

Mr Mayor and members of the Council, thank you for this opportunity to speak.

Yesterday the citizens of Portland voted to **"retain a provision in Metro Charter prohibiting Metro from requiring local governments to increase density in identified existing single-family neighborhoods."**

It cannot be more clearly stated than by Metro Charter that our established neighborhoods are protected against increases in density. What then are Skinny Houses? My historically platted subdivision named "Irvington Park," is entirely 25x100 lots which were developed in groupings of two, three and sometimes four. It is built out as R-5, speckled with more spacious spreads where wealthier homeowners secured yards and gardens. This subdivision is the greater part of Concordia.

A few years back my neighbor Sean had a Skinny house built to the South of his Craftsman Bungalow. Over the weekend, the humble cottage to his North was demolished by an excavator. The house across the street is being sold to a developer. With a skinny beside and likely another across the street, Sean is already facing double the density that the zoning promised when he bought his home. Sean is literally squeezed between the McMansion/Demolition epidemic and the Skinny House invasion.

In 2003, Mayor Katz and Council ignored the recommendations of the Planning Commission and the pleas of many Citizens. With no "well considered plan," they passed an ordinance allowing construction on all 25x100 "vacant lots." These "individual" lots, whether or not they have had a residential structure on them in the past five years, have no "grandfather" building rights associated with them. Nonexistent rights for nonconforming construction were created and authorized by fiat with the gavel. The Comprehensive Plan Zoning Map and the Metro Charter language protecting our neighborhood density was and is being ignored and violated by that action.

Eleven years later, longer term analysis provides that this form of development continues to fail to meet the benchmarks for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. In the eyes of the Department of Planning and Sustainability skinny houses don't even meet the definition of "infill development". They are frequently marginalized as being an insignificant number of units and an unnecessary contribution toward meeting the housing goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

Skinny House construction only finds conformity in an R-2.5 setting. The very size and stature are "nonconforming" to the R-5 neighborhood because the constraint, the lot size, is half of that of the neighboring homes. The permissive Code table authorizing this single lot development was unapologetically given the heading "Nonconforming Situations." A home on a single lot is out of compliance with the residential 5000 zone from the day that it is authorized to be built.

Skinny house development offends our zoned rights as homeowners. If every 25x100 foot lot in an R-5 neighborhood can be individually developed, then by ordinance, this City has re-zoned those neighborhoods, which violates State law, the Comprehensive Plan and the Metro Charter. As our elected officials, I am asking you to implement the most expedient plan of which you are capable to end the illegal development of 25x100 foot "skinny" lots in R-5 neighborhoods. Please get back to me with your determination before allowing the Bureau of Development Services to grant approval of any further "new construction" permits, including the application made for 6216 NE 22nd Avenue (IVR Number 3491897).

Thank you,
Ken Forcier
ken@gracewooddesign.com
503-522-7660

2

Parsons, Susan

From: Ken Forcier <ken@gracewooddesign.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2014 4:57 PM
To: Parsons, Susan
Cc: Ken Forcier; gwen3
Subject: Speaker on the agenda for November 5

Susan,

Please put me on the agenda for the November 5th City Council session.

My topic will be:

The Problem with Permitting Non-conforming, Skinny House Construction in R-5 Neighborhoods.

Thank you,
Ken Forcier
6107 NE 32 place,
Portland, OR
97211
503-522-7660

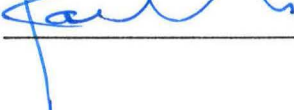
Request of Ken Forcier to address Council regarding skinny house construction
(Communication)

NOV 05 2014

PLACED ON FILE

Filed OCT 31 2014

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Novick		
Hales		