

8/6/2020

Greetings Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to thank those who are fighting against the gentrification of our historic neighborhoods like 5th/Ave Seminary Lane.

I am reaching out to you asking for your support of a moratoria for this community.

As you may know, this community dates back to the mid 1860s when Blacks were released from local plantations. Schools, businesses, churches and homes were built. We have some of these families who continue to live in this community. We have churches that were established more than 100 years ago, still holding services.

I voted and supported most of you on this commission because I thought you would be there to save our neighborhoods, support our neighbors and to make neighborhoods stronger, not create situations where our neighborhoods are taken away from us. We are now watching another generation of homelessness due much to gentrification of older neighborhoods.

I am asking you to take a pause from the increase in gentrifying that is going on right now. I ask you to go deep within yourselves to figure out what your role can be in insuring that we not only preserve our history but also insure its safe and affordable for our residents who are there now, and those who have been displaced an opportunity to return.

My organization Cultural Arts Coalition has a permanent exhibit in Washington DCs Library of Congress of this community. While we are proud of this exhibit, its even more important to preserve and protect the community and its residents.

You represent Us, You have a responsibility to our residents, not just those only looking to profit at the expense of our most vulnerable income challenged.

Its time we seized the opportunity to put mechanisms in place that protect our neighborhoods.

What role will you play in this moratorium request. Please do not cloud the issue of gentrification with possible law suits and talk of inclusionary/exclusionary zoning.

As you sit and make excuses for why a moratorium may not work, more and more housing is lost and so is our historical neighborhoods.

What will be your role in gentrifying our neighborhoods?

Thank you for your attention to my letter, please let me know if I can clarify any portion of this correspondence.

Sincerely

Nkwanda Jah

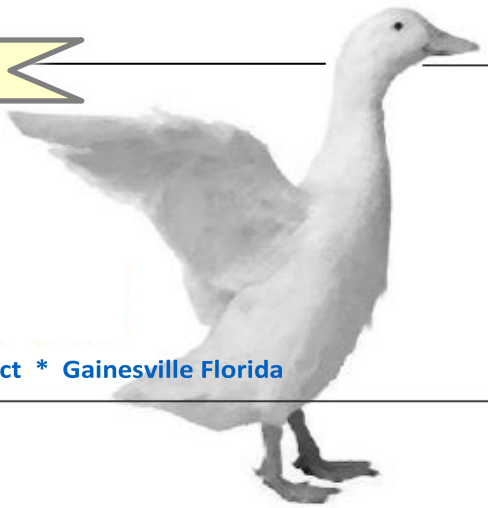
Executive Director, Cultural Arts Coalition



celebrating 30 years

dna

duckpond neighborhood association * NE Historic District * Gainesville Florida



City Commissioner Gail Johnson
City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville FL 32601

August 5, 2020

Dear Commissioner Johnson,

The Board of the Duckpond Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to support a moratorium on new development in historically Black neighborhoods.

We understand that the historically Black neighborhood of Fifth Avenue/Seminary Lane is presently experiencing an attempt to place a large scale student apartment complex that is out of character with their culture and character in their neighborhood. Enacting a moratorium will provide an opportunity to examine the ramifications of the proposed project and provide for equity and appropriateness of future developments.

We believe a moratorium will be a good way to give some breathing room to all historically Black neighborhoods until a new comprehensive plan is enacted that addresses the ability of developers to build large apartment complexes in neighborhoods that are presently single family residential neighborhoods composed of one and two story homes.

Sincerely,

Melanie Barr
Ashley MacSuga-Gage, president
David Auth, vice president
Michelle Koidin Jaffee, secretary
Brian Miller, treasurer
directors:
Nic Armfield Joanne Auth Mai Dean
Chris Jones Dan Rountree Mike Ryan Simonovich



August 5, 2020

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

The building of the Harper's Point development and the lack of community engagement surrounding the project has prompted this agency to join Commissioner Johnson in requesting a moratorium on development. The main reason for this support is the lack of community engagement policies or procedures. Also, there is need for coordination of the multitude of building projects, infrastructure projects, traffic/transportation plans and projects, either in process or being considered for the future especially in East Gainesville.

In addition there is a desperate need for oversight to assure that decisions made regarding future projects do not adversely impact the City as a whole and, most important, the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding the project. Development decision making and changes to ordinances in Gainesville should be made to benefit the entire city, including vulnerable communities.

