

Property rights will disappear as we crush people together

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by [Randy Bright](#)



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Three articles online caught my eye this week, further convincing me of how dysfunctional our urban planning system really is.

The first one was entitled Agenda of Fear, written by Don Terry, a senior writer at the Southern Poverty Law Center. (Yes, that's the group that believes that conservative and Christian groups are hate groups.)

In his article, Terry lamented the fact that people who opposed Agenda 21 had been able to derail the new comprehensive plan Horizon 2025 in Baldwin County, Alabama. After thousands of hours developing the plan, Baldwin County's Planning and Zoning Commission resigned – all nine members – after the Baldwin County Commission rescinded the plan due to protesters claiming that the comprehensive plan had been based on Agenda 21.

Terry wrote, "Unless you follow Glenn Beck or frequent far-right websites, you probably have no idea that Agenda 21 is considered a grave threat to truth, justice and the American Way. (And, apparently, to life in Baldwin County.) Odds are good that you, like most people, have never read a word of the 22-year old, 100-plus-page document. Agenda 21 is a non-binding U.N. resolution – that is, a proposal or global guide – designed to encourage nations to use fewer natural resources, conserve open land and pursue more sustainable development patterns. It was passed and signed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit by more than 170 world leaders, including President George H.W. Bush. The resolution is anathema to many on the far right, including Tea Party activists, who do not believe in manmade climate change and bitterly oppose government having a say over what happens on private land."

While Terry presupposes that no one has read Agenda 21, I can say that I and many others have. It is an obvious wealth redistribution plan using the now debunked global warming (climate change) theory as a premise to take money away from developed countries (i.e., the United States) and give it to undeveloped countries. Of course 170 world leaders signed it, most of them were going to be the recipients of the windfall.

And, of course, anyone who has read the Constitution and understands the concept of property rights should bitterly oppose the government from telling them what they can and cannot do with their own property.

The liberal thinktanks in urban planning have used Agenda 21 to promote comprehensive planning and that kind of thinking *leads to* (sic) leads me to the second article, “Neighbors balk as infill spreads from up-and-coming streets to Portland’s wealthiest zip codes” that appeared on the oregonlive.com website.

Neighbors in some of the more wealthy, older neighborhoods are protesting the practice of infill development. Developers are purchasing older homes, some of them still in very good condition, razing them, and building two larger homes back in their place.

You would think that environmentalists would be against this practice because it is destroying “embodied energy”, that is the energy and resources used to create the original home, only to use more energy and resources to build more.

However, since urban planners and environmentalists alike want density (one of the things promoted in Agenda 21), this is a practice that is actually promoted. Which leads me to the third article, The Theory Behind NIMBYism. (NIMBY means, Not In My Back Yard.)

This article told about neighborhood “activists” (a negative connotation, by the way) who opposed the rezoning of an area, allowing the construction of five-story buildings instead of the previous regulation only allowing three stories. The author described this as a “city decision that actually expanded a landowner’s right to build on its property by allowing it to build five stories instead of three.”

This, again is a story about regulations promoting density; the fact that a five story building blocks more sunlight and casts a longer shadow on its neighbors, not to mention the loss of view and of privacy, is not an issue. In some areas, you are not allowed to replace your one-story building with a one-story building, you must build a tall building or you won’t be allowed to build at all. So it is not an expansion of rights at all.

The truth is, the more we crush people together, the greater the rational to say that property rights are not practical and are not guaranteed by the Constitution, when, in fact, the knowledge and respect of property rights is the key to less conflict between neighbors. But this is a concept that is totally lost in Agenda 21 for no other reason than it is an impediment to its implementation.

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