

Elsa Messing
201 Onondaga Ave.
Palm Beach, FL 33480
March 29, 2021

Ref.: Residential Zoning

Dear Mayor and Members of the Town Council,

As a long term resident of the Town of Palm Beach (over 40 years), I am writing to express my concern with the increasing level of construction massive homes on ever smaller parcels of land, particularly in the North End of Palm Beach. A neighborhood that distinguishes itself as having one story homes, increasingly, is overwhelmed by the construction of two story homes that dwarf smaller homes next door. This trend makes is such that the distinctiveness and diversity of the area is now challenged by the uniformity imposed by ever larger and taller homes being constructed over the last few years.

It is all the more important, therefore, that the Town Council make a serious study of the current residential zoning rules of the area (and the Town of Palm Beach, overall) that permit this increasing “densification” of the neighborhood with the aim to balance the unique characteristics and quality of life of the Town with its demand for housing stock. The Town (with the North End being a case in point) seems to be ever more intent on accepting construction of larger homes over preserving the uniqueness of Palm Beach.

I urge the Council to undergo a comprehensive review of the antiquated residential zoning regulations (in its main form unchanged as they are since the 1970s). The aim of such a review would be to update the Town’s zoning codes and deal with such incongruities (as dictated by FEMA) of new constructions being required to over-add fill to lots for the purpose of drainage. This “over-filling” has had the negative impact of accentuating the height of newly constructed homes over older existing homes in the adjacent lot to the detriment of protecting the privacy of the owners of the existing one-story residences. Additionally, such a review should deal with the trend of combining lots (again, especially in the North End) that result in the construction of even larger homes in neighborhoods where smaller homes have dominated historically.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Elsa Messing