

Density is ‘destruction’ according to Winter Park architect

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by [Randy Bright](#)



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The book *The Five Thousand Year Leap* by W. Cleon Skousen contains 28 principles that the Founders used to establish our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The 22nd Principle is, “A free people should be governed by law and not by the whims of men”. The Founders sought a form of government that struck a balance between anarchy by the people (in which people would do whatever they wished without restraint of law or ruler), and tyranny by a ruler (in which the ruler would create and disregard laws with no regard for the people).

Skousen wrote in his book, “To be governed by the whims of men is to be subject to the ever-changing capriciousness of those in power. This is ruler’s law at its worst. In such a society nothing is dependable. No rights are secure. Things established in the present are in a constant state of flux. Nothing becomes fixed and predictable for the future... The American Founders and their Anglo-Saxon forebears had an entirely different point of view. They defined law as “rule of action” which was intended to be as binding on the ruler as it was upon the people. It was designed to give society a stable frame of reference so the people could feel secure in making plans for the future” (emphasis mine).

Skousen quotes John Locke who wrote, “The end (goal) of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom. For in all the states of created beings, capable of laws, where there is no law there is no freedom. For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others, which cannot be where there is no law.

In our government today, at all levels, our government has been transformed (slowly at first but much faster recently) into a government that governs over the many at the whims of the few. In all cases it is insidious and unpatriotic, and the pain it causes comes with a price, especially when it affects those who feel powerless to do something about it.

For example, just this week I have read several articles by those who are beginning to question the wisdom of those who espouse the principles of dense development. One in particular on the [newgeography.com](#) website by Richard Reep entitled *Florida: When Density is Destructive*

intrigued me because it seemed to me that his article (though I am sure was meant to inform and convince his readers of his viewpoint) was a product of frustration with local government.

Reep, an architect in Winter Park, Florida, describes how dense development has been negatively affecting his community. He wrote, “Like many cities that have a working class enclave that butts up against a newly trendy one, Winter Park has encouraged dense, mixed-use development, while nominally protecting its existing neighborhoods. And this is where the density equation seems to fall apart. The residents who leave the area (because they are being forced out by upzoned development) will no longer participate in the economy of Winter Park. The new residents of half-million townhomes probably won’t ride the bus, walk to churches, or otherwise activate the local streets. So a natural piece of the city is lost forever. Urbanism, for all that has been written in favor of this ideology, is diminished for the sake of density.”

Reep further describes “upzoning” – the practice of changing a property’s zoning classification to allow for denser development, as “zoning for dollars” because the practice benefits developers and city government over the property rights of individuals.

How is this possible? Though not the exclusive theater of government to practice it, it has become fashionable for city governments to engineer their zones into a situation that benefits itself at the expense of its residents, and it does so at its own whim.

Reep continued in his article, “City halls, so obsessed with petty regulations, would do well to recall their basic functions as protectors of their residents. If there were a ‘back to the basics’ movement for government, many ordinances written to benefit the few would be shed, and there would be a refocus of attention back to the public good.”

In other words, local governments need to stop ruling their cities at their own whims to accomplish only what benefits themselves. Otherwise, the lack of security in investment in a community will discourage not only new developments, but reinvestment by its current residents. Laws are important, but they should be formed only after hard due diligence and vetting, and only at the consent of the government.

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