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Smith, to go into Executive Closed Session per Attorney-Client Privileged Communications [MO Statute 610.021(1)], Real Estate [MO Statute 610.021 (2)], and Negotiated Contract [MO Statute 610.021 (12)].
Mayor Welch called for the vote to go into Executive (Closed) Session.
MEMBERS VOTING:
AYES: SMITH, ALEXANDER, RICHARDSON, WELCH, ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN
NOES: NONE
Mayor Welch stated that the Council would go into Executive (Closed) Session.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:08 p.m. on motion of the Mayor, duly seconded.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 18th day of May, 2021.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR
Hello,

The Alliance for Interracial Dignity fully supports the Webster Groves Planning & Development Department’s current recommendations for amending the zoning code. Contrary to false advertising in the April 23rd issue of the Webster Kirkwood Times claiming legislation is being rushed in secret, the two proposed amendments are part of a set of housing priorities that City Council unanimously adopted in October 2019. The Alliance has followed along closely for years as city leaders have grappled with concrete steps to improve housing access, build a consciously inclusive community, and overcome decades of residential segregation.

The proposed zoning changes can help slow the tide of smaller, dated homes being replaced by outsized new construction. New structures will now have to comply with reasonable floor area/lot ratios, and unnecessary restrictions will be removed on the construction of duplex housing. Instead of McMansions, we could have two-family homes at a more accessible price point. All of the information about these changes has been made available in public meetings of the Plan Commission and City Council going back months, according to the normal legislative process.

We reject unsubstantiated scare tactics claiming property values will be damaged by improving the variety of housing stock available in town. Studies elsewhere show the opposite, and if Webster Groves property values can weather the Great Recession, it is hard to imagine much impact from a modest supply of duplexes. We believe that more housing options in Webster Groves will help to make our community more welcoming, more inclusive, and more diverse (in every sense of those words)—which brings a greater value for all of our community members.

Thank you for listening, The Alliance for Interracial Dignity’s Culture of Inclusion & Housing Action Team
April 19, 2021

Hello

I have been a property owner in Webster Groves since 2001. I live at 625 Sherwood Drive (A3 district). My neighborhood is surrounded by the A4 district.

My understanding from the previous city council meeting notes is that Mara Perry stated, "In keeping with the directions of the city council, these ordinance changes are designed to limit building bigger houses as well as to limit the size of additions SO AS TO PRESERVE THE AFFORDABILITY AND DIVERSITY OF HOUSING IN WEBSTER". I have read and re-read the Times article and nowhere in the article is this information articulated. I find it odd and perhaps unsettling that the Webster-Kirkwood Times seems to have neglected to fully share this information. This is clearly an important and informative point. Given the gravity of this change, it would seem appropriate for our elected leaders to work with the media to ensure that important information is properly disseminated, especially during a pandemic. One might conclude that there exists an effort to keep certain information from becoming widely publicized so that a small, vocal minority's agenda can be executed.

Many people in the A4 district have worked very hard and saved to own their homes and pay their mortgages. They have a right to improve their homes. More importantly, they should have the right to enjoy the full economic benefits of their home upon the sale of that home. If this ordinance passes, the value of all homes in A4 will undeniably be adversely impacted. A first year economics student can explain that any restriction on the use of a good necessarily reduces its value. People who have worked hard and sacrificed to own their homes should not find that their home is worth less due to an agenda by a tone deaf group of politicians agitated to action by the small, aggressive and vocal minority. What will you say to the person who was hoping to use the funds from the sale of their home to fund their retirement, only to find that those funds will be considerably less than anticipated due to the actions of their city politicians?

This ordinance, if changed, will directly affect all residents living in the A4 district which is approximately 21% of all Webster Groves residents. Moreover, there are carryover effects to the rest of Webster Groves residents not living in the A4 district. That should be abundantly clear to anyone with a basic understanding of economics. At a bare minimum, a formal notice should be sent to each tax paying resident telling them about the change.
Kindest Regards,

Norma Rufkahr
I am a fifteen year resident of Webster Groves, and I am deeply concerned with the A4 ordinance changes that are being considered. My husband and I were initially interested in living in Webster Groves, because of it’s authentic charm, location and income diversity. It is a “real” town. However, I don’t believe it’s the Council’s authority to limit existing home owner’s in their pursuit of a nicer home, or a higher price on the sale of their property, in order to make it more affordable for future residents. It doesn’t seem fair or equitable to those existing residents. I am also concerned with allowing more duplexes in Webster Groves. If I’m reading your proposal correctly, the owner of the duplex does not have to live in the duplex. Experience has taught me that when the owner is not a resident and the renter has no ownership, respect and regard for the community is greatly diminished. I think the community of Webster Groves will suffer. I know I am not alone with my concerns as they pertain to these proposals. It is my hope that you will keep the best interests of current homeowners in Webster Groves in mind as you move forward.

Sincerely,
Lisa Mooney
Sent from my iPhone
As a resident of 26 years, I am appalled by the secret meetings of the Webster Groves City Council on rezoning all A4 single housing to duplex housing. Even though my property is not in the A4 area, this new zoning would affect the density of population in our neighborhoods as well as present challenges for the school district. Such extreme changes should be on the ballot in November so that taxpayers can vote on it.

Pat Benefield
A local realtor with national connections
Coldwell Banker Gundaker
Cell 314-560-4457
Dear City Council,

My husband and I wanted to express our opposition to changing or easing the duplex construction rules.

We relocated here 5 years ago and took a chance on a house that was above market value for our area. We made and continue to invest in Webster. We took the chance as we felt the homes that need some work will draw young or older investors.

Webster Groves has a charm that in today’s throw away society can’t be retrieved. Single family homes in South Webster are not cookie cutter. I can’t understand why you need this change.

I don’t know why all of Webster Groves was not included in the proposal. If it’s such a urgent need then include the entire residential areas.

I look forward to this plan being defeated.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kerry DeGregorio
14 E Drake Ave
Webster Groves, Mo.
314-368-6167

Sent from my iPhone
I am opposed to the re-zoning of ANY zoning rule or zone
Without a PUBLIC HEARING
The proposed zoning change is to be voted on by only secret closed door council meeting, with 3 of the 6 council members NOT OWNING PROPERTY IN WEBSTER GROVES?
I have lived in one of the proposed zones, for greater than 25 years – paid very high property taxes – spent 220k 25 years ago
NOW YOU WANT to dilute my property value - WITHOUT my VOICE

This zoning needs to be tabled and VOTED ON BY ACTUAL RESIDENTS

As promised, below you will find their addresses:

Three of them have no Webster Groves addresses; they are – Laura Arnold, Sarah Richardson and Emerson Smith.
Karen Anderson, 826 Holland Ave, 63119. Purchased property 2-1-2005; paid $65,000
Pam Bliss, 511 Oakwood Ave, 63119. Purchased property 5-25-2010; paid $375K
David Franklin, 223 E. Jackson Rd., 63119. Purchased property 6-5-2020; paid $252,500

them at citycouncil@webstergroves.org and title the email "Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting" or use "Send eMail" button below.
As homeowners in the A4 housing zone, we believe that any rezoning should be put to a vote by the community. We will push in our church and community the voting out of any city counselor that takes away the vote of the people and our democratic populous to choose the future of the community.

Thanks,
Gavin Ackermann
140 Cottage Ave.
Webster Groves, MO, 63119
A-4 Rezoning Change/Webster Redevelopment Project
Who is benefiting from the proposed rezoning to allow for duplex housing? Not the current citizens of Webster Groves!
I was under the opinion that the Mayor and Council Members were elected to represent the citizens of Webster Groves, not some outside/unknown interest. Look around, the proposed development is not consistent with the Webster Groves we have enjoyed for many generations. Current zoning is meant to preserve the uniqueness of Webster Groves.
How can you, in good conscience, vote in favor of rezoning?
Steve and Michelle Hieger
120 Webster Woods
Webster Groves, Missouri

Sent from my iPad
I'm a writing regarding the zoning change proposal for the A4 zoning district to allow for duplexes.

An allowance for duplexes within A4 doesn't magically change all of A4 from single family homes into duplexes. The vast majority of A4 will remain single-family properties because most of A4 is currently built upon. It gives the option that within A4 a duplex could be built in lieu of a new single family house that will not be priced at anything less that $800K. We need diversity in our housing stock! In the current construction market, new single family automatically means minimum $500K for the build, take into account the land purchase, you’re up to min $700K - you can’t build for less than that right now. If we are going to maintain options for young families, couples, etc. we need to have flexibility in what can be built, and that also means WG needs to be open to apartments, townhomes, etc.

Thank you for your consideration,
Katie Niesen Cook
515 Florence Ave.
Katie Nakazono - Remarks by visitors-city Council meeting

From: jenny Fagan <thefagan7@live.com>
To: "Citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <Citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 4/24/2021 8:52 AM
Subject: Remarks by visitors-city Council meeting

Dear city Council I hope you think hard and fast about the A4 rezoning changes you are considering this should be put on the ballot to let the people who live in Webster Groves voice their opinion. It seems as if the city of Webster Groves mission is to build the biggest houses they possibly can to get the most taxes they can it’s sad to see how all single family homes are being squeezed out and you are trying to squeeze as many people into this small city as you possibly can. I am against this rezoning. Are the builders in this area taking control or do you as a city Council have control? I would love to see smaller single-family homes that are affordable made available to people wanting to move to Webster Groves. Not duplexes and not minimansions!
Jenny Fagan Webster Groves resident

Get Outlook for iOS
My name is Andy Herrmann. I have lived in Webster Groves continuously since 1950. When I was 6 months old, our family moved to Lake Ave. My wife and I have raised our three daughters while living on Tuxedo Blvd. My daughters attended our wonderful school. I have paid high taxes for over 40 years. I shop in Webster...Rogers Produce, Schmucks, James Carlton Insurance, Imo's, First Bank, Webster Animal Hospital and more

Please stop rezoning all A4 single Family housing to duplex housing.

