

Below is the email dialogue of two parties:

First, a response from Rep. Chip Baltimore, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee to Ms. K. an Ames "Activist" living in Ames, Iowa – a person instrumental in the City of Ames adopting the "Maximum of 3- Unrelated Adults" Ordinance and a Past President of the South Campus Ames Neighborhood.

Second, after the jump, is the email message Ms. K. sent to ALL members of the Iowa General Assembly.

From: "Baltimore, Chip [LEGIS]" <Chip.Baltimore@legis.iowa.gov<mailto:Chip.Baltimore@legis.iowa.gov>>

Date: March 3, 2015 at 4:07:40 PM CST

Subject: RE: zoning: HF 161/ SSB 1218

Ms. K.,

I would like to thank you for your email, but I won't. You should be very cautious ascribing knowledge or actions to me, as opposed to a comment made by one of my partners. You have absolutely ZERO facts to establish that I was behind or knew any of what you are claiming.

Nevertheless, I appreciate the opportunity to illustrate for the House members the rationale for this bill. The home at issue was a 4-bedroom, 4-bath 2-story home with off-street parking for at least four vehicles. Apparently the home had previously been a problem for the neighborhood, because when it was purchased at sheriff's sale (which WAS a public auction at which anyone could bid I would add), the home was a disaster. A substantial amount of money was invested in the home to clean it up and make it more livable. Yet at the time and to this day, the City of Ames ordinance allows no more than three unrelated people to occupy the home. Despite the fact that even with four occupants, each could have his/her own bedroom and bathroom.

What you completely fail to do, Ms. Kxxxx, is explain to the body why unrelated people shouldn't be allowed to rent this home but several more than 3 related people could. The Iowa Civil Rights Code prohibits a landlord from discriminating against prospective tenants on the basis of familial status, yet you wish to continue to allow the City of Ames to do so via ordinance. Would you be complaining if my partner had refused to rent the property to any number of unrelated people? How about refusing to rent to related people? Do you realize that it would be a potential civil rights violation to even ask the question of the proposed tenants and then make a rental decision based upon the answer?

So, given that the incident was almost 15 years ago, here is my full disclosure of my interest in this issue - now as well as back then, I did not see any logical relationship between the problems the City of Ames was trying to solve (i.e., loud parties, trash in the yard, unsightly furniture on the porches, on-street parking, etc.) and the relationship or lack thereof of the occupants of a residential structure. If a city wants "low density," then just limit the number of persons who can occupy a residential structure and base the limitation on something that is not a civil rights violation, like number of bedrooms, square footage of the structure, etc. To continue with the existing ordinance is discriminatory and offensive on the one hand, and just plain lazy ordinance enforcement on the other.

Sincerely,

Chip Baltimore

----- The above is response to the Email Message after the jump -----

(Quoted Verbatim) TO: Rep. Chip Baltimore (and 99 other Representatives in the Iowa House)

Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2015 3:51 PM

Subject: zoning: HF 161/ SSB 1218

The passage of HF 161/ SSB 1218 which proposes to remove the criteria limiting unrelated people in a rental unit would have terrible consequences for a college town. Zoning is a local matter and should be dealt with at that level.

Please understand the history of our Ames neighborhood: In 2001, Chip Baltimore (R/Iowa House of Representatives, 47th District, sponsoring this bill) was one of the out-of-town owners of a large house at 2324 Knapp Street near Iowa State University. The home sold via a sheriff's deed without going on the open market. Mr. Baltimore and his partners purchased this house for \$98,001. They were asking \$1,800 a month. By city ordinance, the house was in a low density area of affordable homes. Mr. Baltimore and his partners knew that. Yet they planned to have only three student signatures on the lease and allow many more tenants to make up the exorbitant rent.

When these facts became public on the front page of The Ames Tribune, the house was immediately sold. But this precipitated the beginning of the SCAN (South Campus Area Neighborhood) association to protect our neighborhood of affordable homes from landlords who would defy zoning standards and threaten the viability of our neighborhood.

At the very least, Mr. Baltimore should offer full disclosure of this incident in conjunction with his interest in eliminating zoning requirements.

Responsible cities want to maintain stable neighborhoods. That is why zoning restrictions are written in the first place. Zoning restrictions insure that strip clubs can't be opened on a block with private homes. Or that that six college students can't rent a house in a neighborhood that is zoned "low density."

Fragile neighborhoods need protective zoning.

In 2007, the Iowa Supreme court had the good sense to support zoning ordinances when disgruntled landlords, who had been renting illegally for years, sued the city of Ames and lost. Now the same bill is coming up again. Greed doesn't die easy.

Ames Mayor Ann Campbell and the Ames City Council are on record as opposing the passage of HF 161/ SSB 1218. This bill should not be passed.

Sincerely,

Ms. K.

Ames, Iowa

(past president of the SCAN neighborhood association)