

Council says no to Amendment 4

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Article published on Tuesday, May 4, 2010



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SEMINOLE – It’s six months before a decision will be made but the Seminole City Council believes it’s not too early to begin the fight against Amendment 4.

Councilors voted unanimously April 27 to pass a resolution opposing the proposal, which would amend the Florida Constitution on land use decisions.

The measure, which will appear on the Nov. 2 ballot, if passed, would give voters veto power over changes in a community’s master plan for growth.

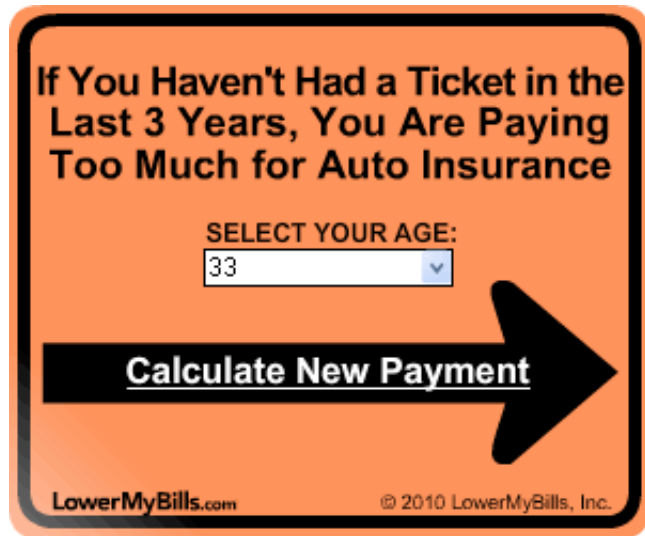
Proponents say the Florida Hometown Democracy amendment would enable state residents to preserve neighborhoods and protect property values.

Opponents say it would take decision-making power away from elected officials and force growth issues onto the ballot for voters to decide.

Something as simple as a zoning change for a new business or approval of a development agreement, such as the Aldi grocery store on Seminole Boulevard, would require approval by voters. The process would delay the decision-making process by months and prevent economic growth throughout the state.

Developers, they argue, will go elsewhere.

“It takes away from the municipalities to make decisions on their comprehensive plan,” said Seminole City Councilor Bob Matthews. “It’s as negative for our state as electric cars are positive.”



"If you think we are in a recession now, watch out. Things will get worse if Amendment 4 passes," said Vice Mayor Leslie Waters. "Amendment 4 will bring economic growth to a halt throughout the city of Seminole. It will cripple the ability of the City Council to do what is best for Seminole. We currently follow very detailed and stringent growth management state laws as it is."

Matthews said the amendment would take away a public process that already exists and eliminate efficient decision making.

"Any development involving a zoning change would have to go in front of the voters," said Matthews. "It takes away an elected persons' diligence to do the right thing."

Matthews said the measure could lead to voters passing an issue one year and reversing it the next.

"I ask that citizens vote no on Amendment 4," said Waters. "Please leave the complicated business of land use planning to local citizens, local business leaders, local government officials, local professional planners, and local elected officials who are far more knowledgeable on growth management issues than the tiny group of mainly South Florida wealthy extremists in support of this change. They don't have a clue what the needs of our city or county are."

The city's resolution states Amendment 4 "will result in the unintended consequences of hindering the implementation of comprehensive plan and land use changes that are in the public interest and which both protect the environment and allow for responsible economic development."

It goes on to say land use decisions are best made by the City Council through its professional planning process because such decisions are complex and technical.

The resolution continues, "the passage of Amendment 4 will result in unnecessary delay and cost to the city in carrying out its land use planning responsibilities by virtue of the need to hold special elections with lengthy, complex ballots before any changes in land use and the comprehensive plan can be approved."

In other action, the City Council:

- Passed ordinances on first reading regarding the voluntary annexation of property at 12983, 13014 and 13046 Estates Terrace South off 131st Street and 102nd Avenue.

- Passed a resolution supporting the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's efforts for Project Get Ready Tampa Bay to promote the region as electric vehicle plug-in ready and to assist in preparing for the use of plug-in electric cars. The Rocky Mountain Institute, Snowmass, Colo., has set a goal of designating 20 cities and regions as Project Get Ready affiliates. The federal government has set a target of 1 million electric vehicles in service by 2015.

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