

Weighing in as former City Attorney

As a former City Attorney involved in Affordable Hometown (affordablehometownpt.org), who sponsored the ad that “dismayed” Jason Serinus (Leader, 2/11/26), I offer the following:

- AHPT wants amendments to the code to ensure affordable housing. Simply allowing developers to add more units doesn’t make new units affordable. Unlike code changes in some other cities, there is no teeth here that requires developers to provide affordable units.
- AHPT believes last minute increases from 4 units per standard residential lot (above the previous 1 house) as recommended by the Planning Commission in late-October, to 6 units per lot first formally considered by the Council in mid-November, and done *without* environmental review, did not allow time for adequate public input.
- The photo in the ad of a house overwhelmed by two 6-plex structures is a real outcome, because the code now allows all units in one structure.
- AHPT asserts that more density (adding units per lot) must be looked at in combination with bulk and dimension standards of what can be built. For example, the new code allows only 5’ setbacks, and no onsite parking (allows parking to go to the street).
- Mr. Serinus wishes the changes “included provisions that incentivize workforce and low income/affordable housing, ... and prevented destruction to older homes and blocks in Uptown”. AHPT does too.
- He “believe(s) that council members are committed to finding the best way forward via amendments ...” The question is why didn’t the Council “find the best way forward” in the first place - before adopting the sweeping and impactful 6X density increases.

AHPT supports greater density, if combined with guarantees that some new units will in fact be affordable for middle and lower incomes. Until this happens, we will continue to draw attention to the deficiencies in the recent code changes.