

Historic Old Northeast Forever

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On July 20th, after a public hearing on July 13th, the city council of St. Petersburg is scheduled to decide on an amendment to the Land Development Regulations.

St. Petersburg is a city of distinct and unique neighborhoods, many of which have historic significance. The Historic Old Northeast, for example, has been placed by the US Government on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The privilege of living in these areas certainly comes with a responsibility to our neighbors and to our city to preserve their character and value.

On the record, the City of St. Petersburg agrees. From Chapter 12 of its Comprehensive Plan: “the City shall incorporate policies into the LDR which discourage the demolition of historic resources... Not only does this reinforce the City’s public policy that historic preservation is a public necessity, it preserves a sense of place, encourages heritage tourism, and eliminates permanent vacant blocks.”

Given this stated mission, it is shocking to learn that the council is being asked to approve the city staff’s recommendation of an enormous FAR (ratio of building floor area to lot size) city-wide, in all neighborhoods to 0.7. In our neighborhood, this represents a house size *more than double* the average of what exists. Furthermore, the amendment includes no language to either encourage the preservation of traditional homes, or to discourage the demolition of historic properties.

Neighborhoods evolve, of course. But the current trend of smaller, traditional homes being torn down and replaced by enormous, featureless blocks, is irreversibly destroying the integrity of our historic neighborhoods.

If you care about preserving the uniqueness and the character of our neighborhoods, please come to the council meetings on July 13th and July 20th and ask our representatives to do their job.

Respectfully,

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Carol and Burt Kline
Mary Dowd
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