Thank you.
Shocking and disappointing that the WG city council has secretly been planning to turn our family city into a duplex city. A change of this magnitude should never be considered nor decided by 7 citizens of Webster Groves. Manipulating the lives of 23,000 citizens whose neighborhoods will be destroyed and home values will be depreciated will cause flight. Please don't vote the character of Webster Groves into extinction.

Betsy Zorumski
Dear Webster Groves City Council Members-

Your upcoming decision to rezone all A4 single family housing to duplex housing is one which we strongly oppose. Such widespread rezoning affecting 69% of all single family houses in Webster Groves is a radical proposal which should not be made solely by the City Council. At the very least, this is a proposition that should be submitted to the voters of Webster Groves at the next available election date. If so, I think you will find that it will be defeated overwhelmingly and that will be your answer.

Thank you for your service and careful consideration of this matter.

Leland and Cheryl Curtis
451 Oakwood Avenue
Webster Groves

Sent from my iPhone
Our family opposes the A4 Rezoning Proposal. It would increase population density with less green space and falling property values. The high quality of life we have invested will be negatively affected.

To be through and fair, we need more time and exposure to direct questions such as: studies from other communities projected financial impact upon the entire community including private home ownership, business and city services. What logic was applied in choosing the areas to be rezoned? Reported closed door meetings is not appropriate.

We moved to Webster Groves in 1962 as we knew what the community had to offer us and our family. Also we know how Webster reached the point of today and it is not what A4 represents.

A rezoning proposal of this magnitude must be put on the ballot for the entire community to decide, not by the council.

Mary & Bill Neumann
1457 Crossbrook Dr.
Webster Groves, 63119
As a 16-year resident of Webster Groves, I am pleased to see that Webster Groves City Council will be voting on a text amendment that will allow duplex housing to be built in many areas of the city (as per the original zoning for the A4 area). This proposal has the potential to add to the stock of affordable housing in our increasingly expensive city. I urge council members to vote yes on this amendment at their May 4 meeting. In the future, I also urge them to consider rezoning other areas of the city (including my own neighborhood) to allow for more affordable housing across Webster Groves.

Sincerely,

Tess Thompson

418 Florence Ave, Webster Groves, MO 63119
Council Members,

We believe that the A4 rezoning proposal should be put to a vote by the residents of Webster Groves and not be decided by the council. This is a decision that effects every household, our property values and the very character of our city.

The city council should be concerned with improving the lives of Webster residents and maintaining our property values, which will attract more people to our community.

We also feel that the development along Kirkham Ave would cause many more problems than it would solve. Traffic at Gore and Lockwood is already terrible when one is stopped for a train and parking in the Old Webster district is bad at any time of the day. Increasing the density of population makes no sense at all, unless there is a hidden agenda behind this proposal.

Respectfully yours,
Linda and David Yates, 51 year residents of WG
To Whom It May Concern;

I am respectfully asking you to not approve adjustment to south Webster housing. Being a father of 3 and a resident for over 25 years, I can confidently say this is not the right move - please do not make changes. Until recently our homes have been stable, pricing has increased and schools have shifted zoning. Another adjustment to this environment will be more disruption than confidence. Our portion of the community does not need additional housing / pressure.

Please call if you would like to discuss further.

Thanks,
Alex Horsfield

Sent from my iPhone
As a resident of WG, I support this project. The concept is great and will provide economic growth to our community while upgrading the aesthetics of this area. The project needs to be self supporting and the developer should not need financial support such as tax credits.

Gayla Hannon
428 Lee Ave.

Sent from my iPad
Katie Nakazono - Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

From: struckel <struckel@charter.net>
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 4/25/2021 11:22 AM
Subject: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

Regarding the A4 rezoning change:

Please put it up for a vote in November, 2021.

Thank you.

Jim and Mary Struckel
736 Landscape Avenue
Webster Groves MO 63119
Please the council and Mayor of Webster Groves the choice of doing a whole scale vote to rezone/ change All A4 to duplex housing is based on opinion as quoted below at the bottom of this email.
It is a sad commentary that 69% of housing stock and associated property valuations can revolve around an opinion of a paid employee and not be put to a general vote for consideration. Much less where’s the data to propose such a change?
The counsel is suppose to represent the community of webster groves. Here it appears the majority of the council are representing a developer’s desire at 69% of the community’s expense?
Just because another community is doing something it not sufficient reason to follow. Just because someone storms the capital it does not mean we should follow or it’s the correct thing to do.
Where is the research and the data to support the choice presented below?
Question for all including Mara Perry: “A small bite of what for who? And what is the actual benefit to the community?

Quote
“Director of Plans, Mara Perry, who was directed by the council to make these A4 changes, defended the changes saying that other cities have abolished all rules throughout their municipality and thinks it is a small bite.”
Dear Members of the Webster Groves City Council

We are absolutely against the A4 rezoning proposal. It is imperative that current residents be involved in major decisions such as this that will have such a profound effect on their property values and the stability of their neighborhoods—more than 2/3 of which are in the proposed rezoning areas in Webster Groves. We want the A4 single family classification to remain as it is.

We support a public vote on this matter.

Perrin and Alice Stifel
How many city council members live in A4 housing zone? The proposal to allow duplex housing in the neighborhoods with the smallest lots is baffling and short sighted. In many of these communities, residents already compete for limited parking spaces on the street close to their houses. Doubling the density of people and cars will only make a difficult situation worse. An increase in the number of students in these neighborhoods will require increasing desks, classrooms and teachers. Every school has continually added structures chipping away at the already skimpy "green" (blacktop and woodchips) space for students. The periodic flooding of Deer Creek and Shady Creek will only worsen with an increase in impervious surfaces from larger structures on these smaller lots. Would the city council members vote for this proposal if duplex housing was allowed in their neighborhoods?
I am disturbed by the recent decision by the city council to reclassify all A4 single family housing to allow for duplex housing. This subject has not been presented clearly to WG residents. More information is needed as to why & for what purpose. Why the rush? Put it on the ballot & do the work this time to inform the public.

Michael Slusher
Our family opposes the A4 Rezoning Proposal. It would increase population density with less green space and falli values. The high quality of life we have invested will be negatively affected.

To be through and fair, we need more time and exposure to direct questions such as: studies from other communit projected financial impact upon the entire community including private home ownership, business and city services was applied in choosing the areas to be rezoned? Reported closed door meetings is not appropriate.

We moved to Webster Groves in 1962 as we knew what the community had to offer us and our family. Also we kn Webster reached the point of today and it is not what A4 represents.

A rezoning proposal of this magnitude must be put on the ballot for the entire community to decide, not by the cour

Mary & Bill Neumann
1457 Crossbrook Dr.
Webster Groves, 63119
Issue of rezoning all A4 single Family Housing

As a resident of Webster Groves for 44 years I feel that the proposal to rezone all A4 single family housing to duplex housing should not be determined by 4 council members and should be put to a vote by all of the residents of Webster Groves on the November ballot. I believe changing the zoning will result in changing the dynamics of the neighborhood by increasing the population, reducing property values, increasing parking and reducing the safety of the neighborhood.

If the city council truly represents all of the people of Webster Groves, you must decide on putting this rezoning issue on the ballot for a vote.

Thank you,
Paul Mayer
Dear Council Members,

I'm shocked you are trying to change Zoning without the vote of your Neighbors. I understand granting zoning variances on a case-by-case basis if they are agreed to by affected citizens. But to arbitrarily change Zoning without all Citizens voting on it is outrageous. DO NOT change Zone A4 from Single Family to Duplex without putting it to a vote of all Citizens.

JC Bates

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Dear Webster Groves City Council,

I am writing to voice my fundamental opposition to A4 Duplex Rezoning.

What I don't want (but fear is happening in Webster) is what I've seen happen in Kirkwood. You drive down a once-familiar street and are shocked by how quickly and completely the entire character of a neighborhood was changed by poor development decisions.

Keep Webster the community we know and love.
Vote down this proposal.

Sincerely,
Steve Braun
Concerned Larson Park Neighborhood Resident
I and my husband are strongly opposed to the proposed rezoning of Single Family Housing to Duplex Housing in the A4 zone. Under the guidelines that you, the council have listed as your "Visionary Direction and Goals" under "Protect Community Assets and Infrastructure" is the following: "Make policies to preserve and protect the character, infrastructure, and assets of Webster Groves, including Parks and Green Spaces".

The rezoning of Single Family Housing in the A4 zone to Duplex housing severely compromises the character of these areas and the quality of life of all the residents in these areas, and the future value of their property. It does the opposite of preserving and protecting the current residents and the green spaces in these areas. It creates an uncertain future by the people affected without adequate input. You have exempted the larger lots, favoring the more expensive homes for no obvious reason. Is this fair?

In this matter the council isn't representing the majority of the residents who voted them in, but is working against them and their city. It creates a feeling of betrayal and suspicion of the city government, and will mobilize people to vote for a council that they feel represents them.

Linda McFarlane
Hello,
I would like to urge the council to vote no and not allow duplexes in the A4 zoning areas.

My reason for this is the loss of property values here in Webster Groves.

There is no need for this as the housing market is doing very well.

I urge you to vote no on this zoning change.

It seems there are some really questionable choices being made there concerning developments and increasing density. Let’s not make the same mistakes over and over again just to appease developers.

The atrocious mistake made on the site of the YMCA where you let a horrid brown box with zero character or design get slapped up across from the beautiful library should serve as a beacon of the failure of the council every time you drive by it.

