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Is high-density ordinance worth fighting for?

Almost 90 days later the **high-density ordinance** that is supposed to save the **Southampton** and **Boulevard Oaks** neighborhoods from the evil (in their minds) 23-story high rise at Bissonnet and Ashby is back to the drawing board for two weeks or more.

Constructed narrowly for the limited purpose of stopping **1717 Bissonnet** from being built, few are satisfied with the outcome according to Mike Snyder's **story**.

From the story, "Late last week, city officials decided the measure needs additional work and delayed its presentation to the City Council for two weeks and perhaps as long as a month. The council had been expected to review the measure this week.

"It seems to me that the current draft is going to make no one happy," said Kendall Miller, a shopping center owner who serves on a committee advising the city about the ordinance.

Jane Cahill, a neighborhood activist who also serves on the panel, said the costs of enforcing the latest draft would far outweigh any benefits.

Cahill said she was dismayed to hear Andy Icken, a deputy city public works director, say recently that the ordinance represents a "rifle" rather than a "shotgun" approach to development issues.

"A rifle aims a single bullet at a single target," Cahill said. "Aiming an ordinance at a single project is not a good way to develop public policy."

The goal of the measure is to limit traffic congestion caused by dense developments on streets with limited capacity in single-family residential neighborhoods.

Developers of projects that met the criteria would have to conduct a detailed traffic impact analysis. If it showed congestion would increase beyond specified levels, the developers would have to reduce the project's size or take other steps, such as adding traffic lanes or signals, to reduce the impact."

The only **supporters** of the ordinance are Boulevard Oaks and Southampton residents even though they acknowledge the measure in its current form would only limit 1717 Bissonnet to a 13- to 14-story tower.

It seems the city might need to let this one project go. Developers Matthew Morgan and Kevin Kirton had followed city laws, in fact doing more than required including a traffic study, prior to the neighborhood outcry that halted the project.

Now the city is trying to make up a law, that sounds like is not a very good law, to keep the residents in two

neighborhoods happy. In most situations it would seem it is a good thing when city officials listen to residents, but here it seems the resident's cries came too late.

The best solution might be to move on and begin creating a more systematic approach to insure future development benefits the neighborhoods where it is located.

Do you think the city should continue working on and try to pass the high-density ordinance or allow the project to be built as proposed?