

August 1, 2022

Planning Commission
Written Public Comments
Non-agenda item

From: Ruth Berge <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, July 31, 2022 10:05 AM
To: Planning Commission Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment Non-agenda Item

I grew up in Orange and it is my hometown. I am saddened that the City Council and particularly the Planning Commission has not taken action to preserve Watson's Drug Store and instead it will be yet another boring restaurant. When I lived in Orange, the soda fountain was old - and not the only one in the Plaza- and the pharmacy was still operating. A vibrant downtown Orange was a big part of my life there, we went to many of the shops around the Plaza- Orange Camera, Buster Brown shoes, the natural food store that was next to the Orange Cinema where we saw actual movies. I still have a sweatshirt from the Army Navy store. Of course Orange is in Orange County (aka never saw a hill that didn't need a housing tract Orange County) but it is astounding to me that the city has a huge protected area of homes around downtown but does no planning to make a walkable, workable downtown, including preserving places like Watson's Drug store. The Planning commission could be creating, preserving, remaking a beautiful vibrant place that would bring in the people who live in the neighborhood, not just drunk rich college kids. Ultimately that would stand out more than another Mexican Restaurant. I hope your visions for the future of the City of Orange change in a good way to not just retain old houses (at high cost) but think about making a place for people, especially the people you should be serving- the citizens who live in the City - not just temporarily for college, but actually live there.

While I'm at it, why are you not protecting the people who live near the weekend farmers market? People who live right next to that market are under siege during the market hours and afterward under siege from skateboarders. Who does the planning commission serve? Find a new location for the market. Every farmers market I know of is in a space that is not bounded by people's homes. Close off the plaza and put the market there.

Thanks for listening.

Ruth Berge
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