Please do better here.

Thank you,
Joe Grasso
To the City Council of Webster Groves,

Concerning the proposal to make duplexes acceptable in the A4 Zones of the city, I must express my extreme opposition to the proposal. The majority of citizens of Webster Groves were not born here, but chose to live here because they liked what they found here, and so, like myself, voted with their purchases and their mortgages, and settled here. We deliberately chose neighborhoods of small-to-moderate-sized single-family houses, and streets not jammed with parked cars, to establish our homes, raise our families, and spend our lives. The proposal's attempt to degrade the neighborhoods by raising the population density without giving the residents a chance to vote on the matter and with no provision for compensation to the residents for the decreased quality of life that a higher density will bring is nothing more than an attempt by the city to defraud the residents of the value of the investments they have made in their homes and neighborhoods.

Thomas L. Weaver
Mayor Welch and Council Members,

Once again I find myself writing you to express my concerns on decisions you are about to make on behalf of Webster Groves residents. To learn you are planning to put Proposition 1 Use Tax up for a revote in August after it was voted against, demonstrates a blatant disregard for those of us who fulfilled our civic responsibility by voting for or against it in the first place.

As elected officials, it is your responsibility to enact the decisions of your community. The final vote on April 6 was against Proposition 1. While I understand you might not be pleased with the results, it is not for the Council and Mayor to conclude the legitimacy of a re-vote based solely on the fact it didn't pass. The result you should uphold is the one that residents in a fair, democratic manner, concluded at the ballot box.

It's not so long ago this nation got beaten and bruised due to the results of a vote. I would hope that in the effort to maintain Webster’s voting integrity and not fall into some level of hypocrisy, you will do the right thing and let the vote stand as it was concluded on April 6.

Regards,
Alexandra Guillossou
Why is the A4 Rezoning Proposal not being put on the November ballot to be voted on by the citizens supporting WG? We had a home built in the past few years and we couldn’t even have a 2 car garage in the front of our home because 40% of the homes on our block didn’t have 2 car garages...yet you are now going to take it upon yourselves to decide that the homeowners of A4 zoning want the rezoning that will only reduce the value of our property and double the number of citizens? Let the citizens decide....this should not be your decision to make. And why is it only affecting A4? I suppose if the other districts were included, it would be stopped immediately.

Dan and Nancy Traum
335 Chestnut Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119
Increasing the ultimate housing density in Webster Groves is a horrible idea and needs to be stopped. It will only harm the residents.
In regards to the a4 district rezoning. How on earth does anyone believe this will help diversity inclusion, housing stock for middle/lower class, or help really anything at all? What is the benefit? The rental prices in this area are ridiculous right now. And honestly, always have been. You want developers/investors to take one overpriced house and knock it down to make a duplex in which potentially EACH unit would bring in more monthly than my mortgage? Because a quick search of the rental prices in the a4 zone make it clear that this would be the case. The only Benefit that I can see is adding more residents. There will be no increase in affordable housing.

Also, sticking potentially double the amount of people in the same footprint that a single family allows will not only drive out your current residents, but will cause issues in the areas of parking, traffic, noise, and would overall take from the quiet and peaceful atmosphere we have currently. Which I might add, is the only reason I pay the ridiculous taxes to live here in the first place.
Madame Mayor and Council members,

I generally vote against tax increases as a matter of personal policy, but the proposed “Use Tax” proposition in the April election was particularly easy to reject. The “math” didn’t make sense.

In a column by Mary Shapiro in the April 23rd Webster-Kirkwood Times Council member Emerson Smith was reported to say “There was a lot of bad information out there about this issue”.

Here’s an example; An estimated annual revenue gain of $250,000, at a tax rate of 1.5% would necessitate in excess of $16 million dollars in out-of-state, online purchases by citizens of the City. This amounts to $700 in sales for each man, woman, and child in the City. Given the threshold of $2,000 for the tax to apply would require most of the 8,000, or so, households in the City to qualify.

Given the economic diversity of Webster Groves I fail to see how these thresholds can be satisfied to substantiate the expected revenue.

If, as Mr. Smith declared, this “bad information” can be corrected, or explained, I will still not support a resubmitted proposal, but at least may be able to understand the mathematics.

James Cunningham

628 Lockwood Court
April 28, 2021
City of Webster Groves
4 East Lockwood
Webster Groves, MO 63119

To the Mayor and City Council,

With a great deal of interest, I have been following the Council’s apparent intent to modify the current Code of Webster Groves to expand the ability to construct two-family dwellings and single-family attached dwellings in the A4-7500 -square-foot Residence District.

Speaking as a former elected member of the Webster Groves City Council (1981-1992) and as the owner of my home in the A4 District for the past fifty-seven years, I feel that I have a few relevant comments to make regarding this matter.

First, I must remind all that you have been elected at large to represent the best interests of all existing citizens of Webster Groves, not the interests of outside developers and those individuals who wish to relocate to Webster. I, among most others, established my home and raised my family in Webster because of its unique charm, great schools and intense civic pride. Why do we want to risk changing this inherent character of a large segment of our community to accommodate the desires of non-residents? Property values in Webster are at an all-time high. Why should those of us who have invested in this community risk a loss in the value of our homes simply to accommodate those who simply wish to locate here?

Terms such as “equitable and affordable” housing and “inclusive zoning” are casually and recklessly mentioned as possible reasons to consider such changes. Might I remind you that our City and our fine neighborhoods continue to become quite diverse. We do not restrict the sale of any property to any financially qualified buyer.

To date, I have yet to hear a single plausible reason for the Council to even consider the proposed change. Further, even if such a reason were identified or devised, such a change should not be restricted to the A4 District. To avoid the appearance of favoritism, I would suggest these changes also be applied to the A1, A2 and A3 Districts. As this proposed change would reportedly affect at least 2/3 of all single-family housing units in Webster, the call by some for a vote of our residents should not be casually dismissed.

Finally, thanks to all for representing our city. Each of you have likely found out, as did I, that no matter what you do, you will be judged by some to be wrong!

Sincerely,

Richard C. Peterson

#2 Chestnut Hill Lane

Webster Groves, MO 63119
As a resident of 26 years, I am appalled by the secret meetings of the Webster Groves City Council Rezoning A4 Single Family Housing to Duplex Housing. Even though my property is not located in the A4 area, this new zoning would affect the density of population causing traffic problems plus the school system would experience challenges. This proposal should be on the ballot in November so that the taxpayers can vote on it.

Pat Benefield
A local realtor with national connections
Coldwell Banker Gundaker
Cell 314-560-4457
Bruce Eckhardt  
<bruceeckhardt@gmail.com>  
<citycouncil@webstergroves.org>  

Date: 4/28/2021 11:05 AM  

Subject: REMARKS OF VISITORS—NO TO A4 REZONING

> I want you to hear my heart on this issue of A4 rezoning. My family relocated to Webster Groves from a farm town in Ohio. We were attracted to the small town values, diversified opinion of the residents, the historical architecture, and ample houses of worship. We absolutely love the neighborhood desire to protect their trees. I appreciate the forethought of the town fathers some 140 years ago to plant the prairie with trees. These trees we now enjoy! We have been blessed by our forefathers.

> My request is to ask the town Council to slow down and take measure of how this administration is changing the very character of Webster Groves. The thoughts of the city planners need a broader review. Seven or eight generations have made Webster Groves what it is today. Are we ready to throw out the goodness of the play “Our Town” which I was told was patterned from Webster Groves.

> I have a garage on my property which is not designed to house today’s cars. It was built in 1908. To demolish it, I have to get some sort of historical preservation permit and allow the city to study my intentions. It makes no sense to me that I need to go to all these measures over a single car garage when the city can determine the rezoning of 69% of Webster Groves with little resident input. This limits long-term planning and is not subjected to critical thinking, or the vote of residents.

> Please slow this A4 zoning down to get greater voter input and support. I am reminded of Elvis Presley’s song “Only Fools Rush In. You are thoughtful people but I feel we are rushing a high impact decision for no reason. This town council has much wisdom, and I am hoping we slow down and measure the impact of the A4 decision. My desire is that later generations will look back on your stewardship of our community with favor and appreciation that characterized great foresight and work.
I have been a Webster Groves resident, homeowner, taxpayer and voter residing off S. Rock Hill, south of Big Bend for 36 years. During that time, I have had two homes for my family. I moved from our larger home when my children grew up to move one block away in order to stay in the same pleasant neighborhood. I have willingly paid my Webster Groves property taxes each year because of the value I place on our schools and community.

I am very opposed to the Reclassification of area A4 Single Family Housing to Duplex Housing. The creation of duplex housing in this area will place additional pressure on the area infrastructure (sewers, roads, power) that the area cannot support. This is a problem that is a serious concern due to ongoing water drainage issues in the south Rock Hill area. During rainstorms my neighbors and I face water seepage in our basements. This is in spite of ongoing repairs. This drainage problem was present in both of the homes I owned. Rezoning resulting in duplex housing will put additional pressure on an already taxed drainage system.

I have invested 36 years of my life and livelihood in Webster Groves expecting to receive a profitable return on my investment. The rezoning will reduce my neighborhood property values, which I depend on to support my retirement. I am also concerned that the area targeted for rezoning is the area where moderate priced-homes are located. Why has the Council not considered rezoning the areas with larger lots and higher housing values?

Kathleen Hanrahan
kathleen.hanrahan@att.net
I am against the AG Development plan. I’ve lived in the immediate neighborhood for over 23 yrs and have watched the green space flourish. The improvements to the parks, Shady Creek...We were on the right path and now you want to ruin it with over development. I’m guessing none of the council members live in that neighborhood. We need total transparency and flesh and bones meetings, not zooms, before this goes any further.

