

Comments to the Albany Common Council
Don Reeb, June 20, 2016

The proposed rezoning of the Loughin—Sandidge Way site is filled with problems for the City of Albany.

As I understand it, the City can rezone---but the size of the development—173 units—100 units—60 units—whatever---is determined by a different body.

So if some here want the development to be 60 units—that is all well and good but it is not in the legislation being considered by the Common Council.

The legislation being considered by the Albany Common Council does discuss the property tax revenue from the project or whether the IDA can or will grant a generous tax abatement or excuse Columbia/Dawn from paying sales taxes and various fees like the revenue that CDTA might expect from development.

The cemeteries on Fuller have been damaged by previous construction in the area. Corteges have much more difficulty accessing the cemeteries. Cemeteries need revenue—just like others--or they become abandoned, with all the problems for the local government that abandonment would create. It is the city's interest to make sure that the cemeteries are not further injured by construction.

County Rt 156—Fuller Road—is in the City of Albany, the Town of Colonie and the Town of Guilderland. The road was recently rebuilt, at great expense of various governments. Rebuilding this road once again—to maintain safe auto use, walking, biking and general use in the vicinity of Loughin-Sandidge Way---means higher County taxes and therefore higher tax costs for City residents who, of course, pay County Taxes as well as city taxes.

The State and Town of Guilderland spent much money to abate the storm water problems that have been caused by SUNY Poly redirecting its storm water into Guilderland. It is due to spend even more.

The City of Albany rightfully complains that it is not receiving sufficient revenue from the State.

Had the stormwater problem not been created by a property located in the City—the stormwater should have directed into Patroon creek-- then the state might have allocated some more of its revenues to the City.

The RFP and purchase of Loughlin Street-Sandidge Way property is the subject of a State Attorney General investigation. To grant an exceptionally dense use—173 units—to this small plot—5.2 acres—while this investigation is incomplete could prove embarrassing.

The property in the original RFP was to be a parking lot for a large dorm. SUNY Poly has readvertised and the large dor was omitted from the new RFP. But some of us suspect that once the 173 units are built the property will be sold to SUNY Poly, removing it from the tax rolls, and leading to the purchase by SUNY Poly to the purchase of the two privately owned homes in the city that are neighbors to Loughlin Street—with that land becoming the new parking lot for the dorm—and tax exempt. There is nothing in the amendment—once again—that protects the City from this result.

McKownville does not want to be over run with SUNY Poly buildings. It would like Fuller Road to be safer for all users—drivers, bikers, walkers, those taking the CDTA buses and those crossing Fuller Road. McKownville does not want more stormwater in its streets nor in its gardens or its basements. And certainly McKownville does not want to halt all redevelopment. But we must protect our neighborhood from excess development.