

To: Honorable Carolyn McLaughlin, President of the City of Albany Common Council and Common Council Members

From: Don Reeb, president, McKownville Improvement Association

Date: November 7, 2016

Topic: Rezoning of Sandidge Way-Loughlin Street

Loughlin Street Rezoning—Losses for Those Seeking Modest Priced Homes to Buy,
Salvation for the Investors, Hardships for City and McKownville Residents

There are eleven modestly priced homes on Loughlin Street—empty—and there is a need for modest priced homes for sale in the Albany area. Why are these eleven homes vacant?

The simple answer is---politics---of the worst kind. Developers want to make money and some elected officials care more about the developers than modest income families who need and are pleading for homes they can afford to buy in a decent neighborhood. Without home ownership, most families have almost no likelihood to create savings to help finance college for the children or provide a home for retirement years. If elected officials do not want to help the aspiring middle class, why are they in office?

The Albany County Planning Board recommended against the rezoning of Loughlin Street citing the proposed increase in density as extreme in comparison to present use and homes in the neighborhood. Yet the Albany City Common Council is holding another hearing to rezone the Loughlin Street properties—to permit high-density rental housing—not to replace decayed or “zombie homes but to replace perfectly fine single family homes.

The traffic impact on Fuller from the build-out of SUNY Poly and UAlbany already strains the capacity of Fuller Road. Adding 300+ cars from 173 apartment occupants will only increase the danger to everyone using Fuller Road and nearby streets and highways.

Will the property tax revenue increase (if any) for the City offset the increased water, sanitary and storm requirements imposed by 173 residences versus the 11 present residences? Will it also offset the cost of other services? Probably not since the developer indicated it will ask for (the usual and large) tax abatements.

Ground and storm water problems exist in McKownville and the City. Ultimately, the water flows through McKownville to Albany’s turn-of-the-century infrastructure that is failing. The proposed 173 apartments will add to the infrastructure costs for both the City and McKownville.

The Loughlin site was purchased by Columbia for about \$3.5 million with the expectation of selling the property to SUNY Poly. That did not happen when an investigation of possible collusion between Columbia and SUNY Poly was launched and indictments were issued. Massry has purchased the eleven homes for \$4.5 million. Why would a developer pay a million dollars more for a site whose future is unknown? One explanation that has been offered is to reduce the “sour odor” coming from the SUNYPoly/Columbia relationship.

Depriving modest income families from owning the 11 vacant homes, rewarding developers for poor quality investment decisions, and punishing innocent McKownville neighbors is not good public policy.

City of Albany and Capitol District residents do care about families trying their damndest to get into the middleclass Here are letters from 23 Albany City residents and others who do not live in McKownville. Each asks that the eleven homes not be destroyed and express their concerns about the traffic and other problems that will come forth with the construction of 173 apartments on Sandidge Way.

Please help those who want to buy nice but less expensive homes in the City---and vote against the re-zoning of Loughlin Street/Sandidge Way.

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