I also oppose the A4 rezoning change. What are you people thinking? You are trying to ruin everything that makes Webster Groves desirable. Put it up for a vote in November!

Kenn Ann Smith
Thank you for allowing me to speak into this subject. I know that we are all here and addressing this because we have deep love for our community and seek to always improve it.

I am against the A4 rezoning because I do not believe it will enhance our community. I am concerned that the increase in population will burden our infrastructure. I am also concerned for increased traffic and parking situations. I believe there will be an increased need for more schools, more teachers, more first responders, etc.

I also believe this proposal will change Webster Groves and drive taxes to proportions beyond what we already have seen. Today we have a diverse community. The median income is approximately $102,000 per household. This tax burden could be more than the community can bear.

Sent from my iPhone
Katie Nakazono - Remarks of visitor- Bill #9145

From: Cheryl Haney <haneyhome@gmail.com>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 4/29/2021 12:39 PM
Subject: Remarks of visitor- Bill #9145

Good Afternoon,

I am a lifetime resident of Webster Groves I grow up here, left for college, and returned to raise my family here. I own and live on one of the A4 zoned blocks.

My overall feeling is that adding some duplexes in the A4 zone could be a healthy change for the diversity of our community. With that said I have an underlining concern that we as a city need to address before that rezoning takes place.

My request is for the city to review and updated the guidelines of accountability for the landlord and property owners of rental property in Webster Groves.

We as a city are not currently holding landlords accountable for the maintenance and the appearance of their rental properties. As we are all aware our traditional property owners can and do receive citations from the inspection office on any items in question and are given a very clear timeline for correction.

Currently, Webster Groves has a local landlord (who is also a lawyer and should be held accountable) who owns somewhere in the neighborhood of 15/20 single and a few double occupancies properties most are up and down the Kirkham/Brentwood edge of the A4 plan. He is not being held accountable for the property’s exterior appearance or maintenance. I can only assume that he isn’t our only subject of concern. He is the only one I can speak to from personal experience. This landlord owns several single-family homes on my block (Corona Ct.). Without checking the map or even looking up the properties that he owns: you could drive our block today and with your educated guess you could pick out which properties are rentals and which are owner-occupied and in my option that shouldn't be the case.

My direct request to the city council is that if they are considering passing the A4 rezoning to the building of duplexes then please take a real look at the regulations and requirements for landlords in Webster Groves. The guidelines need to updated and reviewed to include an action plan for the neighbors to report issues as well as a timeline for concerns to be addressed.
Thank You,
Cheryl Haney
"Life is a Balance of Holding on and Letting go...."
Katie Nakazono - Re: Remarks by visitors-City Council meeting

From: Katie Nakazono  
To: Hanneke, Betty  
Date: 4/29/2021 3:56 PM  
Subject: Re: Remarks by visitors-City Council meeting

>>> Betty Hanneke <betty@hannekes.com> 4/29/2021 3:56 PM >>>
We are against the rezoning to A4. We already have duplexes in WG and think this will encourage absentee landlords. These lots are not big enough to keep our community the wonderful place it is. Will cause overcrowding in our already over crowded schools. This should go to a vote of the people.
We do not want to turn Webster Groves into the new North St Louis.
Please do not do this.
Betty Sue Hanneke
Mayor, City Council & City Staff,

In strategic planning, before you can plan forward, you should first evaluate and learn from where you have been. According to the City's org chart, our Major & City Council report to the Residents, which makes me one of your 23,000 bosses.

Thus, in keeping with that responsibility, I am providing this resident's subjective, humble & imperfect opinion of your performance against the seven current Council goals, originally dated in 2018-2019.

Despite the impact of COVID, here's how I see where you have been and the important progress you have made:

Goal #1: Create a plan for a proactive approach to encourage and grow the commercial sector of the city.

Grade: A. Not aware of the creation of any new plan, per se, but restaurant scene in Webster Groves is alive and booming! Plus, the redevelopment project was launched and promises big & bold future economic development.

Goal #2: Investigate options for increased parking in the two major business districts.

Grade: B. It certainly seems that options were investigated and enacted, like Bompart parking for Old Orchard businesses. While the need for new Old Webster parking dramatically decreased, the innovative & collaborative idea of using the Bristol blacktop for after-hours additional parking revealed a new option if necessary.

Goal #3: Promote safe gun use and ownership by enacting legislatively acceptable municipal ordinances.

Grade: F. This is admittedly a very tough area but, except for a one afternoon training session in three years that I know of, there was nothing really done against this goal.

Goal #4: To increase opportunities for public engagement with the Council & staff.
Grade B. Council & Staff engage with the public very well in all written and circulated communications, but there is a need for more frequent face-to-face public engagements, such as more town hall meetings.

Goal #5: Explore additional housing options, such as multi-family housing and affordable housing.

Grade B. Additional housing options have certainly been explored, such as Community Land Trust (CLT) Homes. A4 rezoning proposal for two family residential and the workforce housing in the redevelopment project are concrete efforts against this goal. But gentrification in North Webster and the loss of many of our long-time black residents have called for swifter, decisive action.

Goal #6: Address and correct, through ordinance changes, housing issues that negatively affect Webster Groves homes and neighborhoods.

Grade B. Council eliminated the discriminatory source of income requirement for apartment tenants.

Goal #7: Continue to promote the arts in Webster Groves through new funding sources for public art.

Grade A. New funding sources made the "City of the Arts" proud with the public art additions of the "Ascension" bronze monument in Barbre Park, and the "After Hours" and "Earth Rabbit" sculptures.

Overall Grade: B-. Very good performance, all factors considered and the turbulent, unpredictable times you faced. One goal, in particular, lowered your overall grade.

My advice for the future from the cheap seats is to focus on fewer goals (like only your top three) but more tangible ideas and actions for each goal. In short, focus on doing only a few fundamental things but doing them extraordinarily well!

Thanks.

PEACE.

Dave
Voters rejected the Prop 1 Use Tax on April 6. So why is the city council putting the Prop 1 Use Tax back on the ballot in a special election in August? The city council falsely claims voters were misinformed, yet the opposite was true. The city council spent $18,688.23 on the Prop 1 by “educating” voters with 100 yard signs, 4,484 postcards, a Prop 1 website, Webster Kirkwood Times ads, and a fair election. The city council lost its proposed 13th special sales tax -- exactly BECAUSE voters were educated. Voters do not need re-education, the city council does. Never in the history of Webster Groves have the residents had to re-vote on any of the 12 previous special tax propositions. If the city council wants to force a re-vote on Proposition 1 use tax immediately after an election it didn’t like, I suggest the city council have a re-vote on all of the previous 12 propositions and special taxes too.

The residents of Webster Groves are not ungenerous as these 12 special taxes have already added to the cost of every purchase made in this city. No municipality has ever taxed its residents and businesses into prosperity. Why tax away the online sales advantage of our own neighborhood businesses? Giant online retailers, such as Amazon, lobby for local use taxes because it levels local businesses who simply can’t compete with their one-stop shopping convenience and economy of scale. Homeowners and businesses are not the city council’s cash ATM to redistribute tax money for pet projects or bailout the city council’s inexcusable $2.4 million dollar projected budget deficit. When it comes to our hard-earned money and our local Webster Groves businesses, there was no use for a 13th special “Use Tax.” Voters rejected the Proposition 1 use tax, and "No" means “No.”

Listen to us, the voters. Don’t insult our intelligence. Don’t disenfranchise our voting system. Don’t force us to keep paying to vote on the same Prop 1 tax increase until you get the result you want. Autem constitutis (it has been decided). What kind of a government -- of, by, and for the people -- so disregards the will of its citizens?

Dan

Daniel B. Bruzzini
Webster Groves Resident
I have a number of major concerns that need to be addressed re: the A4 rezoning.
1. Why not ALL of Webster Groves, why just the “smaller, more affordable” homes?
2. Why are the taxpayers affected in these ‘red’ areas unable to vote on this issue?
3. What are the parameters for WHERE exactly these can be built, what about surrounding neighbors, traffic and lighting issues, parking, etc. Homeowners in the A4 areas should certainly be informed with more details.
4. How does the City plan to regulate and hold property owners and/or renters accountable to Webster ordinances and codes in order to protect the existing homeowners?

We need more information and the chance to vote on something that affects our property and neighborhood. Your May 4 Council vote should be tabled and presented to the people for a vote.

Sheila Noonan  
801 Colebrook Drive 

Sent from my iPad
From: Jeff Beezley <jeffbeezley@hotmail.com>
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 4/29/2021 9:08 PM
Subject: "Remarks by Vistors-City Council Meeting.

City council members,

The A4 zoning change is very concerning. We came across this proposal in the Webster-Kirkwood Times. We did not know this issue was even up for consideration until about two weeks ago. There are a few issues that we feel need to be addressed:

1) When individuals bought into A4 zones, many were buying into single-family home neighborhoods, not mixed housing. To rush this change through is questionable. Can a pause be taken so that the affected residents can have time to address this?

2) Shouldn't the zoning change apply to all of Webster Groves and not to just 69% of residences?

3) Since this zoning change affects 69% of the residences, it would only be fair for this to be moved to a city-wide initiative and put on a ballot for all residents to vote on.

Jeff and Donna Beezley
Nicolas Nunn-Faron  
<nunnnfar@gmail.com>  
<citycouncil@webstergroves.org>  
4/29/2021 9:19 PM  
Remarks of Visitors

City Council Members,

I am reaching out as a concerned citizen to express my vehement disapproval for the proposed zoning change to District A4, specifically allowing the building of two-family units. These recent years have seen an ever increasing loss of the preservation of our community's historic nature, and this would be just one more step in that direction. I along with many other homeowners in the area are investing countless dollars to preserve and/or restore our homes, allowing them to remain in the condition which they were originally built. The atmosphere that currently exists in Webster Groves is why we live here, and the only reason many of us are willing to pay the premium to do so. Allowing the conversion of homes to duplexes, and the building of other two family units will be a blight on our neighborhood, and drive many of us out. I ask you that you please vote down this proposal, or at least amend it to remove the provision for two family units.