Any decisions regarding the Waldo Road Corridor will not only impact the traffic flow in and through the immediate area but also will impact future development in the surrounding District and the quality of life in our East Gainesville neighborhoods. Decisions regarding the building of additional hotels, stores, restaurants and residential housing will impact traffic flow, parking, energy, water and sewage usage, aesthetics and the environment and should be made in part by the community that will experience the effects of the development.

Our City planners need to view future development holistically, rather than fragmented and at such a pace that robust community engagement can be done for each project. A



moratorium would allow the community and city staff to work together to develop a more inclusive process that would allow neighbors a voice in development decisions for their communities.

Sincerely,

Andrew Miles Sr.
Andrew L. Miles Sr., Executive Director

Greater Duval Neighborhood Association

918 NE 18th Street

Gainesville, Florida 32641



We build strength, stability, self-reliance, and shelter.

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

For the last two years, we have been exploring the issues that lead to gentrification and marginalization of communities in an attempt to create a more robust affordable housing plan. The most relevant issues to our city and community involves the University of Florida and rapid student development. When a university is located in close proximity to a disinvested neighborhood, the relationship between the institution and the community should be mutually beneficial. However, the bond can become unrequited when higher education institutions invest in the community without regard to or input from existing residents (quoted from an article, link included). Often times, upgrades in disinvested neighborhoods do not seem problematic and are often packaged as a facelift for the area. However, development can equate to a recipe for gentrification. John Joe Schlichtman, DePaul University assistant professor and author of *Gentrifier*, defines gentrification as the “reinvestment of real estate capital into disinvested and devalued neighborhoods in order to create a new residential and commercial infrastructure for middle- and high-income inhabitants.”

When you look at the communities closest to the University of Florida you can see single family homes replaced with massive student housing development. Most of these developments are privately owned, large money generators that extract wealth from our community to out of town developers. These issues are heightened with State Universities that are exempt from property taxes such as the one in we have here. Because these institutions have the support of the State, there are very few tools that can be used to address the gentrification of our Communities. One of the most effective tools is the creation of Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts. When successfully executed, this process create new policies for development in and around the focus community.

A neighborhood conservation overlay district (NCOD) is a zoning tool used to preserve, revitalize, protect, and enhance significant older areas within a community beyond what is specified in the standard code. The NCOD should not be confused with Historic Preservation Districts. Both a NCOD and a historic district are overlay districts; however, a NCOD will typically regulate fewer features and will focus more on significant character defining features, such as lot size, building height, setbacks, streetscapes, and tree protection and policies such as a Neighborhood Bill of Rights. Unlike historic districts, NCODs rarely consider specific elements, such as windows, buildings materials, colors, and decorative details. The conservation overlay regulations are applied in addition to standard zoning regulations and will usually take precedence. NCOD regulations will differ from neighborhood to neighborhood depending on the area’s character and needs.

Alachua Habitat for Humanity is taking a two pronged approach to addressing the marginalization of our vulnerable communities in Gainesville. The first approach is to work with the University to develop a partnership and help create funds and resources to address

housing, secondly, work with the City's planning department to create overlays for vulnerable communities. Both approaches will require robust engagement from all Stakeholders, and we have committed close to \$50,000.00 for these two processes. Because of the amount of time needed for community engagement and meetings between influencers, we are asking that a moratorium be put in place and development is halted until we create a process to protect our vulnerable communities and neighbors.

If you need further information on Rapid Student Development or Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts, please reference the following two links which were used in the creation of this letter.

<https://www.presnc.org/neighborhood-conservation-overlay-districts/>

<https://www.insightintodiversity.com/private-universities-bring-new-growth-but-gentrification-can-sideline-existing-residents/>

Sincerely,

Alachua Habitat for Humanity

In support of Commissioner Gail Johnson's Call for Moratorium on Development

As it has been said, all neighborhoods are different, however, all neighborhoods have common elements, individuals, families, residences, and no matter how new, there is a history. In Gainesville we are fortunate to have several neighborhoods with an African American history. These neighborhoods have become increasingly popular with developers due to their locations. Unfortunately this popularity has increased the prices of homes in the neighborhoods. As we struggle to provide affordable housing, houses being built in our historic neighborhoods are priced way out of the reach of those who would benefit from affordable housing.

