



For MAYOR *of* HENDERSONVILLE
November 3, 2009

Common Sense is defined as beliefs or propositions that most people would consider prudent and of sound judgement!

REDEVELOPMENT, OWNERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY, MANAGED GROWTH!

Problem: Many areas of the city - privately owned and previously developed, are in a state of aesthetic decay. Many have outdated or non-practical assets. Many have passive, speculative, or uninterested ownership. These areas are a community, public, and environmental, liability. The impact of blighted or stagnant areas is negative and impedes growth, development, and ownership from committed private sector individuals and/or entities. City planners and ordinances are not designed to expropriate or manage such properties, nor is the city engineered to redevelop these properties for public use.

Solution: I will make it a priority to establish a **Hendersonville Redevelopment Authority (HRA)** to propagate growth and revitalization. If owners refuse to fix up properties in obvious decay that deter investment and negatively impact the citizenry, the city may choose expropriation.

My vision for a local **Redevelopment Authority** is required to facilitate a variety of programs to administer and manage the elimination of blighted areas for residential, recreational, commercial and industrial opportunities. By doing this, interests shall be held accountable to the community and to committed, responsible, ownership. Such an authority can influence exogenous developers that employ hold-out behaviors. Speculative patterns and collusion by owners or developers can be limited or eliminated. In short, a community needs **responsible ownership** for continued investment, progress, and managed growth.

Here are some “nutshell” ideas for such a commission:

- Assertive enforcement of property ownership accountability ordinances including pertinent International Property Maintenance Codes.
- Authorization to condemn and/or expropriate outdated structures and environmental liabilities. The city shall require owners of such properties to either develop them into pragmatic and habitable assets for the community, or forcibly confer them to the city at fair market rates for public use. The city shall become an aggressive developer of these properties and shall benefit the citizenry by revitalizing these properties for a variety of uses, such as affordable housing, business and residential rentals, and new parks and libraries. The city shall by decree only use **local resources** - unless needs are unavailable, for funding, design, building, and labor. Not only will this create opportunities for jobs to stimulate the economy, but it will be an impetus for managed growth. While this idea may ride on the coattails of domain expropriation issues, note that the city is not a private party, that acquisitions will be for public use, that property owners will be compensated at fair market rates, and that owners will be given a period of time to make modifications, repairs, or refurbish such properties and liabilities prior to expropriation. Rural lands that are undeveloped and lands retained for agricultural use shall be exempt.
- The HRA would be committed to create affordable home ownership and rental opportunities within the city, promoting public health, safety, and convenience. A focus will be made to

alleviate the impacts of market rate housing on the supply and costs of housing for low and moderate income households. Using public or acquisition land, and with the help of local developers, financing assistance, and relief from regulation, housing may be made affordable to all incomes, ages, and households.

- The HRA could include a strategy for aggressive city infrastructure improvements utilizing aspects of redevelopment and revitalization.
- The HRA shall be committed to stimulating the arts through the development of artists residences, artist daytime studios, performance and community centers, amphitheaters, and artist designed gathering spaces utilizing the discretion of the HRA.
- The HRA could commit to the development of health conscience amenities like bike trails, walking trails, and exercise stations.

If developers will not create affordable housing opportunities, then the city can and should. If previously developed land sits stagnant for a period of time in vital or transitional areas because of hold-out opportunism, then the city should acquire this land and put it to use. Either way, if done correctly, the HRA would be a win-win scenario for the city. It's existence alone may be enough to urge passive owners to either sell, develop, or refurbish their investments. This will cause economic growth, spur investment from more committed owners, and create jobs.

Though a Henderson County Redevelopment Authority coordinating with separate city divisions might be a better solution, my idea is to shore up ordinances that may not exist within the scope of current planning and ordinances. A well designed commission to be aggressive. An HRA could combine resources with the Partnership for Economic Development which is highly experienced in permitting, real estate site assembly, financial package assistance, grant applications and local tax relief ideas for new business ventures.

The clearing of urban and industrial land of both outdated structures and environmental liabilities, while encouraging city or committed private sector development for community needs and public use opportunities, shall guide Hendersonville into becoming a place of growth, create new jobs, and allow Hendersonville to become a better fit for more diverse demographics.