Thanks,

Nic Nunn-Faron  
105 N Elm
To Whom It May Concern;

I am a Webster Groves resident living on Lyman Place in the A4 zoned area. I did not know anything about the proposed zoning changes until I read the Webster/Kirkwood Times. I would like to voice my displeasure at this proposal. The houses on Lyman Place have sold recently in the $500,000 to $600,000 range. Changing this zoning to allow duplex housing will lower real estate values. Has anyone reviewed real estate values in the designated A4 Zones. There are many streets in this zone where houses are above $200,000. This proposal needs to be reviewed.

Sincerely,
Anne Blackburn
Lyman Place
Webster Groves
We disagree with the proposed A4 rezoning measure and would like to see an opportunity for community input on this issue.

Thank you,
Katie and Lou Bosso
25 Marshall Place
I am a resident of Mildred Ave off of Bompart Ave. Currently Bompart is essentially a one lane road because of the number of residents who park there. I strongly suggest that all new duplex housing be required to have “off-street parking” that could contain at least two vehicles. Otherwise each duplex will be contributing 2-4 or more vehicles to our limited street parking.

Sincerely,
Sue Darcy
633 Mildred Ave

Sent from my iPhone
I read the full page ad by the Webster groves residents organization and found it disagreeable. I support rezoning to allow for buildings that make the most sense to the owner. If someone wants to build a duplex on an empty lot, and they can pass the architectural review board, then great, I see no problem with that. To say that building duplexes will reduce affordability is gaslighting at its best.

Brian Bergfeld

From my phone
Katie Nakazono - A4 zoning

From: joan esserman <sserdda961@gmail.com>
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 4/30/2021 11:10 AM
Subject: A4 zoning

City Council and Mayor

As a resident of an A4 area, I am concerned that many in my area are not aware of the complex issues concerning upcoming action affecting our major assets. Please consider an informative postcard mailing to folks in those areas and also postponing a final vote. Thanks for your consideration of this.

Joan Esserman
415 Newport
From: Jim Wienstroer <jimwienst@sbcglobal.net>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>, <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 4/30/2021 11:17 AM
Subject: "Remarks by Visitors-City Council Meeting"

Members of the Council,

I write to express my strong opposition to two critical issues coming to the fore that will have huge impacts on the quality of living in this Great City.

The first is the A4 housing proposal. The scope of this proposal is massive and transformational. The density duplexes would bring to much of the town itself would be greatly increased. Houses will be much closer together in many cases at the expense of green spaces. Today's costs of renovative/building duplexes would make it much more expensive for newcomers and young families to move to Webster. In my judgment, for a City Council to be the final decision making body on a matter of this importance is governmental overreach. Please, at a minimum, put this to a city wide November vote.

The other "Hot-topic" affecting Webster residents is the SG Collaborative's development. Allowing this to go through with will result in:

A. Increased traffic congestion, due to increased demands on North-South use on Rock Hill, Gray, Gore and Elm. People trying to get from Crestwood and other South County areas to places like Boeing, Clayton, UMSL, Lambert etc are forced to transit these roads. (We can thank Politicians years ago for stopping the planned extension of I-170 to I-55 for bringing us this traffic volume). Having the addition of the mixed-use and residential population SG would entail will make it only worse. Most new residents of the SG condo's or apartments will have 1 or 2 automobiles. More traffic for limited roads to handle.

B. As it is now, Lockwood from City Hall west to Rock Hill has already become "Delmar-Loop Lite". With Bristol and Ambrose School drop-off congestion morning and afternoon already a log-jam, increased traffic the SG project would bring would make Lockwood less safe than it is now.

C. Environmental deterioration will be another drawback to SG. As many know, there is great controversy as to building warehouse and distribution centers in flood plains like the Creve Coeur Lake-Maryland Heights area that add to flooding of the Missouri River. The reason is when you replace water absorbing soil with concrete and blacktop, the water goes to other places (like Kirkham Road). The creek next to the road already cannot handle the heavy rains we get when it is now mostly forested. Our area doesn't need another concrete eye-sore like the River Des Peres!

Thank you for your consideration,

Jim Wienstroer
137 Gray Ave
Webster Groves MO 63119
314-378-7324
JE Lerch <JELerch@sbcglobal.net>  
<citycouncil@webstergroves.org>  
4/30/2021 11:29 AM  
Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting  

This is the letter I just sent to the WG Times regarding the proposed A4 zoning changes.

Let’s examine the reasoning of those favoring the proposed zoning changes in Webster.
“Allow a more diversified housing assortment in Webster Groves.”
“Create more diverse housing stock”
“Build a consciously inclusive community”
“Improve housing access”
“A more accessible price point”
“Make our community more welcoming, more inclusive and more diverse.”

Ah, all of the feel-good terminology. Sorry, but Webster Groves residents don’t need virtue-signaling zoning changes to be welcoming or inclusive. Let’s look at the numbers.

The average sales price for a home in St. Louis County is $220,000. As described by the WG Residents Organization, a home is being purchased in Webster approximately every fifteen days for UNDER $200,000. There’s twenty thousand worth of “affordability” right there. If you want a broader scope, the average sales price in the US is currently $353,048. Webster looks very accessible by St. Louis County numbers, and definitely by US figures.

Inclusivity is a noble concept, but doubling up on density is not the way to make Webster Groves more affordable. Why not concentrate on expanding retail density, thus lowering the ever-increasing property taxes that genuinely make Webster “inaccessible” – especially for long-time residents who struggle to stay in the community with this burden? Lower property taxes would make housing more affordable for young families, as well.
Affordability is a relative concept, and it’s not clear why Webster is trying to be all things to all people.

I’m sure my letter will result in cries of “racism” and “white privilege.” It is shameful and absurd to make this proposal about race. But that is what’s happening.

J.E. Lerch
While I understand the goal to improve housing opportunities in the city I am very disappointed in the council moving forward on any changes to the current zoning rules without first reaching out to those citizens that may be affected to notify them of any proposal and possible changes. As currently written I am opposed to the zoning bill. Another item I find difficult to understand is the method used to determine which areas are included in this bill. If the goal is to improve opportunities in Webster shouldn’t it encompass all of the city? It seems that many of the more costly areas of the city are not affected. These plots seem to have the larger plots and could support duplexes better than smaller areas currently included in the plan.

Martin Elkins
Kent Peccola <kpeccola@att.net>
<citycouncil@webstergroves.org>

To:  

Date:  
4/30/2021 4:31 PM

Subject:  
Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

I do not believe that the City Council has provided enough information to residents about the pro’s and con’s of the proposed A4 rezoning change and gathered enough feedback to approve this change on May 4th. I am concerned that building duplexes will increase the population of Webster groves and change the character of our charming city.

Please share more information in a public forum and get more feedback. Also consider letting the community vote on an issue as important as this.

Kent Peccola
Webster Groves resident
Dear Council Members,

Changing zoning laws in the A4 district to make it easier to slap up duplexes - even if every other house in the neighborhood is single family - seems arbitrary and shortsighted. I wonder if anyone in support of these changes lives in an A4 area. By claiming anyone who is opposed to these changes is promoting exclusion and denying diversity is just plain wrong.

The beauty and design of our smaller neighborhoods and wanting to keep them as single family houses is a valid enough reason for opposition with no meanness intended.

Please do not vote on this on May 4.

Joan Bates
Webster Groves
314-962-4502
Sent from my iPad
We oppose the change to the A4 zoning and believe this matter should be put to a vote of the residents of Webster Groves rather than a decision of the City council.

Bill & Sally Delabar  
311 Fairlawn Avenue  
Webster Groves, MO 63119
I live in one of the neighborhoods affected by your proposed rezoning change. We already have fill in houses selling for almost one million on previously modest properties. This change protects the wealthy residents and literally tells me we are not wanted. We have made significant investments in upgrading our property and hope to sell it when we eventually retire as affordable to a family not to a fill in investor.

We oppose the A4 rezoning change and agree it should be be put before voters.

Regards,

Dan Studelska
201 Simmons Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119

Sent from my iPhone
Katie Nakazono - "Remarks Visitors - City Council Meeting"

From: GINNA HAYDEN <ginnahayden@yahoo.com>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 5/1/2021 4:27 PM
Subject: "Remarks Visitors - City Council Meeting"

THIS IS TOO IMPORTANT OF A DEAL TO BE DECIDED BY THE CITY COUNCIL. THIS SHOULD BE PUT TO THE VOTE OF THE PEOPLE!
Ginna Hayden
I fully support the rezoning proposal that would allow more duplexes in our community. Thank you.
Katie Nakazono - A-4 Zoning Changes

From: Debi Salberg <debisalberg@outlook.com>
To: "Citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <Citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 5/2/2021 7:00 PM
Subject: A-4 Zoning Changes

Mayor and City Council:

I would respectfully argue that the proposed changes to the A-4 Zoning District will not create an opportunity for affordable housing. Rather, it will eliminate affordable housing and increase the cost of housing in Webster Groves.

Replacing an existing single family residence with two attached units will require the acquisition of the single family residence. Although there are some ill maintained single family homes in Webster Groves, they are limited. The vast majority of A-4 zoned lots are occupied by completely livable, solid residential structures. Therefore, the cost of acquiring these residences will not be cheap. Demolition will add to the cost.

New construction generally is more expensive than existing structures. The cost of acquisition and demolition will add to the cost. The resulting may be two residential units, but they will not be "affordable."

