

Pittsburg County sports a new town, Carlton Landing

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by [Randy Bright](#)



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Last week, Carlton Landing in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma, was incorporated as a town, and locals say it is the first one in decades to be incorporated in that county.

Carlton Landing, a lakefront community on Lake Eufaula, only has a population of 56 right now, but its master plan is for 3,000 homes within its 1,650 acres. They also plan to build a 300-slip marina at the lake, as well as a nature center and camping facilities.

The community has been designed according to New Urbanism principles, and in this case, I say bravo.

That might shock most of my readers, since I ordinarily am not in favor of New Urbanism. But in this case, this is a new town with established rules that aren't being forced on anyone. And that is the whole point – no one is being forced to move there that doesn't want to live that lifestyle. They are free to move there, and they are free to sell their home and leave if they don't like it.

I have said all along that I don't have anything against New Urbanism per se, but I believe that it is wrong to force it or any other form-based set of rules on existing communities.

In some communities that have adopted this form of planning, the impact can be very detrimental.

In cities where the goal is high-density development, if your one-story home burns down, you won't be allowed to replace it with another one-story home – if you want to stay there, you might be forced to build a three-story apartment building. And if you can't afford to do so, well, too bad.

Another example would be infill – perhaps your business has a large parking lot. The city would encourage you to sell most of it to allow multi-story, mixed use buildings to be constructed on it. No more minimum parking requirements, now it will be maximum spaces allowed, regardless of the impact it will have on your business.

Planners continue to attack the suburbs as if it was a mistake to ever allow single-family homes to be built. Why? According to them, those suburbs were designed for cars, not people. We should be building high-rise apartments with services like grocery stores and shopping within walking distance.

Yet suburban living is still the most preferred form of housing, as survey after survey shows, and sales as well. In fact, Carlton Landing, is a master-planned community of single family homes to be built in the style of Traditional American Farmhouses.

Proving that not all New Urbanists are alike, the new community was designed by none other than Andres Duany. While I still find myself in disagreement with him on many of his ideas, I applaud the fact that he designed the new town at the same human scale as suburbs have been designed for decades, and I suspect that, at least in this part of the country, that it will contribute to the success and growth of this new town.

And again, the reason I am in favor of this community is that there is still freedom there. But also, I am glad to see that it is still possible to even build a new town in America, because that is clearly not the trend that planners want to see. Their ideal would be to see small towns of America to diminish and disappear, as its inhabitants die off and their offspring move to urban centers for jobs.

Carlton Landing is nowhere near an urban city, as its setting is truly rural. Tulsa is ninety minutes away, and Oklahoma City is two hours away. And even though it doesn't appear that it will allow for large churches, it does appear that any church of any size that wants to locate near enough to it can do so by building just outside the community.

There are a few new towns being formed in America now. When I did a Google search for "new towns", it didn't reveal even one. But I can think of at least two – the highly successful planned community The Villages near Ocala, Florida, and Seaside, Florida, a planned community designed by Duany many years ago.

And it is not likely that there will be many more, since there is such pressure by planners and government to densify existing cities rather than to allow new towns to be created. Hopefully that will change if the public becomes aware enough that they push back and defend the suburban lifestyle. Proponents claim that creating these high-density residential urban centers are all about giving people more choices, while at the same time they want to eliminate the suburban lifestyle that most people want.

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Randy W. Bright, AIA, NCARB, is an architect who specializes in church and church-related projects. You may contact him at 918-582-3972 , rwbrightchurcharch@sbcglobal.net or www.churcharchitect.net.

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