



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] Amendments to the Knoxville-Knox County Minimum Subdivision Regulations MPC FILE # 9-A-16-OA

1 message

Jack W <ajwoodal@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 10, 2017 at 7:14 PM

Reply-To: ajwoodal@gmail.com

To: commission@knoxmpc.org

Cc: gerald.green@knoxmpc.org, tom.brechko@knoxmpc.org

To: Knoxville – Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission

MPC takes up revisions to the Knoxville-Knox County Minimum Subdivision Regulations at their October 12, 2017 meeting. At the September MPC meeting, MPC staff presented sidewalk options to MPC for the new proposed subdivision regulations, which included an option which would require sidewalks in all new subdivisions. Despite extensive staff work on sidewalk issues in Knox County, the October proposal does not have an option which would require sidewalks, or have any explanation why the staff abandoned an option for required sidewalks.

Tennessee state law provides that developing standards for new subdivisions are the duty of the Planning Commission. Subdivision regulations are not the duty of other governmental bodies. State law requires the Planning Commission to assure that new subdivisions provide “conditions favorable to health, safety, convenience and prosperity” [Tennessee Code Annotated 13-4-303 (a). Subdivision regulations — Adoption]. The subdivision regulations provide they are adopted for “for the harmonious development of the City of Knoxville and Knox County. . . [including] adequate open spaces for traffic, light, air and recreation” [Proposed Subdivision Regulations, section 1.01]. These new subdivisions will represent the community for the next 50 years.

Sidewalks have been under consideration for a year and a half. Rather than insist the MPC resolve every potential construction issue before sidewalks are required, MPC should vote to require sidewalks. Knox County Engineering can work with the development community to resolve construction issues. The variance procedure is adequate to deal with claims of hardship.

Jack Woodall
9520 Westland Drive
Knoxville, TN 37922

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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] October 2017 Agenda Item #5 (9-A-16-OA) - Knoxville/Knox County Subdivision Regulations

1 message

cdgreenwood via Commission <commission@knoxmpc.org>

Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 4:03 AM

Reply-To: cdgreenwood@cs.com

To: commission@knoxmpc.org

Cc: gerald.green@knoxmpc.org

Dear Commissioners,

Knox County desperately needs more sidewalks. It is already going to take a long time to catch up to where we should be in this regard. Please do not continue to put off addressing the problem by allowing more development without sidewalks because it will just make it significantly harder for future generations to address it.

Having grown up in a military family before settling in Knoxville over 30 years ago, I have lived in many different suburbs in many different states, and have visited many more, and have never seen a place with so few sidewalks and so many people walking in the road or on dangerous roadsides to get from place to place or to exercise, walk their dogs, etc. as I have seen in Knox County. I understand how this has come to be, due to the rural nature of housing along the original roads, but it is short-sighted and dangerous for Knox County to continue to allow new developments to be put in without sidewalks. Growth is happening rapidly and the toll on people's health and safety, as well as the quality of life in the County, will only get worse as more developments are put in without sidewalks.

It is undisputed that the cost of retrofitting neighborhoods with sidewalks greatly exceeds the cost of putting sidewalks in as new neighborhoods are developed. Since raising property taxes and putting the County into debt are probably not politically realistic options, the best option is to build the cost into the cost of new homes and have the homeowners who largely benefit from the sidewalks, pay for their cost as part of the cost of their new house.

Unfortunately, it appears that the desire to maximize short-term profits on new housing is being put above the long-term health and safety of the residents of Knox County. While claiming to be concerned that sidewalk costs would price low-income people and typical first-time buyers out of the market, developers actually provided quite low estimates for sidewalk costs when the discussion was about the possibility of fee-in-lieu (FIL) payments by developers as an alternative to requiring sidewalks. The truth is that adding the cost of sidewalks will not make a significant difference when considering the total cost of new home ownership and will provide homeowners with a higher quality of life and higher potential resale value.

I am aware that there is little or nothing that the citizens of Knox County can do about requiring sidewalks in new developments at this time. It became very clear when, earlier this year, I attended a meeting where citizen input on the subdivision regulations was being solicited. During the meeting, MPC staff noted they had already decided not to continue discussion about requiring sidewalks in new developments in the County because they said there was insufficient support for it at this time. With County Commission being heavily weighted, by the appointments of our County Mayor, in favor of developers, it is clear such a requirement will not be implemented.

Still, you should know that there is tremendous support from County residents for sidewalks to be put in as new homes are developed, yet numerous developments are going up in our communities right now without them.

Thank you.

Carolyn Greenwood
3224 Boomerang Lane
Knoxville, TN 37931
865-254-5039

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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] proposed updated subdivision regulations

1 message

Paul Laudeman <paul@laudeman.com>

Tue, Oct 10, 2017 at 10:17 PM

Reply-To: paul@laudeman.com

To: commission@knoxmpc.org

Sidewalks are an important part of neighborhoods for many reasons. Walkability and community are the most obvious. Safety and desirability are others. I realize that developers say "money" is the most important consideration. However sidewalks add little to the cost of development. Building sidewalks creates jobs which help grow the economy and the small cost of installing them initially can be easily rolled into the price of new houses.