I also see issues with the lot coverage and driveways. Although the proposed ordinance limits lot coverage to 32%, I can see a number of variance requests for just a bit more lot coverage. Also more units mean more driveways, which will add to traffic and safety issues.

Finally, the 60 foot lot width will concentrate the 2 family to South Webster, as much of the northern part of town is platted with 50 foot wide lots.

I believe this wholesale rezoning (which is what is really is) is inappropriate and will be to the detriment of the City of Webster Groves.

Debi Salberg
Hello,

Recently I became aware of the A4 rezoning proposal through local media. This proposal, if enacted, has the potential to alter the make-up and constitution of neighborhoods in Webster Groves. This issue should be decided at the ballot box. Give voice to the residents. Something with a potential for change to the significance of the A4 proposal should also be open for public input regarding how changes would affect the neighborhood before said changes are finalized, if the proposal were to gain voter approval.

Sincerely,

John Belanger
603 Brainard Pl.
Susan Nordmann  
<sjnordmann@yahoo.com>  
<citycouncil@webstergroves.org>  
5/2/2021 9:12 PM  
Remark of visitors-no to R4

It has been announced that the Webster Groves city council is planning to implement a zoning change - R 4-, affecting 69% of the city housing, without the consent of the residents. This proposal, to bring about social change, will be a major disaster for this wonderful city.

Wants and needs are two different things. No one is "entitled" to live here. All anyone is entitled to is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Remember council members, you were elected to SERVE the current residents of Webster Groves and preserve the character of the community, not to serve those that "WANT" to live in Webster Groves.

sjnordmann  
47 yr resident  
Tax payer  
Voter!  
Sent from my iPad
Deanna Gentile

From: <dee.gentile@me.com>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 5/2/2021 10:50 PM
Subject: Remarks of Visitors

There is too much misinformation on the rezoning. Revising our dated zoning rules to fit the changes of the world is needed. There is no data to back up the lies that revising the zoning will decrease property value. In fact, it is the opposite. Revised zoning will increase values as seen in neighboring communities. There are very few options in Webster to downsize or get a starter home. Yet our neighboring communities have these housing options and are seeing larger increases year over year of property value than we have in Webster. Adding flexibility in Webster housing will increase home values- not decrease it - as more people will look to Webster to live. Duplexes are desirable by younger families, single parent families and older generation. Don’t we want a diverse population in Webster? Progress will increase home values. Let’s adjust all zoning in Webster to accommodate the diverse needs of our community and build upon our beautiful walkable community.

Dee Gentile
146 Gray Ave
314-605-3325
Webster Groves City Council

It has just recently come to our attention that the city is proposing a zoning change to the A4 zoned residential areas. I was stunned that I just learned about this and a vote is expected on May 4. After canvassing others on my block, indeed no one had heard of this until just recently when it was published in the Webster Kirkwood times. We then reached out to other friends in Webster and found no one that was knowledgeable about this proposed change in zoning until just recently. This tells me that the City did not make a concerted effort to inform the community. While we vehemently disagree with the proposal this type of proposed zoning change has far reaching consequences and should at very least be a full and broad discussion in the community with the public voting on any such changes. It should not be a "almost unknown, undisclosed topic" voted on by the city council.

Regards,

Gary W. Schmidt
Greeley Ave
Vote NO for the A4 rezoning proposal and vote NO the Old Webster Redevelopment Project.

It is unrealistic to think you can build affordable housing and think it will stay affordable in the future. The only way housing will ever become affordable is when it is less desirable to live in a community. What is the goal of saturating our community with housing? Why add something that is inappropriate for our community’s land mass when what we have now is why people want to live here in the first place? It would make more sense to stop knocking down nice affordable existing houses and replacing them with a price tag 4 times as high. If you stop knocking down affordable housing and start filling the vacant store fronts in Old Webster, Old Orchard and the Crossing area there would be no reason to build more and over-saturate our charming and attractive community.

Briget Wilke-Grimm
41 Hart Ave.
Webster Groves, MO
As a 43 year resident homeowner on an A4 lot I strongly oppose the planned rezoning of A4 lots in Webster Groves. I support an increase in diversity but not at the expense of certain homeowners without any guarantee of any success.

Based on the information in the past week's local newspaper this effort seems to be driven by the desire to increase diversity but ignores all factors that create segregated housing patterns except price. There is no guarantee and no execution process to ensure that any increase in diversity will result. In fact the price of the future duplexes will be driven in large part by developers and real estate agents whose primary motivation is higher profit and/or higher price. There is nothing wrong with this nor is there with the idealistic desire to increase diversity. However the destabilization of property values and increase in density with many potential negative effects is not justified by these motivations and is, in my opinion, irresponsible (at best, naïve) given the significance of a home to the net worth of many homeowners and the uncertain outcome of diversity in any area. This is especially true since only a certain group of Webster homeowners will bear the primary consequences. Why are larger lots not included? Why is there not a vote on this issue which so strongly affects the future of so many of us?

More information on something so important for our future, and a vote by all citizens of Webster groves is needed.

John McFarlane
I’m concerned and disappointed at the lack of involvement citizen have been afforded by the city council in the Rezoning of A4 Housing Zones. I believe I’m up on most of what is happening with city council and issues that are before the council, but this slipped by me. I think that if more people were aware of the proposal, you’d have more of an outcry. I used my savings to buy the house on Greeley because the neighborhood was a nice quiet single family home neighborhood. We don’ have wide streets and there’s generally not enough parking for guests who visit because everyone has cars. Where will additional residents park? I don’t want to live in a neighborhood with duplexes and townhomes because I feel it will bring down the value of my property. I can’t believe that the purpose behind this proposal is actually to provide opportunity for housing to the underserved residents. I feel this is an opportunity for the council to raise money by increasing the number of residents in the city. If this were really about providing affordable housing, why did we limit it to the A4 zones? Why not the other zones? They could actually accommodate larger buildings and provide affordable housing. I am sure that if this were on the ballot in November that the citizens of Webster Groves would vote against it. I think the process being used is underhanded and not transparent enough for a topic this foundational to the city.

David M. Sterling
Greeley Ave
Perplexingly, Webster's proposed affordable duplexes are only permitted on tiny A4 lots, which already contain our most affordable housing stock. This is backwards! True progressive policies eat the richest first, in this case the A1 lots over 20,000 square feet. At the proposed lot rate of 3750 square feet, my wife's A1 property could be converted to 15 affordable units within a year! The 29 A1 homes in the 40-acre Old Westbury subdivision could be rezoned to yield several hundred such units. Include all the Webster A1 zones, and we can create thousands of low-income units while displacing only a relatively insignificant number of current Webster residents to Kirkwood or beyond. Is not calling on A1s (and A2s and A3s in turn) to also help solve our affordable housing crisis an injustice to many (including needy real estate speculators)? Going further, perhaps now is the time to equalize all A zones!

Seriously, this rezoning proposal is a big deal, and governance philosophy changes of this magnitude should demonstrate having the broad support of Webster voters in a general election, not quickly adopted in a couple of pandemic shrouded City Council meetings.

Thanks,

James (Jim) Seeser
5 Old Westbury Lane
St. Louis, MO 63119
jseeser@gmail.com
314-614-6769 cell
Katie Nakazono - Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting May 4, 2021

From: Katherine Weyhrich <weyhrichk@aol.com>
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 5/3/2021 5:24 PM
Subject: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting May 4, 2021

Members of the Webster Groves City Council,

My comments are directed to the proposed change in the A4 classification in the City’s Zoning Code. The proposed amendment provides a major change directly impacting approximately 70% of City residents and seems to be controversial. For example, according to the Webster-Kirkwood Times, at a recent Webster Groves City Council meeting at least one citizen proponent of the A4 amendment labeled, in my view, anyone who opposes the amendment as an exclusionist - an interesting stance for those professing a strong interest in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I was unable to locate any data concerning the results experienced in other communities adopting similar zoning changes. Thus it appears the city is well on the way to adopting wholesale changes to the zoning laws which directly impact 70% of City residences, with apparently little or no idea whether the changes will further the stated goal or might result in unintended negative consequences. Does the phrase “let’s do something even if it is wrong” come to mind?

What is the rush? Why not walk before we run, as recently observed by Councilman Franklin, and target a small section of the City to start? However, if the intent is to move forward with the present proposal when its consequences appear to be guesswork, as a matter of equity the amendment should be subject to a City wide vote.

Thank you for your consideration

Joseph H. Weyhrich, Resident
From: Katie Nakazono  
To: Sean  
Date: 5/3/2021 5:48 PM  
Subject: Re: “Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting”

As a Webster Groves resident in one of the A4 Single Family Housing areas, I find it hard to believe that you all are taking it upon yourselves to make a decision that impacts 69% of the homes within our city. If you truly represent our community and our interests, then do right by your citizenry and put this up for a vote next November.

If you don't respect your constituents enough to allow us to make a decision that impacts 70% of your residents, then we'll be escorting you to the door as our representatives. Please think twice before making such an uninformed decision that will impact so many of us.

Sincerely,

Sean Devereaux

Sent from my iPhone
Why are you limiting this to the smallest of the A4 lots? The neighborhoods with the smallest lots are already stressing the infrastructure and allowable street parking. Larger lots would be better able support two-family dwellings.

Wayne Davis
721 Greeley Ave
Webster Groves
My name is Neil Bartnett and I live in Webster. I want to voice my strong opposition to the A4 rezoning proposal. This has the potential to significantly change the neighborhood dynamics for the worse in the effected area. I for one would not like to see a single family home torn down so a developer can build a new 2 family. This means among other things, more cars parked on the streets and more rental units. Neither is good for our community. Please vote NO on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Neil Bartnett
429 Somerset Ave
Dear City Council members,

Please put the A4 rezoning change up for a vote in November.

