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# Letters to the editor: Bend gets feedback on tree code

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Opposition to the city of Bend's recently adopted tree code is growing. An appeal has been filed with the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

Dean Guernsey/Bulletin file

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## Editor's Note

Do you have a point you'd like to make or an issue you feel strongly about? Submit a letter to the editor.

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Regarding the article [“More groups join appeal of Bend tree preservation code”](#) in the Aug. 30 Bulletin: A developer wishes to unilaterally change the rules they helped create, and has enlisted the support of groups who were not involved in the process.

The Tree Regulation Update Advisory Committee (TRUAC) process was open to the public. They conducted nine meetings last year.

The development community was directly or indirectly represented by seven of the 14 TRUAC members (a developer, home builder, lobbyist for the builder community, “YIMBY” lobbyist and design consultants — an architect, civil engineer, landscape architect) as well as other expert representation including two arborists. The construction-oriented members had opportunities to express opposition to policies proposed and to forward desired alternatives. In some cases they did and proposed rules were loosened.

I attended some meetings and saw this process at work. In the end, there was a close vote to approve the hard-won recommendations. The process was open, considered and fair. The close final vote suggests that no one got everything they wanted, and this is as it should be.

The appellants assert that this regulation will unduly increase housing costs. However, this assertion has not been documented, nor the degree of increase. Some may say that “any cost increase is too much.” However, a glance at the many factors that potentially increase housing costs (e.g. increased financing costs, NIMBY-ism, limited availability of skilled construction labor, and zoning skewed towards single-family housing) suggest that tree preservation may be a scapegoat. Trees are really more of an investment than a pure cost. Mature trees greatly improve the environment and in fact enhance property values.

It is a disservice to the hard work of the TRUAC committee to disrupt this process before it has been given a chance. To the city council I say: stand your ground, and give these environmentally-friendly rules a chance to work. They can always be amended if necessary.

— *Robert F. Anderson, Bend*

I am a longtime Bend resident (34 years) and native Oregonian who feels the need to give my two cents regarding the tree policy proposal pushback that Pahlisch, et al, are giving the Bend City Council.

The council has the ultimate decision making power on this issue, not the building profiteers. The council ethically has the responsibility of collecting public opinions and then must act in the best interest of the community and ultimately the planet.

I appreciate the effort the special group made brainstorming this issue. Now it's time for making some forward progress. From where I sit, a deaf ear should be in place to the few who will make additional personal gains in amending the policy.

I have to say that there are successful areas in Bend where developers have been mindful of maintaining standing trees, such as Northwest Crossing. I assure you the developers "made bank" while they also preserved, for the most part, a significant number of the native, valuable, beautiful and important trees.

The council needs to hold steadfast on the policy which is fairly lenient already. Established trees with deeper, established roots must take priority. It's the right thing to do.

— *Amy Timony, Bend*