Home buyers want sidewalks and are willing to pay a little more for them.

Please vote to require sidewalks in all new construction as well as significant redevelopments. For a better Knoxville.

Paul Laudeman

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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] Sidewalk Requirements

1 message

Brittany Bentley <brittanydavisbentley@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 9:03 AM

Reply-To: brittanydavisbentley@gmail.com

To: commission@knoxmpc.org

Hi,

As a relatively new addition to the Knoxville area and someone who falls within an increasingly important cohort, older millennials, I wanted to voice my support for the proposal to require sidewalks in new subdivisions.

When my husband and I were looking to purchase a home in Knoxville we focused in on only those where we would be able to walk to amenities such as parks and restaurants, unfortunately this narrowed our search to a very small number of neighborhoods. We eventually decided on living in the Old North Neighborhood because of what we saw every time we drove down around the neighborhood, people out walking their dogs, pushing strollers, and talking to neighbors sitting on front porches.

Sidewalks build connected, healthy communities which should be the aim of a city like Knoxville.

I appreciate your consideration and hope you will support the proposal,

Brittany Bentley

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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] MPC meeting tomorrow - urgent affordable housing issue

1 message

Jennifer Roche <jennifer@kaarmls.com>

Wed, Oct 11, 2017 at 2:24 PM

Reply-To: jennifer@kaarmls.com

To: commission@knoxmpc.org

Commissioners,

I write to you on behalf of the Knoxville Area Association of Realtors in reference to your meeting tomorrow, 10-12-17, and the issue of sidewalks and affordable workforce housing (homes under \$200K) in Knox County (outside City limits).

KAAR, and other groups, are concerned that MPC may move to require sidewalks in subdivisions in Knox County at the meeting tomorrow. While realtors are all for promoting walkability and sidewalks, where appropriate, we are greatly worried about a growing concern in our county and across the nation: affordable workforce housing.

We want to see sidewalks and better walkability along roads outside of subdivisions, where the cost of such improvements can be enjoyed by the greater community and not just the residents of 1 subdivision. Requiring sidewalks in County subdivisions is simply something our current market conditions and our home buyers cannot afford.

Our Knox County residential market statistics demonstrate this: inventory is down and demand is high, pushing prices above pre-recession highs:

- we have 2.1 months of inventory available; this is a severe shortage; this is a crisis level for buyers; a healthy, balanced market has 6 months of inventory available

- comparing 2016 vs 2017, new listings are down 38% and sales are down 18%

- average price of new construction in the County is \$351K and \$495K in the City

Realtors and mortgage lenders have ready and qualified buyers who can't find homes to purchase or find a home only to lose it in a multiple-bidding-war.

We simply cannot add the cost of sidewalks to new construction or we will be pushing our Knox County workforce out of the County to lower priced homes in Blount, Anderson, and Loudon Counties.

Sidewalks not only add thousands of dollars to the price of homes but push homes further back on lots, adding to grading issues, reducing backyard space, limiting placement of lots and homes, all adding more and more to the total cost of housing. All development costs are pushed onto buyers; it's simple economics; and that reduces housing affordability.

Please, I respectfully ask you to make a priority call: please prioritize affordably-priced housing over sidewalks in subdivisions. Our Knox County workforce deserves to live in Knox County as well.

Thank you very much and please let me know if I may provide any further information to you.

Knox County MLS Data	City of Knoxville MLS Data
123 listings between \$100K-\$200K (that may seem like a lot but many of these homes are severely outdated and would require significant upkeep and deferred maintenance costs) (over twice that available in the \$200K-\$400K price range)	174 listings between \$100K-\$200K (that may seem like a lot but about half of these are 2 bed, 1 bath, and quite old and small)
9 new construction	8 new construction (1 less than county)
Average age is 34 years old	Average age is 55 years old
Average size is 1700 square feet, 3 beds and 2 baths	Average size is 1600 square feet, 3 beds and 2 baths (100 SF smaller than County houses)

3 are listed as having sidewalks, all new construction, all with HOA fees of \$120-\$300 annually	6 are listed as having sidewalks, all older *many more with sidewalks but Realtors aren't notating sidewalks in listings because it's not a critical selling point
15 total properties have mandatory HOA's, all newer construction	1 total properties have mandatory HOA
Average property taxes is \$700	Average property taxes is \$1,240 (\$540 more than County houses)
Average PPSF is \$102 and Average DOM is 62	Average PPSF is \$102 (same as County) and Average DOM is 60 (same as County)
Sales prices are up an average of \$8,000	Sales prices are up an average of \$10,000
Number of 2017 sales, compared to 2016 is down over 18%	Number of 2017 sales, compared to 2016 is down over 18%
Number of new listings is down 38%	Number of new listings is down 37%
240 new construction on the market with an average list price of \$351K (over \$100K less than the City)	42 new construction on the market (200 less than county) with average list price of \$495K (over \$100K more than the County)
It's a seller's market – severe hardship market for buyers with 2.1 months of inventory available (6 months is a healthy market)	It's a seller's market – severe hardship market for buyers with 1.9 months of inventory available (6 months is a healthy market)

Jennifer Roche, J.D.
Governmental Affairs Director
Knoxville Area Association of Realtors
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