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Date: January 4, 2021

To: Brandon Swanson, Martha Diehl and Joseph Sidor

From: Carmel Highlands LUAC

Subject: Concerns, questions, clarifications & recommendations

Over the past several years the Carmel Highlands LUAC has witnessed an increased set of concerns from Carmel neighbors regarding projects that they believe are negatively impacting the character of Carmel. New projects are being submitted for our review that are not in keeping with neighborhood personality. In many instances they are disproportionately massive for the building lot size and architecturally out of synch with respect to the exterior profile. Additionally, we are witnessing a relaxing of county discipline in terms of netting and staking, an expansion of variances with respect to driveway to street access as well as lot slope acceptance.

We are not characterizing these matters as a neighborhood effort to stop or impede renovation or new construction, many projects that are in keeping with neighborhood character and county regulations are approved by the LUAC as well as accepted by the neighbors.

However, the outcry at our Carmel Highlands LUAC is robust and animated at many of our meetings and has become more commonplace.

These are not the frivolous or poorly conceived or self-serving concerns but are a plea from our neighbors for needed intervention by the county.

Some examples of recent projects reviewed (but not limited to these) by the Carmel Highlands LUAC that give rise to these concerns include:

1. PLN 190097
2. PLN 190098

In the spirit of being positive and constructive with respect to these concerns from the Carmel Highlands neighbors, the Carmel Highlands LUAC proposes some key considerations that would stop the present trend and better serve to preserve what Carmel is to longstanding residents.

The Carmel Highlands LUAC believes that these recommendations are not excessive nor are they difficult to understand, accept and implement. Our guess is that this is occurring in other LUAC jurisdictions.

These recommendations probably need to be tailored to the various areas of Carmel LUAC, such as the Carmel city area and Carmel Highlands area.

Questions and Recommendations for consideration:

1. Increase building setbacks to provide more adequate privacy for adjacent homes.
2. Increase the land to building ratios to reduce the introduction of disproportionately massive structures with overbearing exterior profiles.
3. Improved enforcement by county planning to the stipulated flagging and staking so that neighbors have a clear understanding of property boundaries, structure size, height and positioning for proposed projects.
4. Improved communications feedback to the Carmel Highlands LUAC as well as neighbors on LUAC project recommendations and their disposition.
5. More attention to driveway approach to streets that pose a danger to oncoming traffic as well as pedestrians.
6. More site visits arranged for LUAC with owner, architect or builder to more completely understand the project and its neighborhood impact.
7. Below grade finished square footage should count in total square footage when determining building to lot ratio.
8. Building to lot ratio should be reduced.
9. Granting variances to building guidelines should be limited to extraordinary situations.
10. As members drive through our neighborhood, there appears to be projects underway that have not been reviewed by the LUAC. A statement defining the criteria of what projects are to come before the LUAC and the rationale as to why certain projects do not.

Thank you for your consideration. We await an opportunity and invitation to discuss these matters and recommendations.

Sincerely,

The Carmel Highlands LUAC members

Barbara Rainer  
Clyde Freedman  
Dan Keig  
Holli Leon  
Jack Meheen  
John Borelli  
Norm Leve