

## Roberts, Karin

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**From:** e.freed@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 8, 2021 12:43 PM  
**To:** EBCC  
**Subject:** Written Comment  
**Attachments:** Letter to EBCC 12-8-21.pdf

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Hello,

Please see the attached written comment and distribute to all EBCC members.

Thank you,  
Ellen Weiss

Chair Hummer and EBCC Council Members,

I'd like to make a few comments about the discussion that took place last night at the December 7 meeting in response to the presentations of SOS member Rick Chesmore and the representative of MN Custom Homes.

1. In response to SOS's idea that land that has not ever had a structure on it is suitable for the development of the types of large homes being built by builders such as MN Custom Homes, Councilmember Kasner commented that his point of view is that undeveloped "greenspace" should remain that way. While I do not speak for SOS, I would like to point out that it is unlikely that Mr. Chesmore was suggesting that public greenspace would be considered a good option, by SOS's standards, for development. Rather, I think his point was that if there are relatively large, privately-owned greenspaces that happen to have never had structures on them, these would make more sense for developing a small community of larger houses rather than infilling neighborhoods with existing smaller homes (1200-3000 SF) with very large homes that are out of character with the surrounding smaller homes.

In fact, there are at least two large, privately-owned, previously "green" properties undergoing intensive residential development at this time. One is at the top of Kamber Road where a 15,000+ SF property is being developed into a community with (6) houses. The builder has removed most of the trees on the property to site the (6) houses on the site.

Another site is at 110 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE with 380,000 SF of wooded and wetland area. It appears that a private company called Milestone NW is planning a large condo development project on that site.

So, as you can see, it is already likely that most large privately-owned properties that are or were previously valuable greenspaces for wildlife and native trees/wetlands, will be fully developed over time. As such, I don't think Councilmember Kasner's comment had much validity as an argument against SOS's proposal as it is, essentially, a moot point since that sort of development of large, previously undeveloped private property is already taking place and will continue to do so with or without changes to the Land Use Code.

2. Councilmember Kasner's comment that the large builder homes may look strange in our neighborhoods right now but, in ten years, will look normal when all the houses are 5000+ SF, is very telling. I find that there is a lack of honest acknowledgment among city representatives about the reality of what is occurring in Bellevue's neighborhoods. I don't think anyone can honestly deny that Bellevue's mid-century neighborhoods are changing, whether they support the changes that are able to take place under the current LUCs or not. The Comprehensive and neighborhood plans should not even bother stating that single family residential development is expected to fit in with existing neighborhood character and scale if assumptions of wholesale redevelopment of our neighborhoods, such as the one expressed last night, are the norm. If Bellevue's mid-century neighborhoods with moderate-sized, relatively affordable homes ensconced among 60-100 year-old native trees, and surrounded by larger yards and greenery that makes for a more pedestrian-friendly and livable neighborhood, is no longer valued or deemed relevant to today's lifestyle, then the Comprehensive and neighborhood plans should not hood wink concerned citizens into believing that their preferred vision of neighborhoods

with these more “green” and sustainable characteristics are also the goal and vision of City planners. Let’s be honest – Bellevue neighborhoods are going to lose their charm and eventually come to be indistinguishable from the Issaquah Highlands or the expansive development on the Sammamish plateau if LUCs do not change to restrict the size and height of new homes.

3. The MN representative stated that their median size home is between 3800-4200 SF. This is misleading and false. In fact, 99% of their structures are at least 5000 SF in total, including the garage. It is the total SF size of a structure that is relevant to the conversation about neighborhood character and scale, not the SF of living space within the structure.
4. The comment made by the MN representative about placing new trees in better locations on a site to create summer shade are complete folly. These are words meant to justify the cutting down of 60-100 year-old native trees, many of which could be retained (even with the existing large size of their houses) if the builder took more care with excavation and did not rely on over excavation to speed up their construction process.

Finally, I am not suggesting that a 1200 SF mid-century house should be considered adequate for any or all families. We fully remodeled and added onto our house which went from 1700 SF to 2800-3000 SF plus a new 400 SF detached garage. I do believe, however, that a thoughtfully designed 4000 SF structure (including the garage) should be sufficient (particularly on 10,000 SF or less lots) to create the necessary space for modern family living. I believe that any lot up to 10,000 SF should be restricted to a maximum structure size of 4000 SF.

Sincerely,

Ellen Weiss  
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