

Bonnie Wessler

From: Mariah
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2018 6:29 PM
To: Bonnie Wessler
Subject: public comment tonight

Hi, my name is Mariah Zeisberg and I am a resident in Normal Park. I moved to Ypsilanti about 6 years ago because I was attracted to the vibrant, creative, and passionate communities of artists, activists, and intellectuals here. I am a professor in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan and when my colleagues ask me why I love Ypsilanti, I usually tell them that I love it because it's a place where people don't need a certificate or an official stamp-of-approval in order to live creative and beautiful lives.

I am aware that gentrification is happening and that it threatens to erode the civic basis of what makes Ypsilanti so precious.

Recently I've been reading a book by Elizabeth Anderson called *The Imperative of Integration*. Anderson is a professor in the philosophy department at U of M. She argues that zoning restrictions account for far more problematic segregation than school segregation ever did. She also argues that residential segregation – where blacks and whites are separated, folks of different income levels are segregated, or where segregation happens along any other socially and politically relevant cleavage – that that kind of segregation creates democratic leadership which is “ignorant and incompetent.” She argues that in order to have intelligent leadership, people need to be living integrated lives. I highly recommend her tightly-argued, careful book.

I wanted to share my longing that Ypsilanti would change its zoning to encourage residents from different levels of economic security to live in the same neighborhoods. For example, zoning that permits garage apartments, tiny houses, and other forms of inexpensive and low-environmental-impact housing can easily integrate into neighborhoods like mine that include many beautiful and stately family dwellings. In my own yard I have room for a tiny house, and I have wished that putting one there were possible, as I see friends and allies leave the city or be subjected to intolerable living situations due to the shortage of affordable housing. I would love to do my part to address this need but the city of Ypsilanti blocks me from doing so!

I am aware that RVs are allowed in yards, but I believe a tiny home would be a far more elegant and beautiful way to house someone. I also think that permitting RVs but not allowing tiny homes is a form of economic discrimination – wealthy folks are allowed to park vacation mobiles, but poor folks are not allowed to access a form of housing that suits their needs.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.