Gmail

Re: Any statement on the Court of Appeals decision

Ted Coopman Thu, Jul 13, 2023 at 1:45 PM

Hi John,

Here is my reaction statement:

The time and taxpayer expense for this appeal was completely avoidable and is indicative of a deeply dysfunctional public comment process and inadequate oversight of an out of control Planning Department. The purpose of public comment is to surface issues and deficiencies and add needed context and perspectives to staff proposals so we create the best possible ordinances and avoid the expense and delays of court challenges.

Increasingly important ordinances have been delayed years due to successful challenges and needed revisions to be compliant with the law. As voiced by overly zealous Planning Commissioners like Dan Isaacson, any challenges or critiques of staff plans are viewed as "disrespectful" and vociferously opposed without any analysis of their merit. Ironic, as it is the public that is disrespected by an unwarranted arrogance that verges on contempt. Planning management and staff advice to council has been spun to provide just enough information to come to the conclusions desired, not to inform our elected officials. The City Council needs to greatly increase oversight of public processes and create accountability for these types of serious and expensive errors. There are currently no consequences for such egregious and costly mistakes.

The argument by Planning management that all significant ordinances get appealed regardless is a cop out - Eugene is the only city to get its HB 2001 compliance plan remanded and the ADU ordinance was appealed three times! Appeals by citizens with no financial incentives or deep pocketed special interest support are not taken casually - they are time, money, and soul-sucking affairs. The success of appeals is proof of their legitimacy.

To be clear, this debacle was completely avoidable, the deficiencies were obvious and clearly articulated from the onset. The fact that we had to dedicate our own time and money to argue the most basic premise - that you should follow your own rules and not add density without ensuring there is adequate infrastructure to support it - is ludicrous. It is the most basic requirement.

Now we are, once again, back to square one. Eugene taxpayers and voters deserve better.

-TED
Ted M. Coopman