

Saving our neighborhoods

A wrong comparison

IN her Sept. 30 Outlook article, "23-story high-rise would be nightmare on Bissonnet," Leslie Miller made the suggestion that the proposed construction of a 23-story high-rise would have the same impact as the destruction that came from Hurricane Katrina. This was irrational and deplorably insensitive.

I doubt that any of the residents of the "lovingly planned and carefully maintained" neighborhoods of Southhampton, Boulevard Oaks and Broadacres have experienced anything close to the devastation and heartache caused by that storm.

Miller's total lack of respect to those people leaves me with little sympathy if she loses her fight to stop this development.

— MICHAEL COPPENS
Houston

Hurt one, hurt all

I AGREE with Leslie Miller's assessment on the impact of building a huge high-rise on Bissonnet. However, I also

wonder where was she when the Heights was fighting to save its historical bungalows or when Shady Acres was trying to retain its lot size?

When issues like these come up, they do not only affect one neighborhood — they threaten every neighborhood in the city! Developers deliberately work to undermine one neighborhood at a time in order to fly under the radar until it is too late to reverse their efforts, and also because they know most people pay no attention unless the problem affects them. Of course, that is one reason why we have a city government: to look out for everyone's best interests.

Unfortunately, in Houston, it doesn't seem to work that way. Our City Council and mayor listen to those in the best position to make campaign donations. And in the case of the Heights neighborhoods and Shady Acres subdivision, it was not the residents who had the campaign cash, it was the developers. And in the case of Southhampton, it is the homeowners.

The only weapons we have

right now are deed restrictions, and the city attorney's office upholds them lackadaisically. What we need are comprehensive zoning laws, clearly drawn to protect the size, use and character of all our neighborhoods — not just those where the rich live.

— KATIE McDONALD
Houston

Not their backyards

AS zoning again surfaces in city politics, there seem to be some contradictions or hypocrisy.

Urban planning elites have a long history of favoring densification, low-income housing and light rail transit — unless it is targeted for their own neighborhood.

While the Rice Military subdivision and others have undergone radical redevelopment in term of size and scale, it seems the more affluent politically connected neighborhoods want city protection from the very policies they are advocating.

— DAVID HUTZELMAN
Houston Property Rights Association,
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