

On Thursday, the State and Local Government Committee will be hearing a bill on housing/zoning. I urge you to vote NO.

As I've previously noted in an email to Senator Jeremy Miller, the Rushford City Council and EDA examined our zoning ordinances and building policies last year and determined they are very accommodating to all types of housing and our citizen's needs. This legislation would not help our housing shortage. It would only add more cumbersome rules, especially for small towns and decrease local control.

Here are some of the specific provisions we are concerned about:

Cities would have to establish and follow an administrative review and approval for all residential developments. Two "Community meetings" would be allowed, but those meetings would have no teeth because all approvals would be at the staff level. Public hearings such as at the city council would not be allowed unless it is in an historical district. (sec. 7, at lines 4.17 – 5.12)

- We are particularly concerned that language at 4.29 – 4.30 would prohibit cities from requiring dedications or fees, such as utilities fees for sewer and water connection, infrastructure fees to support new development such as street improvement or stormwater fees, and park and recreation dedication or fees, including tree preservation.
- Cities would be prohibited from imposing residential design standards on any residential development, whether single or multifamily housing as long as they are located outside of statutory historical districts under Minn. Stat. 138.73 and 471.193. There is a laundry list of what cities may now longer require, including items you may not think of as a design standard. The prohibited list includes the orientation and dimensions of the structure, types of siding, minimum number/placement of windows, building articulation, roof pitch, and multiple other items. (Section 6, lines 3.26 – 4.16) We are concerned that these are so broad that developers could build homes with no windows on the backside, plunk McMansion in the midst of smaller homes, or a hulking apartment block in a downtown area that is not officially historic.
- Homeowners Associations (Section 5, at lines 3.10)
  - Cities would be prohibited from requiring the creation of a homeowner's association and could not require any terms in an association document if not required by state law. We are concerned that cities could no longer require maintenance or insurance of private common areas.
- Parking minimums. (Section 4 lines 3.1 – 3.4). Cities would not be allowed to impose minimum parking mandates greater than one stall per unit, regardless of how many people live in the unit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sally Ryman  
Rushford City Councilor