I would also like to know how many City Council members live in the A4 rezoning area.

Thank you for your time,
Katie Nakazono - Re: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting on May 4, 2021

From: Katie Nakazono
To: Bartnett, Cheryl
Date: 5/3/2021 9:45 PM
Subject: Re: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting on May 4, 2021

>>> Cheryl Bartnett <cbartnett@yahoo.com> 5/3/2021 9:45 PM >>>
On the proposed 4A rezoning in Webster Groves:

How little regard is being given to permanently changing the character and density of our beloved neighborhoods.

All the citizens of Webster Groves, and most importantly the people who have invested in these 5,560 4A-zoned homes, deserve a vote in whether this rezoning should be allowed or not.

Webster Groves was not created as an extension of the city with duplexes and flats and alleys that provide buffers to this type of building but rather as something different, of neighborhoods comprised of single family homes forming one of the loveliest inner ring suburbs in St. Louis.

Creating more diverse housing stock at the expense of the current neighborhood structure is short sighted and short changes the current residents whose interests we voted you in office to protect.

Mayor Welch and Council Members Alexander, Arnold, Bliss, Franklin, Richardson, and Smith, please vote NO on this amendment proposed by Mara Perry and her staff.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Bartnett
429 Somerset Avenue
Webster Groves MO 63119
Katie Nakazono - Re: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

From: Katie Nakazono
To: McDowell, Lynda
Date: 5/3/2021 10:32 PM
Subject: Re: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

>>> Lynda McDowell <lmmcdowell@earthlink.net> 5/3/2021 10:32 PM >>>
I chose Webster Groves after living in Clayton and University City. The large trees, lawns, and gardens were among the reasons for moving here and staying here even as our taxes and home maintenance costs increased. Now our precious neighborhood is losing green space, character, and affordability due to large in fill houses that have tiny trees, token lawns, and driveways that extend to the property line. Neighboring homes that were previously dry now get water in the basement. Allowing duplexes in this area will exacerbate the loss of green space and change the ambience of the neighborhood even more. Duplexes on small lots will also cause overcrowding of our streets. If the city thinks duplexes are needed, the required lots should be large enough to allow for ample off-street parking and still retain enough green space for children to play outdoors.

I oppose the A4 rezoning change and agree it should be be put before voters.

Regards,

Lynda McDowell
201 Simmons Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
I write today to oppose the A4 rezoning proposal. So far the council has not provided any data to prove to the citizens of Webster Groves that this plan holds benefit to current residents. No studies have been presented showing the short term and long term implications of the plan. Have there been requests for this type of change to occur? If so, who is asking? Is the city ready to support the multi-family homes that will be built? Is the school district ready to support these families? Currently, we don't have answers to these questions (and others) and it appears as though this is simply a way to fulfill an altruistic goal which does nothing more than give residents a reason to pat themselves on the back while also bringing in more tax base for the city. Is this idea a result of the defeat of the special use tax?

In recent years many affordable homes have been torn down to make way for new homes which cost 4 times more than the home which was originally standing. I have seen this first-hand on my own street to at least 8 homes. What is to prevent this from occurring in the A4 zoning area and simply building large, expensive duplexes? If corporate builders are allowed to purchase properties in this zoning area and build a duplex which covers most of the lot, leaving little green space, this is no longer affordable housing. It is naive to think this will not occur. It is also naive to believe the proposed changes will not come to other zoning areas which are currently not affected.

As a resident of Webster Groves, I choose to stay here because neighborhoods in our city look and feel different from those in other cities that are nearby. The green space in our city does not simply exist in parks and common areas. Many of our neighborhoods have ample space between homes and properties that are well kept. People care about living here and invest in the property they own. While the proposed changes may not affect our neighborhoods in the immediate future, the look and feel of our neighborhoods will eventually see significant changes. The city is made of its citizens. Without the support of the citizens the city cannot and should not function. It is vital that the public be allowed to vote on ideas/proposals like this which come with significant short-term and long-term implications.

--
Seth Carruthers
Resident of Webster Groves
The amendments for revisions to the zoning code being discussed and voted on tonight relating to construction of duplex units in the city of Webster Groves have their roots in a laudable goal – making housing in our city affordable for those with limited incomes. However, I believe the results of this legislation will not have the intended effect.

There are very few undeveloped lots in Webster Groves. This legislation would allow developers to purchase existing homes on A4 lots, tear them down, and construct duplex units for sale or rent. For this to work, it must be profitable. Therefore, the smallest, least expensive housing found on an A4 lot – specifically those that haven’t yet been undated or expanded – will be purchased and redeveloped. These new developments will be designed and built to maximize the profit for the builder, most likely costing as much or more to purchase or rent per unit than the house previously found on the site.

There are some places in Webster Groves where duplex housing would strengthen the neighborhood, but these areas are limited. This is a natural outcome of living in an older city, and one of the main reasons people want to live here.

All over our city, our modestly sized, affordable housing stock is being transformed into larger, grander, more expensive homes. This is the most pressing issue facing our city in terms of maintaining its diversity, sustainability and character. The bill being voted on tonight only hastens that change.

I respectfully ask the Council to reconsider this amendment.

John Berendzen, 617 Fair Oaks Ave.

---

**John Berendzen AIA**

President

**FoxArchitects**

1 S. Memorial Drive, Suite 1800
St. Louis, MO 63102
o 314 621 4343 x 117  m 314 378 3430
jberendzen@fox-arch.com
www.fox-arch.com
Webster residents what to vote on A4 proposal that could change the community forever. Our homes are our investment and we don’t want the city council to dictate our future or be influenced by developers. There are many affordable homes in W.G. and new construction cost are high so what's the point?

M Ward
Katie Nakazono - Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

From: scott walburn <walburn@swbell.net>
To: "citycouncil@webstergroves.org" <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 5/4/2021 10:43 AM
Subject: Remarks by Visitors - City Council Meeting

Dear Webster Groves City Council,

I am not in favor of rezoning A4 single family housing to duplex housing. One of the reasons I purchased a home and moved to my neighborhood over 35 years ago is because it is comprised of single family homes. I wanted to live in a neighborhood of single family homes. There is nothing wrong with duplexes, apartments, mobile homes, etc. The qualities of each appeal to different people. I am drawn to single family homes, so that is where I live and would like to continue to live.

But if having more multi family homes is good for Webster Groves, I have to wonder why it is only good for Webster Groves to have them on the smallest lots in the city? Logic would dictate that the larger the lot the more easily the lot will accommodate additional families. So I have to ask why only the smallest lots? If this is good for Webster Groves then let all of Webster Groves benefit from it, not just the smallest lots in the city.

Sincerely,
Scott Walburn
Old Webster Redevelopment Project is too much for such a small space. Destined for failure before it begins. We will be a laughing stock and the term 'Webster' will never have the same connotation again. PLEASE STOP beating a dead horse. On net, 'more people' does not always equate to 'more revenue' - long-term costs and consequences will be detrimental to this community – PLEASE take a realistic long view of this. This proposed project should be scrapped. The planners do not have to live with the consequences, we do.

Thank you - Maggie O'Toole

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Old Webster Redevelopment Project is too much for such a small space. Destined for failure before it begins. We will be a laughing stock and the term 'Webster' will never have the same connotation again. PLEASE STOP beating a dead horse. On net, 'more people' does not always equate to 'more revenue' - long term costs and consequences will be detrimental to this community - PLEASE take a realistic long view of this. This proposed project should be scrapped. The planners do not have to live with the consequences, we do.

Thank you - Maggie O'Toole
From: Greg <nski47@aol.com>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org
Date: 5/3/2021 9:29 AM
Subject: A4 rezoning proposal

A4 should be put on a ballot to voted on

Greg Krenski
Sent from my iPhone
From: Greg <nski47@aol.com>
To: <citycouncil@webstergroves.org>
Date: 5/3/2021 9:39 AM
Subject: Old Webster Redevelopment Project

I am opposed to the current proposal for redevelopment. Alternative would be to keep it green space with nature trails. Greg Krenski

Sent from my iPhone
Councilmember Franklin read the following statement regarding Bill #9145:

“I had the unique opportunity and pleasure of growing up on the South Side of Webster Groves, just a few blocks from our Rec. Center. My childhood was made possible because in 1974, my recently married parents—neither of whom had the opportunity to attend college—were able to purchase a 960 square foot house for approximately $20,000.

As a result of my Father’s strong union job, my Mother’s unyielding work ethic, and my parents’ amazing ability to make a dollar stretch, my parents were able to raise four children in this great city and provide each of my siblings and me with the opportunity to enjoy a life better than theirs. The epitome of the American Dream.

My neighborhood and school friends emanated from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and their parents’ employment was reflective of that diversity, ranging from janitors to lawyers, from union workers to doctors. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of my friends and neighbors looked like me—they were white. Webster Groves—and suburbs like Webster Groves throughout the Country—have long been plagued by our lack of racial diversity. And to be clear, that long, historical, and too-often discriminatory racial homogeneity demands rectification through policies and laws that will promote and encourage racial diversity, along with all other forms of diversity. After all, we are better as a community (and as a Country) when our children, neighbors, and religious networks create and encourage diversity.

In 1917, after the United States Supreme Court held that zoning ordinances could not specifically ban a certain race from certain zones (the textbook definition of overt racism), communities turned to covert racism. To prevent lower-income and racially diverse families from living where middle-class whites resided, local and federal officials began promoting zoning ordinances to reserve middle-class neighborhoods for single-family homes. Federal rules and redlining kept black families from getting mortgages, and typically housing developers couldn’t get financing without covenants in the deeds.

