

Loretta Clawson's Response to Phil Tempelton

Written by Loretta Clawson
Wednesday, 07 March 2007 06:54

Dear Editor: Thank you for giving me a chance to respond to the accusations which Phil Templeton apparently has made against me, and giving me a chance to respond. I have not actually seen his letter, which was not sent to me, but as it has been explained to me, it includes a number of statements against me. Certain things apparently in this letter are untrue. Others are true, but have been said in such way as to create the wrong impression. My husband and I built our small home on VFW Drive, off State Farm Road, in 1973....

Our neighborhood is zoned R-1, meaning it is zoned for single-family homes. We love the place and all the people who are our neighbors. As you may know, Mr. Templeton or his company is attempting to develop the property next to my home with some kind of medical facility exceeding 10,000 square feet. What type of facility has not been disclosed, at least to me, and it was not disclosed when the Board of Adjustment considered the application for a special use permit to put this facility in my R-1 neighborhood. I think most people would be upset at such a development. The feel of my home has already been greatly affected by the people apparently connected to this development having cut down many of the trees on the lot, some of which were quite large. Those trees had always provided a buffer to my home from the sights and sounds of State Farm Road. Certainly, I was very upset with this activity, and was concerned about the proposed development. Therefore, I appeared at the Board of Adjustment meeting as an interested neighbor to express my concern and my opposition. It is true that I testified against Mr. Templeton's application, but before I made any comments, I told the Board of Adjustment that I was not appearing in my capacity as Mayor, but as a private citizen. I expressed my opposition to the project, and I also mentioned my surprise that the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) allows a hospital, medical clinic, or mental health clinic in an R-1 neighborhood with a special use permit, but only if the facility exceeds 10,000 square feet. A smaller clinic is prohibited. These provisions did not make sense to me, and I told the Board so. As I recall, other people who testified against the application that night made the same point. Since then I have certainly talked freely about these UDO provisions. Nobody has been able to give me an explanation as to why large hospitals or medical clinics are allowed in R-1, a zoning district usually only for single family homes. I still don't understand it, and I still think this should be changed.

Mr. Templeton also apparently says I told him I would sell my house to him. It is true I have seriously thought about selling if the proposed development is approved, though not necessarily to him. The character of my neighborhood has already suffered from the tree-cutting, and if this development goes in, I feel my neighborhood will never be the same. Therefore, I have been saying to many people, partly seriously and partly just kidding, that I might sell if the project goes through. Mr. Templeton did write me a letter asking how much I wanted for my property, and I said I would consider selling for twice the tax value. Even as of now, I have not decided that I will actually sell, and even if I sell, I'm not sure I would sell to him. My children were raised in this home, and I have many fond memories there. My thinking was that if this project succeeds and ruins my neighborhood, it will cost my husband and me at least twice the value of our current home to move to another neighborhood within the Boone Town limits. I'm not moving to Cary or anywhere else. Apparently, this is another assertion Mr. Templeton has made in his letter. The suggestions which have apparently been made that I

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would have any actual role in the proposed change to the UDO to prevent large hospitals from being placed in an R-1 neighborhood, or that my view about whether such large facilities are appropriate in an R-1 neighborhood would be changed by the selling of my home to Mr. Templeton or anyone else, are both untrue, defamatory and ridiculous. As the Mayor, and previously as a member of the Town Council, I have made a strong effort to protect every R-1 neighborhood in town, not just my own. Also, as the Mayor, I do not even vote on changes to the UDO, unless there is a tie vote among Council members. So far, there has never been a tie vote, and I have never been called upon to vote so the idea that I would trade my vote for a favor is outrageous and untrue. If it had come up that I was called upon to vote on this proposed change, I would have sought the advice of the Town Attorney as to whether it was appropriate for me to vote, and if he indicated that it was not, I would have excused myself from the vote. As for the statement that I have supposedly said that I was not going to run for Mayor again, this is also untrue. I admit that I have been surprised, disheartened and hurt by the amount of anger and general nastiness directed against me and the members of the Town Council since I became Mayor. Personally, I thought it was courageous of the Town Council to pass the viewshed protection and steep slope provisions that are currently under attack in a lawsuit brought by Mr. Templeton's son. It saddened me that people, including Mr. Templeton, who addressed the members of the Town Council after their votes on those issues, said many things which I considered quite ugly, and that critics of the Council's action felt it necessary to resort to such language and tactics. I have known Mr. Templeton for many years and until that time considered him a friend, so I was very surprised by his apparent anger toward me, especially

since he said at a later Town Council meeting that the protection of the slopes and viewshed had increased the value of his property! The truth is that I am running for Boone Mayor again this year because I believe I can help make Boone a better place to live. I am running for Mayor again because it's the absolute best way I know how to accomplish the goal of protecting neighborhoods and improving the quality of life in Boone. I am running for Boone Mayor again this year because I firmly believe in the interests of all of us, not just a few of us. I am running for Mayor again this year because I love this community and all the people who live here. I hope this clarifies the accusations against me. Very Truly Yours, Loretta Clawson

Mayor, Town of Boone