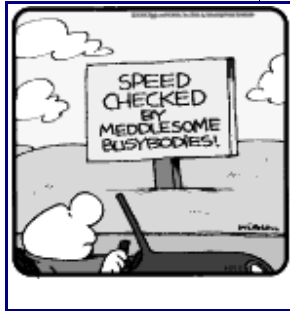


WAKE UP CALL!

Financial Catastrophe Looms for Lafayette Park Property Owners

The current recession in housing prices is generally regarded as a painful, but temporary, dip in value. We all look forward to recovery in a year or two, as the economy recovers.



HOWEVER, the lost value from the forthcoming change due to Historic Preservation re-zoning which encompasses all of Lafayette Park will be a *permanent*, devastating loss for every one of us who regard our homes and property as an investment and source of financial security. When development and property uses are capped, market appreciation is also capped. In fact, a very large portion of the market for resale will be gone, as buyers just go elsewhere, where the future is not restricted.

This re-zoning, with the insidiously friendly official name of "Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning" will lock in all of our properties to their existing bulk and size. This means, for example, that if you have a home sitting on three or four of the original 25' lots (like most of the buildings in the neighborhood), the use of those lots for eventual replacement buildings or future development is wiped out. In an inner-city location such as ours, which is experiencing fresh interest and investment, all the new investment will grind to a complete halt. Those really cute, tall townhomes which are finally coming to other downtown

neighborhoods will go elsewhere. Everything will go elsewhere.

On a more individual scale, if you wish to add a room, a porch, a garage or workshop, just forget it. The threshold of approval will be too great. No longer will the City planning and building department be the starting point for a major improvement. Everything will first have to go through an Architectural Review Board with a history of poisoning homeowner projects.

Architectural Review Board Ignores Legal Requirement

Is this an act of identity theft against all of us?

The Tallahassee Land Development Code, (Sec. 10-318)

specifically requires the advice and consent of every property owner in order to proceed with the initiation of placement on the local register of Historic

Places. This board, in their outrageous grab for power over every one of our homes and future, disregarded this requirement, and

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This is a call to action to my neighbors in Lafayette Park. I'm Mark Daniel, and I own property on Miccosukee Rd, between Crestview Drive and Marion Avenue. TallyMark@RocketMail.com

approved the application to begin the rezoning process with the city. The application was submitted by the Lafayette Park Neighborhood Association and the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation.

How can someone turn in an application which requires your consent *by law*, when you haven't given your consent? How could a legal arm of the city accept it? Doesn't this strike any one as being something similar to *Identity Theft?* I believe the boards of both these organizations as well as the Architectural Review Board, which knowingly accepted an invalid application, should be censured and introduced to appropriate consequences. I think the attorney general's office should be alerted to what's going on.

Historic Registry versus Rezoning

There are really two issues to this whole deal. First, there is registration of the neighborhood on an Historic Registry. Second, there is the rezoning. The apparent tie between registering a place as historic and changing the zoning to prevent any future changes needs to be cut. There is no need to give up historic registry, where it's genuinely applicable, on a home-by-home basis. (It's absurd to consider the entire neighborhood *Historic*—much of it is built way too recently)

Who would not strongly support anyone's right to have their own home declared an historic place and registering it with the National Trust? Who would not support anyone's right to turn their own home into a museum, and stop all future changes, and updating for as long as they want? This right is a cornerstone of our fundamental rights as citizens and owners of private property. It needs to be voluntary, though.

REZONING is an entirely different issue. And sneaking rezoning though a “back door” in the legal code, with no contact, advice or consent of every property owner affected is about as wrong as it gets. The perpetrators of this plan need to be made aware that such actions against their neighbors are outrageous and contemptible.

From the Tallahassee Land Development Code: “...The Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation or the Architectural Review Board may initiate placement on the local register, but only with the advice and consent of the property owner” **Sec. 10-318(b)**

“Unifying” Architectural Features are Slim to None

When you take a long, careful look at the neighborhood, the most striking thing is the incredible diversity of architectural features and styles.

Exterior walls are built of brick, stone, concrete block, clapboard, plywood, vinyl-over-particleboard, stucco, aluminum, glass, wood and asbestos shingles, and interesting combinations of all of the above. The details are equally various: windows, doors, handrails, eaves and other features come in so many combinations and styles, a photo catalog of architecture through the past hundred years could be put together without ever leaving Lafayette Park. Roofs, also, run the gamut of every type known to exist. This leads to an interesting question: *How could an architectural review board make a ruling on **any** proposed change without being arbitrary, unjust and punitive?* We don't need outside “experts” telling us what they think we should be allowed to do. Lafayette Park has grown from it's initial development to the wonderful place it is today by having its own resident homeowners investing their time and money in interesting ways in their own property in the best way possible. We are all genuine experts on our own property and neighborhood.

We are all genuine experts on our own property and neighborhood.

Why are some people suddenly fearing what others *might* do, and trying to set

What it is like to attend a meeting of the Architectural Review Board . . .

