

Expect a Letter from WNA Soon

By Mike Fitzgerald

Here's an update on WNA's goal to seek down zoning. The last newsletter introduced the topic of WNA's intent to seek a change of zone from the city to help protect residents in Districts 1 and 2 (33rd to 40 and 40th to 48th) against construction of out-of-character (ugly) houses or apartments. Then speakers at the February meeting displayed current zoning maps and explained how down zoning will benefit the neighborhood. Residents who completed the Needs, Resources and Assets Survey included in the last newsletter listed zoning as a top concern. Next, WNA residents interested in learning more or in helping with the project are asked to call WNA President Fred Freytag 435-2465 or email at fred@witherbeena.org. A project planning meeting will be held soon – and anyone interested in attending will want to get the date, time and location from Fred.

Among the first of the project tasks, WNA will send all residents in Districts 1 and 2 a letter to invite them to a public meeting. Other project tasks include WNA submitting an application to the city, collecting signatures of residents who support the proposal and attending Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

Support and help is needed from residents on each block – we hope we can count on you for a little help. Please let us hear from you.

WNA is encouraged by Lincoln City Council members Jonathan Cook and Patte Newman announcing on April 5th their plans for ensuring Stronger, Safer Neighborhoods. Cook discussed efforts to preserve neighborhood character by limiting future density in existing neighborhoods which were not built for high density development. "I will strongly support the efforts of neighborhoods to protect their historic character and promote homeownership through downzoning," he said.

Downzoning grandfathers in all existing investments,

so no one is at risk of losing what they own, but it gives assurance to single family homeowners that if they buy a house in an older neighborhood, they won't be faced with a slip-in apartment next door, as has happened in many older neighborhoods in the past. "This is critical to promoting homeowner reinvestment in older areas," said Cook.

Downzoning has been unanimously approved by the council in many neighborhoods all over town, including Near South, University Place, Irvingdale, Witherbee, and Everett. There are more areas that need help, however.

Another tool to preserve neighborhood character is design standards for new construction. Neighborhood design standards are in place, but they are not strong enough, he said. "There are loopholes that unscrupulous developers are taking advantage of to victimize neighborhoods, and I will work to close those loopholes," said Cook.

WNA wishes to thank Tabitha for being a great neighbor and providing meeting space for us each month. We appreciate it.

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