

From: [Tom Dansie](#)
To: [Darci Carlson](#)
Subject: FW: Considerations for changes to Springdale Cottage Housing Development Ordinance
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Attachments: [Seattle Times - Cottages 2005.docx](#)

From: Ken Dailey
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2019 12:40 PM
To: Tom Dansie <dcd@infowest.com>
Cc: Kurt & Becky Goeble ; ROBERT CARLTON ;
Judith Martin Schraut ; jonelljensen
canyonvistabandb
Subject: Considerations for changes to Springdale Cottage Housing Development Ordinance

Hi Tom –

As you know, I am just one of the individuals keenly interested in the discussions pertaining to the Cottage Housing Development Ordinance. And, like the others, I appreciate the thoughtful deliberation from members of the planning commission and town council and input from the town's legal council.

In the recent planning commission meeting (2/6/19) a suggestion was made to research the effects and consequences of actual cottage developments. As a result, I came across a 2005 Seattle Times article about a Seattle suburb, Shoreline, which then faced issues quite similar to Springdale's current issues. In fact, while reading the article a second time I replaced, in my mind, "Shoreline" with "Springdale" and found stark similarities. I share the article with you and the town representatives to underscore that: 1) other municipalities have similarly struggled with the concept of "Cottages;" 2) the promise of providing single-family houses at affordable prices is more-easily promised but less-easily delivered (consider the \$339k "Dakota" homes at Moenave); and 3) the reminder that some ideas that originally seem to present a good solution on paper (cottages) are sometimes far less successful when executed.

For the consideration of the town representatives I've reformatted and attached the article (with the original url source for those who may want to read the original article).

Also, on related notes:

- 1) A well-respected Washington County appraiser, familiar with Springdale's history including the recent rise in tourism and accompanying growth in lodging, was surprised that the town would be in support of a Cottage Housing Development in the Valley Residential Zone. He recognizes that new Cottage developments can have a positive effect on dilapidated neighborhoods. But, that such a development would 'undoubtedly have a negative impact' on the adjacent neighbors and the Valley Residential neighborhood of Springdale.
- 2) A concern that has been repeatedly expressed is the fear that granting a zone change gives a property owner a wide variety of options to pursue, many of which

may not necessarily be in line with the intent of the town or town council (i.e. a proposed “more affordable single family home” may eventually be sold at a less affordable price, or used as a rental, or used as vacation rental). In the event that the town council ultimately determines to approve cottage housing developments – especially in a Village Residential neighborhood zone with attending consequences – the objective of “promoting lower cost housing in the private market” (TC 10.13F.1) could be addressed by adding restrictive covenants to the CHD-O ordinance which would define and limit the use as intended. For example: a) residency is limited to home owners; b) no vacation rentals allowed; c) no rentals allowed; etc.

- 3) It is a common real estate fact that a zone change is the quickest way to increase the value of a property by affording the owner added flexibility to maximize their financial return. For good or bad, this is at the core of a the CHD-O zone change requests. In the case of the AIL Group's request, they own ample land for employee housing if that were their primary objective. But, of course, they argue, that their "other" land has a higher (and some will argue “a better” use). When it comes to Cottages they have the feeling, like most of us, that a cottage development “might be a good idea as long as it’s over there, not here.” Hence, their petition for a zone change in a residential area.

Thanks, again, to all members of the town council, planning commission, and legal representatives for their ongoing thoughtful considerations.

Ken Dailey

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<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/shoreline-cottages-too-close-for-comfort/>

Shoreline cottages: Too close for comfort?

Originally published March 24, 2005 at 12:00 am

Shoreline neighbors balk at high-density housing.

By

[Stuart Eskenazi](#)

From where Shoreline homeowner Terry Barham sits, which very well could be in the hot tub in his back yard, the skinny little house going up next door is too close for him to feel relaxed.

Barham is one of several Shoreline neighbors feeling cramped by cottage housing, an experiment in high-density housing. To them, allowing six houses on a lot that otherwise could accommodate two is seen as a sneaky way to shoehorn multifamily density into neighborhoods with single-family zoning.

“I’ve got essentially a six-unit apartment building next to me,” said Barham, who bought in Shoreline’s Richmond Beach neighborhood in 1998. “I moved my family from a house in Wallingford because we wanted to escape the density of Seattle and experience an established residential neighborhood with room to breathe. Now I don’t have that anymore.”

The Shoreline City Council, which adopted its cottage-housing ordinance in 2000 with great hopes, has heard the community outcry. It responded last summer by imposing a moratorium on future developments, giving the council time to re-examine the law, which has allowed seven developments, with a total of 55 small new homes.

