

Dear Anderson Observer Readers,

Our government requires a permit to do many things, like getting married or driving a car. Imagine that when you applied for that permit, your government said we're sorry, but we're kind of busy right now and we've enacted a moratorium on accepting your application for that permit while we plan how we'll better regulate getting married or driving a car. Does that seem right to you?

That's what some members of Anderson County Council want to do for large-scale residential development. What is large-scale development? 25 housing units or more.

Also imagine that they include in their moratorium an override provision that allows a county councilmember to approve certain people to go ahead and apply for their permit anyway. Their proposed moratorium allows that too.

Their rationale for this moratorium on applying for a permit is that Anderson County is growing too fast, and county council needs time to plan new ordinances to better regulate residential development. Would you be surprised to know that in the last eight months, Anderson County Council has already considered 12 development-related ordinances, not including the moratorium?

What's even worse is that most of the county is not experiencing an unusual amount of residential development. Anderson County's population is growing, but at about the same rate as the rest of the state, and slightly slower than the Upstate region. And those new county residents need an affordable place to live, just like the rest of us. We also should recognize that not all our population growth is from people moving to the county—some are our own children.

Speaking of children, one of the reasons brought up for this moratorium is overcrowding in our schools. But school district data tells another story: the student population in Anderson County Schools has barely increased in the last 10 years—just 195 new students out of more than 31,000.

Who will a moratorium effect? More than 10,000 people in Upstate earn their paychecks in real estate, including more than 1,700 Realtors. Landowners will be affected. And every family that hopes to buy a home will be affected. You probably know someone who will be affected.

It's not hard to imagine why so many people don't trust their government. Our population is growing, we don't have enough housing to meet their needs, and we have an affordable housing problem as a result. Some in our government say our schools are overcrowded, but the number of students has barely grown countywide. They have been very busy adding new regulations, but some members of Anderson County Council say they need to stop issuing permits while they plan more regulations.

A moratorium on applying for a permit required by our government should never be considered.

Josh Grant, Interim President

Western Upstate Association of REALTORS®