

HSQ GROUP INC.

NEWSLETTER



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CONSULTING ENGINEERS • PLANNERS •
TRANSPORTATION

Happy Halloween

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FLORIDA HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY

In June 2009 the Florida Hometown Democracy was able to obtain enough support to put Amendment 4 on the November 2010 election ballot. This amendment will require all comprehensive plan amendments thru a County or City to be voted on by the general public at each election. The current process to amend the comprehensive plan to change the land use of a property requires about a year of time, effort and money on the behalf of developers to obtain the approval. The current process already requires extensive technical review of concurrency items such as traffic, schools, potable water, sewer and compatibility to adjacent properties prior to two readings and commissioner votes at the local level prior to approval. During the current process the general public already has an opportunity to object to a particular development and normally the local government elected officials will not approve an amendment without the support of the community. The proposed amendment will add yet another step for approval which will require a tremendous amount of money and time by a government or developer to educate and convince the general public to vote for a particular comprehensive amendment in which the general public may not understand or care enough to learn about the process and potentially vote no even though it has no effect on them.

WHO IS AGAINST IT?

Earlier this year the State of Florida passed Senate Bill 360 which was created to stimulate the economy by extending existing property approvals and streamlining the approval process to urge new economic development. Please see HSQ GROUP July newsletter for more information about SB 360. Amendment 4 would do the opposite by pushing potential new corporate businesses and economic development to other states. Many professional organizations oppose Amendment 4 including the Florida Chapter of American Planning Association, Florida Association of Realtors, American Institute of Architects, Florida Association of School Boards, Florida Homebuilders Association and Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers.

THE REASONING BEHIND AMENDMENT 4

Supporters of this amendment believe the Florida residents should have more power to control future development in their area. In the past decade the housing boom has created congested roads, destroyed agricultural lands and depleted water supplies. Also, some projects have been approved by local government officials with opposition by the constituents and perceived to be bought by deep pocket developers. The over built condition has led to foreclosures and dropping property values.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF APPROVING AMENDMENT 4

There are hundreds of comprehensive plan amendments every year across the state of Florida. All of them have to go thru a rigorous process prior to approval. What most people do not know is a lot of potential amendments do not even make it to the local commission meetings. We have been processing land use plan amendments in Florida for the past ten years. In my experience, if the city does not want the land use change we know about it long before the developer has to spend a year of time and money on it. Most amendments have very little opposition to them, but this amendment 4 will require developers to market and advertise the amendment to hopefully gain enough public support to get approval, even though the general public may not care, which is a gamble many developers cannot afford. Not all developers have deep pockets and can not take on the additional risk, time and money to do this. Also, government owned property may have to go thru this same process if they want to redevelop the downtown area, change a property to a park or even build a government building. This will slow down an already devastated construction industry in Florida, slow economic growth, reduce much needed impact fees, permitting fees and public improvements in our local communities.

PLEASE VOTE "NO" TO AMENDMENT 4 ASK
YOUR NEIGHBORS TO VOTE "NO" AS
WELL.

SPOOKY STUFF

