

End Corporate Welfare

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It has been pattern and practice for some time for Albany to engage in corporate welfare masquerading as economic development. Multi-million dollar companies and empowered interests are beneficiaries often at the expense of poor people and people who don't have a lot of money.

Examples of this practice include The Aspen student housing, the trash tax, the Palace theatre proposal, and rezoning Sandidge Way. The Aspen is a project of a Maryland company that will be making millions while paying exceptionally (almost unbelievably) low taxes. The trash tax is a regressive tax that punishes apartment dwellers but exempts homeowners who generally have more money. The Palace proposal needs to be looked into a lot more carefully to see who will benefit and who will not.

Regarding Sandidge Way (formerly Loughlin Street), I see no way that rezoning will raise much, if any, revenue for Albany for many years and may actually cost the city because of the increased need for services. The rezoning is a corporate giveaway. The existing houses are beautiful and taxable.

Demolishing the existing historically significant homes to build apartments will adversely affect the health of UAlbany students who walk on and cross Fuller Road as well as residents of the surrounding neighborhood who will have to inhale the injurious toxics in demolition and construction dust. It will negatively affect the quality of life in the adjacent community. It will obliterate a treasured part of Albany's black and integration history. It will do nothing to solve Albany's financial problems. It will, however, benefit multi-million dollar companies and the people who run them, most of whom don't even live in Albany.

A smaller 'compromise' will still provide corporate welfare, will still demolish houses that are part of black history, will still adversely affect the health and quality of life of UAlbany students and residents on nearby streets and will still exacerbate the already existing traffic problems on Fuller Road.

At every hearing and meeting I attended, Mike O'Brien said that if we don't let Dawn Homes have their way, the properties might be sold to the state and the state could do whatever they want. This sounds like the reasoning behind a protection racket: Let Dawn Homes and Tri-City Rentals do what they want or they can make our situation worse. Frankly, it doesn't sound that much worse to me. If the beautiful, historically significant homes will be demolished, I would welcome a dorm. UAlbany students are a vital and vibrant part of our community and economy.