

**From:** Christopher Salmons [mailto:csalmons83@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 10, 2019 11:41 AM  
**To:** publisher@knoxfocus.com  
**Subject:** Your Article on Recode

Good Morning,

I am writing concerning your recent article "Too Many Recode Misteps?" I love the article and thought it did an excellent job on pointing out the legal issues with the ongoing recode process.

There is another legal concern with recode that I wish to make you aware of, an ongoing battle my neighborhood has been having with the city, an issue that I believe should be a discussion with all Knoxvilleians.

On May 2, 2019 the Board of the Parkridge Community Organization was present with a plan by the Rev. Dr. Bruce Spangler of the Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC) to turn three parcels facing E 5th Ave, that are currently part of Caswell Park, into a 3 story 50+ unit housing project for people identified as "chronically homeless". According to the presentation the VMC has drawn up plans for site development at the direction of Becky Wade, Director of Community Development with the city of Knoxville, and the plans include transfer of public park lands to the private non-profit and the closure of a section of Myrtle St. to accommodate staff parking for the center.

The three parcels in question were purchased by the city in 2001 for \$237,000.00 as part of the Caswell Baseball Fields Development and are protected through the city's Open Space (OS-2) zoning which prohibits sale and development of public park lands.

Neighbors in Parkridge, including myself, learned that the city had rezoned these three parcels of land from OS-2 to a high density residential between revisions of the recode map in an effort to sneak the rezoning through, a rezoning that did not include an open public process or any public meetings.

On May 7, 2019 less than a week after the neighborhood was notified, I attended the city council meeting in which council was to decide whether to move forward with the Myrtle St. closure. At this point I had written all of city council about the illegal rezoning maneuver (to which none replied) and had started a [change.org](https://www.change.org) petition which has more than 150 signatures. While sitting in the crowd waiting on the meeting to begin the mayor came down and nervously apologized for the "oversight" and that she would move to have the item tabled for 12 weeks, and that neither herself or Bill Lyons had any knowledge of this matter.

Since this meeting a Parkridge resident has submitted an open records request which includes various email chains from Becky Wade and includes Bill Lyons, David Brace, and several other city officials confirming that this project and illegal rezoning was indeed premeditated with messages dating all the way back to the beginning of February 2019.

My neighborhood is continuing it's efforts to save our parkland, including a written grant proposal to turn part of the hillside into a fruit garden, which the city has denied as the "land in

question has a disputed use." There is a concern of how many other zoning changes were slid into the recode map and what remedy there will be to correct them when/if recode passes. This illegal rezoning along with the other examples you provided in your article are more than enough reason for city council to hit the brakes on the recode. Any light you can shed on these issues are appreciated, the people of Knoxville paid for that parkland and giving it away for private development is not acceptable.

Regards,

Christopher Salmons

P.S. I never received a mailer about the recode for my property. Here in Parkridge the consensus is that only about every 5th house received a mailer.