Cottage housing, which also has been built on a limited basis in Seattle and on Whidbey Island, has been touted as an innovative approach to reduce suburban sprawl by putting more houses closer to the urban core. An alternative to condominiums and townhouses, cottage housing is different from cluster housing, another form of high-density housing that is causing a controversy in Seattle’s Magnolia neighborhood.

Shoreline Mayor Ron Hansen said he wouldn’t be surprised if the council decides to allow cottage housing only in multifamily zones. Doing so, though, would defeat the purpose of cottage housing and essentially render the experiment a failure.

If Shoreline revokes its cottage-housing ordinance, that would be a shame, said Scott Becker, the architect-developer of Reserve Cottages, the development being built next to Barham. The six cottages will be ready to occupy next month.

“Let’s tweak the ordinance, if we must, to address inappropriate developments, but let’s not eliminate cottage housing that is built sensitive to neighbors’ concerns,” he said.

Cottage houses are required to meet specific design criteria, including landscaping, and therefore undergo more city scrutiny than typical single-family houses. Becker said he is preserving more trees on the lot than a single-family-house developer likely would have bothered to save. He also said he’s not making more money by developing six cottages instead of two large houses.

Paul Cohen, Shoreline’s senior planner, said cottage housing also grew out of a public concern that a construction boom was resulting in too many large houses where there had been small houses. Shoreline officials saw the cottage-housing ordinance as a way to encourage more modest-size housing.

Cottage developments also carried the promise of providing single-family houses at affordable prices, but that no longer applies.

Each of the Reserve Cottages, with two bedrooms and 1-½ baths, is selling for between \$300,000 and \$350,000, a price similar to what one would pay for a larger, less-modern house in the same neighborhood.

“It’s like with anything new,” Hansen said. “People have a feeling it might be a good idea as long as it’s over there, not here.”

Concerns over cottage housing vary, with homeowners who live next door worried that their property values will drop as a result.

“I am a Realtor and I’ve been showing houses for 16 years,” Barham said. “Right or wrong, people don’t want to live next to cottages — and that leads to a loss in property value.”

Others neighbors fear that the selling of several new houses on the block will result in higher appraisals for their homes.

“The development will increase the value of my house, and at age 83, I’m not anxious to have my taxes increased,” said Paul Robben, who lives across the northern boundary of the Reserve Cottages.

Robben said he originally was impressed with the development plans and thought having six small houses on the property was better than the alternative of a couple of mega-houses.

“But when they first started framing the roof, I thought, ‘What did I get myself into?’ ”

The maximum footprint for a cottage house under the ordinance is 800 square feet, and the entire home, counting the second floor, cannot exceed 1,000 square feet.

“The developments tend to occur on lots that had small houses built in the ’50s or ’60s and are somewhat wooded,” said Cohen, the Shoreline senior planner. “When people are used to a semirural lot and that lot is being proposed for intensive cottage housing, that comes as a big shock.”

Cohen said the city adopted its cottage-housing ordinance as a way to reach state growth-management targets for housing without having to rely solely on new multifamily developments. The city amended the code after the first cottage-housing development — the brightly painted 16-house Meridian Park Cottages near North 185th Street and Stone Avenue North — had been skewered by neighbors over its street appeal, particularly its Skittles color scheme.

The amended ordinance required cottage-housing developers to meet several guidelines designed to make the developments more compatible with their surroundings in terms of scale, design and external colors.

Cottage developments built under the amended ordinance were received more warmly, but neighborhood concern over the concentration of a proposed 16-cottage development on Eighth Avenue Northeast led council members to pass the moratorium.

“I think it’s fair to say that all of the council members still have an interest in cottage housing, but all of us have reservations whether our current ordinance is restrictive enough,” Hansen said.

Seattle has no cottage-housing ordinance but recently allowed two developments to be built in the city as an experiment. One, at 16th Avenue and East Jefferson Street, has four houses, and the other is nine units at Northeast 65th Street and Latona Avenue Northeast.

“The planning commission has members who support cottage housing, but it is not on our priority list of issues we are moving forward on,” said Alan Justad, spokesman for Seattle’s Department of Planning and Development.

The controversial development of 39 houses in Magnolia, on a vacant 4.5-acre tract where Briarcliff Elementary School once stood, is not cottage housing but cluster housing.

Cluster housing lets developers build homes, under certain conditions, on lots as small as 3,600 square feet instead of the usual 5,000 square feet. Unlike cottage housing, a minimum 2-acre plot is required for the larger cluster of homes, and because lots that large are rare in Seattle, there are few such developments.

Ground has not been broken in Magnolia, and neighbors who don’t want the development built have hired an attorney.

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