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Development projects in the United States are subject to a process I like to call “whoever yells the loudest and longest wins.” Some refer to this as participatory democracy.

Across the country and the county, angry residents and neighborhood associations have the power to delay, reshape, and even halt entirely the construction of vital infrastructure. County Government officials know that developers can’t move forward without their blessing. The developers in the County need to be regulated. They and Real Estate Agents make money when the County turns a blind eye, leaving concerned citizens to fend for themselves when the developers go rogue in the neighborhoods and the County. It looks like, most times, a tale of kickbacks and favors. Not fair.

Affordable housing is constantly touted, but as I have witnessed many, not all, taking advantage of that system thwart the rules and destroy the housing and communities they live in. I have seen it firsthand many times. For example, the ongoing issues with the lovely apartment complex on St. Charles Pkwy.

Democracy is at its best when the views and needs of the people are accurately transmitted to their representatives, the representatives act, and voters express their approval or disapproval in the next election. The existing community-input system purports to improve upon this

process by offering a platform where anyone can show up and make their voice heard. After all, providing input shouldn't just happen at the ballot box, or so the thinking goes. But the process is fundamentally flawed already. It's biased toward the status quo and privileges a small group of residents or developers in this case.

Granted, County Government doesn't have the best track record of respecting legitimate grievances about developer's projects. However, that doesn't mean leadership and the County Government shouldn't and can't do better.

Respectfully,

Dr. Karla Kornegay, MBA