When Webster Groves enacted its current zoning regulations, one of the clear intents of the zoning regulations was to prevent racial diversity. Although the regulations, theoretically, permitted duplexes, due to the cumbersome rules and limitations, the spirit of the zoning regulations was crystal clear: single family residences were the avenue to create and promote a homogeneous character of Webster Groves—a white homogeneous character.

Few can deny that over the past 50 or 60 years, Webster Groves has had a productive and successful run—that is, if you measure success by rising home values. Buying a home in Webster Groves has almost always been a good investment.

As a result, Webster Groves has developed a character that is often rivaled by neighboring communities and communities throughout the Country. However, it is abhorrent for us to fail to recognize that the “Webster Groves character” that so many of us cherish and invest our money in
through home ownership was, indeed, founded and is rooted, in part, upon racial segregation or racism.

The proposed legislation that we are voting upon this evening would remove the limitations and restrictions embedded in our antiquated zoning ordinances, and thereby permit duplexes in a vast majority of Webster Groves. Effectively, Webster Groves would change from a single-family residence community to a community that would permit duplexes, in addition to single family residences, apartments, and condominiums. The effects of this legislation would, obviously, not be instantaneous, and, in fact, is more likely to be a slow, decades-long modification.

This legislation would potentially promote and create diversity in housing, or more aptly termed inclusionary housing. The underlying question, then, that must be answered is why do we need or want diversity in housing. For me, diversity in housing is fundamentally important to the strength and longevity of any community, including Webster Groves.

We need diversity in housing to ensure long-time residents can effectively downsize and remain residents of Webster Groves. We need diversity in housing to ensure first-time homeowners can enter the Webster Groves community without being saddled by unconscionable housing debt or outrageous rental fees. We need diversity in housing to ensure those residents that have smaller lawns, no lawns, or limited home maintenance can enjoy the City of Webster Groves. We need diversity in housing so a family can start and end in Webster Groves.

Data unequivocally demonstrates that communities with diversity in housing can better endure market downturns. The data also demonstrates that diversity in housing stimulates economic and racial diversity that has been proven to be better for family, schools, and children. All laudable and intrinsically important factors that elected officials must account for when legislating.

However, merely because a community has a diversity in housing, does not necessarily equate to racial or economic diversity in the community. The legislation before the Webster Groves City Council tonight does nothing to promote or encourage racial or economic diversity. Rather, the legislation before Council merely creates the opportunity for diversity of housing, without ensuring that our Council goals are achieved or executed upon.

The legislation before us tonight does not limit the costs of the duplexes that could be built and later sold. The legislation before us tonight does not limit the rent a landlord of a duplex could charge. The legislation before us tonight does not limit the single-family residences that could be destroyed to make way for duplexes that may turn out to cost more than that old, 1000 square foot single family residence. In sum, completely absent from this legislation is any inclusionary housing program that would, actually, promote and encourage racial and economic diversity.

Enacting legislation that would create diversity in housing that would promote and encourage racial and economic diversity is legislation that I could support and that Webster Groves needs. This is not that legislation however.

Rather, this legislation merely abandons the idea of single-family residence community without ensuring, or creating the preconditions, that would actually promote those goals and outcomes we all want and that this community needs. As a result, I cannot support this legislation under the
guise that mere diversity in housing will create racial and economic diversity in our community because this legislation does nothing to promote those objectives.

With that being said, I feel it is incumbent upon me to say one last thing. Over the past few weeks, I received numerous emails, phones calls, and texts opposing this legislation. In those written and verbal communication, too often I encountered overt and covert racism and innuendos. Terminology employed included “duplexes will bring undesirables;” “low-income people can save money like I did to buy into Webster Groves,” and “duplexes will decrease my home value.”

First, categorically, there is no reliable data to demonstrate that duplexes decrease home values. It is difficult to overlook the underlying racial undertones triggering that belief. It is wrong and it should be immediately abandoned, for there is nothing undesirable about an American resident living in a duplex and there is nothing, but conjecture, that duplex residents are bad neighbors or don’t care about their communities.

Second, home ownership is becoming unattainable for too many Americans, regardless of race. As I began, forty-six years ago, my parents were able to buy a modest home here in Webster Groves for approximately $20,000. Just last year, I bought my first home—after living in an apartment in Webster Groves for three years—an almost one-hundred-year-old, 1400 square foot home for $250,000. With staggering student loan debt, staying in Webster Groves was almost unattainable for me, an elected councilmember.

Truth be told, if Webster Groves is to remain an economically diverse community and we are to increase our racial diversity—both important factors that make Webster Groves so special—residents must be willing to permit Council to legislate in new ways. If residents want to remain a single-family community, residents must, they must, permit legislation that saves and promotes single family residences that are cost friendly. Members of this Council have proposed ideas and policies that would promote and encourage racial and economic diversity, including a tax on newly built large homes, work-force housing, home maintenance and/or repairs assistance, and limiting the size of new homes. This type of legislation will be assisting in achieving Council’s goals, and this is the type of legislating we should be working on."

Councilmember Arnold read from the following statement: “Over the last few years, we have been talking about how we can be a more inclusive community and ensure that a diverse housing stock exists in WG.

First housing discussions: Work sessions

- April 2, 2019
- November 5, 2019
- January 21, 2020
- February 4, 2020
- February 18, 2020
- March 3, 2020

Housing town hall meeting: November 21, 2019
Housing survey: November, 2019-- asking questions about density, multi-family and affordability in our housing.

Housing Goals March 3, 2020

**Goal #4.** Council will evaluate and adopt code changes that would increase the density of available housing.

* Council will explore policies that would encourage multi-family housing appropriate for various income levels, including apartments, duplexes, town homes, and patio homes.

Plan Commission meetings: October 2020, November 2020, December 2020, January 2021, February 2021, and March 2021. They were thoughtful and thorough in their examination and voted for this proposal unanimously.

The ad published in the W-K Times was misleading in several ways and made some accusations that are not true. Yet, readers of the W-K Times read it as a news article rather than an ad. I’d like to make a few points in response:

I have reviewed our timeline. This has been an open and transparent process.

Pursuing more diverse and affordable options because families who live here right now are concerned about being priced out, seniors are concerned about being priced out. When I ran for election, I knocked on a whole lot of doors and had hundreds of conversations with people. The cost of housing was the number one concern by far. To suggest this is coming from outside of Webster means you have not talked to very many Webster residents.

Duplexes are an option to the increasing challenge of small homes being demolished and replaced with houses 5 and 6 times in value. There are plenty of examples:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Value in 2019</th>
<th>Value in 2020</th>
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<td>432 Bacon</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>740,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>318 Simmons</td>
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<tr>
<td>120 Summit Place</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>320 Westside</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>585,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Duplexes must meet every standard in our code, including ARB review, the floor area ratio standard, and parking standard among others.

Finally, those advertising in the WKT have not made a single public comment in the Plan Commission or before the Council on this proposal until we finally heard from one of them tonight. They went straight to misleading ads in the paper. I appreciate everyone who participated directly in the hearings and sent us comments about the proposal.”

She also stated, this is about what the people of Webster Groves have asked of us, not developers. Single family homes are being demolished, and what is replacing them are large homes. When you
take a $200,000 house and change it to a million-dollar house, that changes the character of the neighborhood. Also, the people whose names are on the ads in the paper – tonight was the first time one of them has made a public comment. She thanked those who commented this evening. I appreciate those who called and emailed so we can have an exchange on the issue. She also thanked the Plan Commission and Mara Perry.

Mayor Welch thanked Mara and staff. This was a Council request, regardless of what the community is saying and responding to. I fully support the creation of duplexes, townhomes, and patio homes. But I would like to see something like what other communities are doing – clustering these homes, making it more affordable. She gave the example of the townhomes on Kirkham and Slocum. I will also tell you, maintaining affordable homes has always been an option for me. We have a good array of diverse housing in the community. I think the economics of this proposal is going to have a negative consequence on affordable housing. I think the developers will find these appealing – you can buy a home for $200,000, tear it down, build $800,000 worth of duplexes and that small affordable starter house has disappeared from the community. The response from our residents has been very negative from people. I think the expectation has been that they bought a home in a single family neighborhood. They choose to live in a single family home and don’t want to live next to two families on a small lot. Another thing that bothers me is that we shouldn’t pick off one zoning area and not the others. I can’t in good conscience vote to allow this in our densest neighborhood and exempt my own.

Councilmember Richardson stated that this is a first step. I think there is a lot of hand wringing here, but I trust that the Plan Commission chose this because it was the one that was easiest to achieve. I am less concerned about a lot of the comments because I can see that they are ill informed, and frankly, I can read the exclusion in them, and that is not something I was elected to protect. I would say, not speaking for Emerson and Karen, but we ran with this as our promise, to push for greater housing variability in our community. I don’t feel like we are going against the wishes of the public, regardless of comments brought on by misleading ads in the Webster Kirkwood Times. I will vote in good conscience and sleep well tonight.

Councilmember Bliss stated that she believes in the process of the Plan Commission and Mara and Danny’s efforts in communicating the nuances in the ordinance. There are certain protections for single family homes that are applied to duplexes. We have not had these discussions in any closed sessions and we have had numerous discussion about housing. That is why we haven’t looked at some of our other goals. I am ready to vote and am glad we have had a healthy robust conversation.

Councilmember Smith stated that his earlier questions were his statement. I have always supported affordable housing and a diverse housing stock. Like Sarah said, this is a first step.

Councilmember Alexander stated that listening to the comments she is overwhelmed by the extent that misinformation is out there. I have questions, including why this is limited to the A4 area, but I recognize that we have to start somewhere. We are not creating a new zoning law, we are amending one that is existing. I am ready to vote.