

MCGC Neighbors' Notes to Provide Context: The article below was written by an MCGC Neighbors' member who attended the Planning and Economic Development committee meeting on July 8, 2015. A portion of this article appeared in the July 8, 2015 MCGC Neighbors News Blast. Below is the complete article.

Waivers and Council Call-Ups

As the November election approaches, MCGC Neighbors has told you that we would make you aware of how City Council members have voted on important issues in the past. Well, we think there is an important issue in the present, and we want to call it to your attention so you can monitor it for yourself while it is happening.

At the Planning and Economic Development (PED) meeting this morning, Ward IV Council Member, Molly Markert, introduced the topic of Waivers (primarily administrative waivers) and Council Call-Ups, and the timeframes and notification processes associated with them.

Council Member Markert expressed concern that the Gaylord project was administratively approved without a public hearing, and the removal of sidewalks at the Dunkin' Donuts on Havana was administratively approved without a public hearing. Ward I Council Member, Sally Mounier, expressed concern that a Walmart on Colfax was administratively approved without a public hearing. They both expressed further concerns that council members aren't notified about these types of developments, and by the time they found out about them, the Call-Up timeframe had been missed.

There were several developers in attendance who spoke out in favor of administrative waivers and against the process of going before the Planning Commission with a public hearing. They were also very much in favor of administrative waivers. They stated that the streamlined processes introduced in the All 4 Business initiative several years ago makes their projects flow much faster, the electronic submission process is easier and less expensive, and they praised the professionalism of city staff that allows them to get their projects approved much faster. They don't want to lose any of that momentum. And, it would seem, they also don't want to be questioned by the public, the Planning Commission, or by City Council.

While we understand that time is money, quick decisions made today can cause long-term problems in neighborhoods that have to deal with the fallout of those quick decisions. Council Member Markert's [ordinance](#), beginning on Page 18 of the PED packet, proposes that "...notice of all administrative decisions including minor amendments be given to City Council. It also provides City Council with the ability to call-up any of these decisions". What's wrong with that?

It was decided that this topic should be forwarded to a City Council study session. We urge you to follow this discussion, speak out at City Council meetings, and write to City Council members with your thoughts about this topic. Then, watch how the council members vote and remember that in November.