

Multiple Personality Behavior Exhibited by City Planning

On Monday, 7/15/19, a Notice of Decision (NOD) from the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) was emailed. It contained the EPC decision, dated 7/11/19, to forward to the City Council, Zone Conversions for some 1226 properties, most of them being single family residences, which had been mis-zoned in the Integrated Development Ordinance's (IDO) creation. Pages 2-4 of that NOD contains justification for these changes based on the City's Comprehensive Plan (CP). Within these 3 pages there are 13 different & specific references to the value of maintaining "the characteristics of distinct communities through zoning and design standards that are consistent with long-established residential development patterns." Words like "enhance, protect, preserve neighborhoods" ... "compatible in form & scale to immediately surrounding development" ... "consistent with long-established residential development patterns" are used to justify these zone conversions to R-1, residential zoning.

On Wednesday, 7/17/19, a Departmental Review Board (DRB) Hearing was held. One item on the agenda, PR-2019-002496, had the DRB considering the placement of a 93 unit apartment complex on a 2.9 acres open lot at the corner of Barstow & Alameda (6-10 times the density previously allowed). This property is surrounded on 3 sides by nothing but single family residences. At both Facilitated Neighborhood meetings between the impacted neighborhoods and the developer & his agent, the neighbors emphatically said that this project does not fit with anything around it (3 stories with a flat roof) and will create a loss of privacy, increased traffic risks/congestion and diminished property values for home owners.

The DRB can only make determinations based on each Department's (Transportation, Water Authority, City Engineer/Hydrology, Code Enforcement & Parks and Recreation – all City employees) rules & regs. and can't even begin to address the fact that the IDO process completely eliminated the Vineyard Estates Sector Plan without any affirmative consultation with the Vineyard Estates Neighborhood Association. The DRB also can't address the fact that during the entire process of creating the CP & the IDO, neighborhood input was severely hampered by the lack of professional urban planning, legal and technical writing resources available to them and the total lack of paid positions among the neighborhoods. This whilst both the City and the development industry had plenty of both AND a consultant group out of Denver to shape both documents as the City & the developers wanted them to be shaped. Part of the 'shape' was for the "density" limits to be removed from the NE Heights area because not only was the Vineyard Estates Sector Plan thrown out, the North I-25 Sector Plan, from I-25 east, was also tossed out.....again, without ANY consultation with the 15 or so Neighborhood Associations who spent 20+ years creating that Sector Plan.

So, Albuquerque now has the EPC advocating for the enhancement, protection and preservations of residential neighborhoods and the DRB only able to follow the constraints of individual departmental regs and possibly approve a project which has no business being built in its current configuration in the midst of single family homes. And neither group is required to address what's really going on in this situation. This inability to address this situation is not by accident or oversight – it was built into the CP & IDO as a bias toward the development industry by the very process used to create the CP & IDO.

Multiple Personality Disorder (currently known as Dissociative Identity Disorder) is listed in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) and can be exhibited by individuals, organizations and societies. It is considered an illness that harms people. It is not a sign of goodness or health for some current CABQ Planning Dept. behavior to exhibit a dual personality and an out-of-touchness with the lived reality of tax-paying, individual families wanting to live securely in the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their homes.