
From: Patti Garrett <[REDACTED]>
Date: Thursday, February 23, 2012 at 8:28 AM
To: "David S. Rotenstein" <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Oakhurst, historic preservation & environment

Hi David,

Thank you for sending this; the map certainly indicates a major change in housing stock occurring in Oakhurst. I will be happy to share this with Commissioner Cunningham and Mayor Pro Tem Baskett.

On a separate note, you mentioned concern about the Homestead tax exemption for seniors that eliminated school taxes at age 80 with an income qualifier of \$40,000. As you probably know, school taxes account for about 61% of our tax dollars. Since the School Board sets these exemptions for seniors (with respect to school taxes), I wondered if you had contacted either Julie Rhame or Bernadette Seals with your concerns.

Again, thank you for your interest in and concern about our neighborhood.

Regards,

Patti

On Tue, Feb 21, 2012 at 7:34 PM, David S. Rotenstein wrote:
Hi Patti,

I just added a map of Oakhurst teardown sites to a blog post I wrote last week. It's getting a lot of traffic and I thought, in light of the conversation you and Laura had last week, that you would be interested in seeing it. According to the GIS analysis, Oakhurst has lost somewhere in the vicinity of 10 to 20 percent of its historic housing stock through teardowns. Add to that number significant alterations (pop-tops, large additions, and large-scale removal of original building fabric) and the number of properties that could ever be considered contributing to any potential historic district is significantly diminished. Regina Brewer (who is copied on this note) hopes to one day get this part of Decatur listed in the National Register of Historic Places. If the rate of teardowns and alterations continues at its current pace, the opportunities to preserve the neighborhood and become more sustainable, i.e., reduce landfill waste, etc., also diminish.

If the city doesn't act to revisit the historic preservation issues, including a thorough analysis of the incomplete 2009 citywide historic resources survey, a point of no return will be reached and no amount of nostalgia or second guessing of past planning decisions will restore the community's patrimony. It's not just a historic preservation issue; it's a larger economic and environmental issue that revolves around what happens when the community changes are not comprehensively considered.

Laura and I just returned from an evening walk and we saw that 922 East Lake, the 1940s home next to the contemporaneous home that I videotaped being demolished in eight hours last October, is slated for teardown. Its owner told me after 916 East Lake was demolished that he felt pressured to keep up with the changes on either side of him, i.e., teardown and rebuild larger. It's contagious and you can see it in the construction activities that are going on at properties adjacent to earlier teardowns with larger new homes on them.

At any rate, the post may be found at: <http://blog.historian4hire.net/2012/02/12/why-historic-preservation/>

Regards,
David