

Late Backup

#36/37

From: Gloria Guzman [

Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 8:43 AM

To: Leffingwell, Lee; Cole, Sheryl; Spelman, William; Riley, Chris; Tovo, Kathie; Martinez, Mike [Council Member]; Morrison, Laura

Cc: Rhoades, Wendy; Meredith, Maureen; Williams, Nancy; Anderson, Greg; Fisher, Ashley; Bojo, Leah; joy.harden@austintexas.gov; Tiemann, Donna; Moore, Andrew

Subject: Against St Elmo's lofts

I live in the Greenwood Hills/Colonial Park area. I'm against the St. Elmo's Lofts development. I can't make it to the meeting on Thursday due to the fact that I work two jobs to pay for my property taxes. I just recently protested by taxes and won....not by much but it was something. I figured out a system where I borrow the money and pay it out by the end of December and then I re-borrow the money in January to pay the property taxes which of course keeps me in a loop. What I told the Appraisal Dept at that time was that we the natives of Austin feel that they are not wanting us to live here any longer. They are wanting people from California and New York to come here and live here because they are the ones with money. Please, deny this zoning and neighborhood plan change. The reason I am asking you to do this is that if one of you can just go out to that part of South Congress at around 3:30 or 4:00pm, you will see how traffic backs up from William Cannon all the way to Ben White/Hwy 71....that traffic is WITHOUT the new lofts. I know that if you were around or living around this area, you also would be against it. I feel that back in the olden days when we (Austin natives) were the majority living here, the City Council made sure that we the people were being taken care of. Now, I feel that MONEY is what counts and that is when greed starts taking over. We probably don't have a chance in this being denied since the developers and the Building Commission said that this is where the future is heading to. But, one thing I would like if it is possible is to do what the California City Council do prior to them allowing them to build. That California City Council makes sure that the streets are build up to hold that amount of traffic before they approve any type of structures to be build. Take care of our streets before allowing others to share in it. Thank you for your time in reading this email.

From: Olivia Gutierrez

Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 6:01 PM

To: Leffingwell, Lee; Cole, Sheryl; Spelman, William; Riley, Chris; Tovo, Kathie; Martinez, Mike [Council Member]; Morrison, Laura

Cc: Rhoades, Wendy; Meredith, Maureen; Williams, Nancy; Anderson, Greg; Fisher, Ashley; Bojo, Leah; joy.harden@austintexas.gov; Tiemann, Donna; Moore, Andrew

Subject: Against St. Elmo's Lofts

Dear Mayor Leffingwell and Council Members,


I am the homeowner of 203 Rowland Dr. and I am against the St. Elmo's Loft proposed development. Items #36 and #37 on 10/23/14 City Council Meeting Agenda.

7/25/14
3/2/14

This development does not honor our South Congress Combined Neighborhood Plan. Our plan specifically states the area should remain industrial. Your City staff, considered experts in the industry have also recommend against this re-zoning. The neighborhood contact team recently approved a letter a support, however this contact team does not adequately represent the neighbors and community of East Congress. The contact team is made up primarily of individuals from the West Congress neighborhood and they are not taking into account the residents of East Congress and small business owners within the area. The contact team is not always forthcoming with meeting notices and I have personally experienced unresponsiveness from them when inquiring for the location of meetings to discuss this development.

If this development occurs as is currently proposed our neighborhood lacks the infrastructure to accommodate the increased traffic, which is estimated to increase from 1,352 trips a day to 7,867 trips, an increase of 6,515. Our community lacks safe walkways to accommodate this influx of traffic. Our community is full of children, adults and pets - which regularly enjoy Battle Bend Park and surrounding streets that the city so well maintains. We love our quiet, tree lined streets and we don't want to see it ruined with poorly planned development similar to what has occurred along the South Lamar district.

The developer has repeatedly changed information previously stated leaving myself and many neighbors questioning his business plans and ethics. For example, he has previously said his vision for the indoor music venue would be a small and intimate setting of 100 people. He has been quoted in an Austin Business journal article as envisioning a music venue of 400 people - that in my opinion is a significant difference with a much bigger implication to the neighborhood in terms of traffic, noise and disorderly conduct. In the same article he states he is looking for development partners for the different components - this is opposite to what I understood at our initial meeting with him and Alice Glasco. During the initial project meeting he indicated his firm would be developing the entire project. The developer cannot guarantee the type of development to occur if he plans to farm out components to the highest bidder. Additionally, this developer's background is in low-income housing - which we discovered online. When we questioned him on this he removed his website and has not provided any additional information regarding the issue. The group has also asked for a written business plan with proof of secured funding, which he has also not provided. Should his project fall through and his vision not succeed my community is left in a very vulnerable position, open to any kind of mixed-use development. A vulnerability that need not exist.



I do not feel this development supports Austin's culture of supporting local business. The developer has stated "This land is under-utilized. It's time for the paint and pipe shops to move to Buda so that developers can make a profit." It would be a mockery of Austin's culture for Council to support the Dallas development firm's profitability at the expense of truly local Austin businesses – which have operated in this industrial area for years. As a City are we saying the blue-collar industry is less-desirable as a local business? Only multi-million dollar developments need apply? Furthermore the area which the developer is proposing to build residential units in, is 100% industrial. It simply is not appropriate to place residential units within industrial lots. I ask the Council to truly consider the direct and indirect costs of agreeing to mixed-use development of this type.

In closing I would like to say that I and my neighbors are not against growth and development. We simply want it to be well-planned and supported by a solid business plan and trustworthy developer. We welcome appropriate development which supports our neighborhood plan, protects our community characteristics, local business owners and affordability (in a city that is quickly becoming unaffordable for locals).

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please help Keep Austin Weird and Local.

Rivera, Andrew

Subject:

FW: Against St. Elmo's Lofts

From: Elaine Martinez

Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:40 AM

To: Leffingwell, Lee; Cole, Sheryl; Spelman, William; Riley, Chris; Tovo, Kathie; Martinez, Mike [Council Member]; Morrison, Laura

Cc: Rhoades, Wendy; Meredith, Maureen; Williams, Nancy; Anderson, Greg; Fisher, Ashley; Bojo, Leah; joy.harden@austintexas.gov; Tiemann, Donna; Moore, Andrew

Subject: Against St. Elmo's Lofts

My name is Elaine Martinez and I am a homeowner in Battle Bend Springs. I have lived in this neighborhood for over 25 years. This neighborhood is located in the South Congress Neighborhood Area.

I am writing this email in regards to the proposed development plan at 113 Industrial Blvd., 4323 S. Congress Avenue and 4300 Willow Springs Road also referred to as the **St. Elmo's Lofts**. I am against the zoning change that would allow apartments/condos to be built here. I would like this area to continue to be the industrial area it currently is.

I believe that by allowing the proposed zoning change this will impact negatively to residents in three important ways: 1) property taxes will increase, 2) the traffic/congestion on S. Congress Avenue will increase, and 3) the industrial area will diminish and hurt our community.

To elaborate on these points please understand that property tax increases will eventually drive many residents out of the area because they will not be able to afford to stay. The traffic on S. Congress Avenue is very congested as it is and this development will make matters worse. Adding more traffic lights will not help people trying to make their way north or south on Congress Avenue. The industrial area currently supports many trades in Austin; it supports a lot of businesses and jobs. We need to keep them where they are. The proposed zoning change will hurt our community. Over time business will be pushed out of the area.

Thank you for considering my concerns and please vote against the proposed zoning change.