

Who owns the streets in neighborhoods and who should be able to afford to own homes were questions laid before the Bloomington **City Council** Wednesday night.

One proposal was an ordinance to keep **speed bumps** that were installed on **Covenanter** Drive in October. The second was a proposal to loosen the rules guiding how the Bloomington Housing Trust Fund can be spent to promote affordable housing.

On both, the **city council** heard presentations and public comment, but took no final action. The council will take final votes at its May 17 meeting.

The **speed bump** ordinance provoked the longest discussion.

Several residents living near, but not on, **Covenanter** expressed opposition to five **speed bumps** installed on the street in October.

Those **bumps** were installed in response to concerns by **Covenanter** residents who said traffic from the Rogers Farm development would flood their neighborhood when a gate blocking that traffic came down last year.

The **city council** approved an ordinance directing the city engineer to devise a traffic-calming method for **Covenanter** in March 1999 by a 7-2 vote. As part of that ordinance, the **city council** gave **Covenanter** residents the option to vote for or against the **bumps** before they were permanently established.

People not living on **Covenanter** said Wednesday that they should have been allowed to vote on the **bumps** as well.

"The people that live directly on **Covenanter**, they don't own that street," said Ken Bardonner, a resident of East University Street.

Bardonner and others said the **bumps** are diverting traffic on to Second Street and damaging the quality of life and property values of people in the area.

"When we satisfy one neighborhood to the detriment of another neighborhood is the overall community satisfaction improved? I don't think so," said council member David Sabbagh, who voted against the ordinance last year.

Others said the **speed bumps** are necessary methods of controlling traffic speeds and improving safety on a street that serves as both a neighborhood road and a significant east-west corridor.

Several council members took exception to the characterization that the process had been undemocratic and said the inconvenience caused by the **speed bumps** did not offset the advantages for neighborhood residents, pedestrians and bicyclists.

A motion to support passage of the ordinance next week passed 7-1 with 1 abstention.

Before turning to traffic, the **city council** considered a proposal to change the rules under which a city trust fund can be loaned out in support of affordable housing projects.

The housing trust fund was established in 1995 with \$500,000 of city money after vigorous debate about how restrictive the rules should be with regard to who could use the money and how much of it should be targeted to permanently affordable housing for the poorest citizens of Bloomington.

The proposal brought forward Wednesday by an admittedly divided housing trust fund board of directors

would loosen the rules, allowing more to be loaned out to projects without permanent affordability or targeted to higher income portions of the low-income market.

Toby Strout, a trust fund board member who opposed the changes, said the city was taking the easy way out of its affordable housing problems with the changes, which she said would allow the city to ignore the hardest to serve populations.

"Instead of looking for creative and aggressive ways to address the housing needs of the poor, I would put it to you that we have decided to do what is easiest," she said.

Council member Tony Pizzo said the changes were needed to bring more developers forward to build the houses.

"The city does not build houses," Pizzo said. "Contractors and developers build houses."

He said no private developers were willing to come forward for the most restricted portions of the trust fund.

"Why don't we accommodate what we can do?" Pizzo said. "What we can do is build \$60,000 to \$70,000 houses. And some people can buy those houses."

Council members were undecided on the issue. Seven abstained on a motion to encourage passage of the ordinance next week.

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