On October 1st, I attended the Architectural Review Board meeting at the Historic Trust House on Virginia Street. Their primary item for discussion was the addition of Marion Avenue to the rest of Lafayette Park for the purposes of re-zoning under the label of Historic Preservation. My duplex on Miccosukee Road sits between Marion Ave and Crestview Drive, and was included in this take over without any input, contact, advice or notification to me prior to my receipt of the official notice on the upcoming meeting.

The Board Members sit at a table at one end of the room, with their backs to us "others". Most board members don't even turn to look, if you address them. They're clearly in their own world, and the fact that it is your property they're discussing doesn't entitle you to any respect, acknowledgment or inclusion in most of the discussion. They're a private club, operating under the cloak of governmental authority.

During this meeting, one of the members clearly seemed to take undue pleasure in causing harm. The others reminded me of bored bureaucrats, pushing paper they've already decided on, while wiping their hands of any "real" involvement or blame for the consequences of their actions. They actually acknowledged that I had been wronged in having my property included in this proposal, but said it was their duty to pass it along to the City's rezoning department, as it was out of their scope to judge right and wrong. ~Mark S. Daniel

improvement or another on their property. It's common sense, when a project goes from, say, a sale on fence panels at Home Depot on a beautiful weekend to having to produce site drawings, obtain & submit an application, pay for notifications to everybody within 500 feet of the neighborhood, and weeks later sit through humiliation in a meeting while board members preen their egos at your expense. The threshold for even a simple landscape feature project will be simply too high.

These five hundred decision makers (us) will continue to make the same "skip it" decision until they (we) move out to a better neighborhood. And these skipped home projects will accumulate and add to the deterioration of a once terrific place to live. As the deterioration progresses and people continue to abandon our neighborhood to the renters and then the low-renters, our once-

themselves up over the rest of us in order to dictate control? It's time to take a good hard look at what is happening. We have good zoning in place right now. Very good. We don't need a whole new level of fearful, pushy, busybody bureaucrats meddling in our private lives and family decisions on what we do with our homes and property.

Our Lafayette Park neighborhood got this darned nice without any interference from self-appointed neighborhood governors.

Human Nature

Consider five hundred homeowners, each making decisions on a regular basis to skip one

great investment will have started well on the road to being a slum. It's only natural, when people can't work on their homes without interference. As each family leaves, they'll end up getting less and less for their homes—declining neighborhoods don't sell well. Restricted properties with impediments to normal use get marked-down prices.

Tenants, again...

Remember when you were tenants, with a landlord, before you bought your house? When you had to get approval for any change you might want to make? Multiply that feeling tenfold, when you consider you will have to get approval from an entire board who will give precedence to your neighbors' opinions over your own. The result of this Historic Preservation Overlay

We have good zoning in place right now. Very good.

Rezoning will be to take control of the exterior of your home away from you and place it in the hands of people who don't care a fig about your financial future or investment. Think about it....they are trying to make you tenants again, with them as landlord.

Silence is a vote!

In the city's zoning meetings as well as in the Architectural Review Board meetings, your silence is considered a YES VOTE for the issue at hand. That is how this terrible situation has gotten so far, and how these people bent on taking over our neighborhood hope to accomplish their goals. **It is not a fair election!** *You must speak up* if you wish to stop it. *You must speak up* if you wish to preserve the market value of your

**You must
speak up....**

property. *You must speak up* if you don't want strangers butting into your life. *You must speak up* if you don't want your property value to plummet by \$50,000 to \$100,000.

What's Next? Guard Your Pockets!

Take a good look at the city budget—they're in real trouble. They're going to keep looking for money. It won't be long before they decide that if Lafayette Park wants an Historic Trust office with paid personnel, then Lafayette Park will have to pony up the money. Suddenly, "SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT" will be the buzzwords you hear. Adding injury to insult, it will not be long before we are told to pay for this intrusion in our lives. If 500 homeowners have to pay for a \$500,000 budget item, the math is simple...you pay an extra \$1000, every year. It's coming--on top of your lost land value--soon.

HOW TO STOP THIS ACTION---WHO TO CONTACT---

Step 1—Architectural Review Board Approval...TOO LATE!! IT'S A DONE DEAL!!

Step 2--Tallahassee--Leon County Planning Board—ACTION PENDING. **SPEAK UP NOW.**

Contact: Mr. Wayne Tedder, Director, Tallahassee-Leon Planning Board, 435 N. Macomb St, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. Object Strongly. **Put it in writing.** This is the most viable chance to save our property—let him know you don't want Historic Preservation Rezoning in Lafayette Park..

Step 3-- Tallahassee City Commission. If it gets this far, it may be reduced to a 30-second reading of the title and a voice approval. You must speak up before this. E-mail each of the commissioners and mayor John Marks. Go to this website to send e-mails to each or collectively: It's real easy...

<http://www.tal.gov.com/gov/commission.cfm>

Property Owner Notification: This Property is Being **REZONED**

IMPORTANT: If you are not the owner of this property, please forward this to the owner. Thank you!