

Calby Hoffman

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On policy order 6

I have just returned from NYC yesterday – the largest climate march in the United States more than 300,000 – not only the size was inspiring since as participants we could only be sardines to our few blocks – but the degree of creativity – visual images, singing, dancing, and diversity of people in all respects. The messages were projected through huge panels, through slogans – “there is no PLANet B”, “save the human beings”, images of flooding, fires, as well as beauty- a 300 yard living river, an enormous globe, trees and people and the necessity of radical change to keep any hope of a livable planet alive.

I am also here in recognition of the work of dozens of neighborhood people who have been looking at zoning, rewriting in small sessions their ideas, have met with the City manager and written a comprehensive critique of the broad issues of the Planning Board which you now have, spoken at hearings to uncover the issues of toxicity in proposals like New street or legal tangles of taking the commons like the courthouse, appeared over and over to question the information about traffic and parking both for its details and for its lack of comprehensiveness, showed us the floodplain and the benefits of the silver maple forest, called for artists and budding scientists and youth leadership to be embraced and underscored everything with the fears of and realities of inequality. And also in recognition the initial master plan initiatives and request for linkage study.

What does this mean all this for the Planning Board order?

It means that processes which ask CDD or other city agencies to find ways to reach out and solicit community feedback for development does not address the urgent concerns of climate, affordability, demographics, and gentrification let alone forging policy which begins to mandate livability and the common good. The discussions on restricting parking give lip service to climate benefits (although 87% of our emissions are from buildings not cars) but could promote a situation where parking is made expensive to limit it ensuring that the rich, the ones with the resources for other options, are the ones who get cars and the rest are left in the lurch. And buildings are designed with individual air conditioning units built in when ac is one of the key contributors to co2 emissions. demographics is not being considered in planning and neither is climate A process for community input does not change the power or the parameters here.

So.. I hope we can pause with this order to surface and support some options which don't just solicit community input but change the rules to benefit the community. I don't have answers which others may but I do have hopes.