A moratorium of one year or shorter in specific neighborhoods would pause development in the historically sensitive neighborhoods. The goal must be equitable development.

Dotty Faibisy

Pleasant Street Neighborhood chair

Dear Gainesville City Commissioners:

We are writing this letter in support of the Development Moratorium proposed by Commissioner Gail Johnson. As long-time residents and members of the Porters Community, we recognize that Porters Community is at a crossroads. Our small part of the City is attractive to potential developers due to the central location to downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida.

We believe the Porters Community is unique and wonderful and worthy of preservation. As you know, the community was established in 1884 and is the second-oldest historically black neighborhood in Gainesville, after the Pleasant Street district. Many residents have lived in the Porters Community for decades.

It is our hope that the Commission activates this moratorium. It is our desire to have knowledge of development projects that will impact the future of our historically black neighborhood. The moratorium will serve as a crucial step to allow the residents of Porters to have a say in how our neighborhood looks over the next decades.

As Angela Davis said, "In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be antiracist." We encourage the Gainesville City Commission to take antiracist measures to protect its vulnerable and historical neighborhoods. The moratorium will give our communities a chance.

Signed,

Porters Community Committee Members:

Janie Williams

Reverend Ronald Foxx

And

Olysha Magruder

Springhill Neighborhood Watch

721 S. E. 8th Street

Gainesville, FL 32601

August 3, 2020

Dear Commissioner Gail Johnson:

I am writing this letter with the expectation that the Mayor and all your fellow Commissioners will consider its content. I have spent quite a bit of time thinking about the Gainesville my grandchildren and great grandchildren will experience in the next 15 to 30 years. I know it will not be my Gainesville in terms of neighborhoods, buildings, parks, and other landmarks. Change is inevitable and necessary. When such entities as cities experience planned change those who are guiding the process have the power to maximize its positive effect.

It is with this thought in mind that I would like to express my support once again for the Moratorium. I listened to and considered all the comments from the members of the Commission as well as those from the public. While I considered the information shared by each person to be valuable, I am aware that some of us were using additional filters to come up with our responses. [VF1]

I would like to share my filters in hopes that you might have a better understanding of why I am in favor of the Moratorium. The first thing I look at is, what does it mean to have an intact, or some semblance, of historic African American Neighborhoods. I see the closeness of the families, the pride of living in a place where their parents or grandparents called home, an expectation that there is an unspoken sense of safety in knowing each other and sharing, most of the time, like values. Add to that the comfort in having a conversation and feeling that you are with those who will understand if you just, "say it like it is."

Still another filter is looking at where African Americans are and how we arrived. Consider that we are living during a time that the nation is hearing, believing, and beginning to turn the tide on the inequities African Americans have lived with since the first ship with our people aboard landed. Think about being disenfranchised. All ancestors leave legacies of some kind. My ancestors who did

not have the advantage of skin color worked from a different perspective. They worked hard with the knowledge that the ceiling that loomed over their heads placed them on a different plane than others. But if they could acquire land and anchor their families in places, they hoped would be there throughout the generations that followed their legacies would survive.

But over time Neighborhoods began to see themselves growing smaller because of gentrification, big business and big dollars all in the name of progress. Yes, progress is what we want we just do not want to always be the sacrificial lambs. I felt that uneasiness when the point was made concerning the builders that would possibility choose another site over us if the Moratorium became a reality.

I am proposing an action on your part that will once again show citizens who live everyday as second-class citizens that they matter in their City. Let the businesses know that they might decide to go someplace else, but your desire would be for them to wait or look at us for their next comparable project. Invite them to do a little soul searching and join you while you allow such an important issue to be given the time it deserves. Once again demonstrating that you are ready to take another step in letting your people know that not only does your elected officers get it but they want to be examples for how the rest of America might begin to take accountability.

Given the right set of circumstances, Gainesville might find itself becoming a trailblazer. An unexpected circumstance but it may be possible to convince these companies to be our allies. They may find ways to be innovative in leveling the playing field for their workers. Attracting them to our cause might prove to be doable as well as win-win situation.

Before I end this letter, I must thank you for the innovative ways you are letting us all know that Gainesville is willing to work progressively for all its citizens. I hope you will consider the Moratorium as another progressive move on your part.

I appreciate the opportunity to write to all of you and appreciate your services.

Kind Regards,

Vivian Filer,

Springhill Neighborhood Watch,

President Emeritus