

October 10, 2017

My name is Kennie Riffey and I am a resident of Parkridge. I am against the expansion of the H1 overlay.

- 1) Knoxville is booming and one only need refer to the MPC's April 5, 2017 report titled "Worforce Housing Report" to learn of the dilemma in our housing sector. In this report, the MPC found a shortage of rental and moderate-priced single family residences. Parkridge still has both of those to offer. This overlay will accelerate the removal of even more rental and low cost single-family homes from the housing stock. There is no moderate priced housing in 4th and Gill and Old North Knox, the two best known historic overlays in the city.
- 2) KCDC has lost many Section 8 properties because the landlords can make more money on the open market. Again, this proposed expansion covering more than 500 houses will result in even more losses of affordable housing.
- 3) This proposed historic overlay in Parkridge will be larger than any other overlay in the city and will cover a neighborhood that is traditionally low to middle income. The cumbersome Guidelines for what are considered "appropriate" repairs will be costly and have the effect of pushing residents out. Homeowners should be allowed to fix up their homes as they choose and take advantage of the booming housing market as they choose – not by backing them into a corner because of restrictive Guidelines that make maintaining their homes nearly impossible from a financial standpoint.
- 4) This is not a discussion about gentrification. People want to live near downtown and they are going to move into surrounding old city neighborhoods. That is a given. This is a discussion about artificially accelerating that process in order to increase property values quickly and make it difficult for anyone without extra income to maintain and stay in their homes.
- 5) H1 zone was adopted into City of Knoxville zoning ordinances in 1971. Created primarily in response to urban flight – people leaving the city and moving to the suburb – it was designed to entice developers to fix up houses and neighborhoods that had been left behind. Our city administration has acknowledged that many of the zoning codes are outdated and no longer apply in today's market. "Our zoning ordinance was written decades ago, for land-use patterns of a very different era – the post-World War II suburban model," Mayor Rogero said. "The ordinance may have made sense then. But as we've grown, and lifestyle choices have changed, the ordinance no longer fits our needs in 2016." Mayor Rogero's report goes on to say that "Our current zoning ordinance is very rigid and in some cases prevents neighborhoods from achieving their full potential. An updated ordinance can protect the things we value about our neighborhoods and commercial areas while allowing the kinds of smart, sustainable growth that will move Knoxville forward."
- 6) The H1 is a restrictive overlay, best compared to a condo homeowner's association. Homeowners must ask permission of the city, through the Historic Zoning Commission, to be allowed to make necessary repairs and must use the materials and processes the

Commission's Guidelines state. There are multiple steps and fees to pay to make simple repairs, such as to deteriorated steps or a porch. The homeowner must take time off work to go down to the City/County building and apply for a "Certificate of Appropriateness." The homeowner must then return one or more times as required for modifications to their plans for proposed repairs or to finally pick up the building permit. More time off from work. Most families who have lived in this community for decades are working class. Too much money and time to make simple repairs.

- 7) Many Parkridge residents are still unaware that this zoning change is proposed. Of the people who do know, many misunderstand and think the expansion does not include them or that the city will pay for their repairs.
- 8) There is already a H1 overlay that covers more than 150 houses in Parkridge and includes all of the George Barber houses listed by the Historic Zoning Commission. Several of the current H1 residents have spoken out against the expansion because they already experience the restrictive and costly Guidelines that must be followed when repairing their homes.
- 9) Many of the houses in the proposed expansion area are rectangular boxes and are in no way historic (as identified by Kaye Graybeal, the city's historic zoning planner). Although these rectangular boxes are classed as non-contributing, the homeowners must follow the same repair/modification Guidelines as homeowners who live in elaborate Victorians or George Barbers. Why burden people with Guidelines that are actually designed for preserving historic structures and not for preserving neighborhoods?
- 10) If there is to be an expansion, why so many houses? Why not simply add a few more blocks of houses that are obviously historic instead of sweeping in everyone unnecessarily?
- 11) A Neighborhood Conservation District would be more appropriate given the large number of houses that are not really of historic value. Refer to the report on non-contributing structures.