

October 2021

Lucas' Never-Ending Rowhouse Development, Part 253.

It's been a few years since we started on this journey. So let me catch you up.

2018 – Bought some dirt in South Park for \$180,000

2019 – Spent the whole year arguing with the city over whether Lucas can use the existing water main or if has to build another water main just for his own building. Shockingly, Lucas loses his fight with the city. He accepts this and moves on.

2020 – Meeting with the city, transcript below:

Lucas: I want to build 6 attached rowhouses, each with a ground-level ADU. This is allowed by code.

City: We agree, but we prefer to pretend that each attached rowhouse is really a separate structure. So, build them so they are touching each other, but with separate exterior walls/siding and pour 6 separate foundations. Also, and this is very important, the garage floors must be slightly below grade.

Lucas: None of those things make sense. Why are you making me do those things?

City: **We like rules. Sometimes we create extra rules. If you don't follow them, you cannot build.**

Lucas: Gotcha.

2020-2021 – Submit plans, get comments, make corrections. Submit plans, get comments, make corrections. Submit plans, get comments, make corrections.

Now the finale!

Lucas: Oh my gosh! Hi City of Seattle, thank you so much for reaching out. Do I finally get my permits?

City: No.

Lucas: (Shocked face) We did everything you asked! We even designed a step down to the garage floor so it would be 12" below grade!

City: True. However, we have decided to interpret the code a different way.

Lucas: You changed the code????

City: No. The code is the same. We are INTERPRETING it differently. You cannot have ADUs anymore. If you remove the ADUs we may allow you to continue revising. Or, you can design something else and start the process over.

Lucas: The ADUs were the whole reason we did the project! To create rental housing. Doesn't Seattle need rental housing?

City: Yes.

Lucas: Doesn't South Park especially need rental housing?

City: Yes.

Lucas: Isn't the city encouraging more density in infill locations?

City: Yes.

Lucas: Does this decision benefit you, me, the city, the supply of housing? Does anyone in the universe benefit from killing this project?

City: No.

Lucas: Then why kill it?

City: **We like rules. Sometimes we create extra rules. If you don't follow them, you cannot build.**

Yeehawww!!! It's good times creating housing in Seattle! In other news: can't believe that summer we had! Go Mariners! The housing market is still hot but it always cools down from now 'til the end of the year. If rates go up, it could cool even faster. Lunch in Seattle now costs \$15!

Lucas

Extra dialogue

Lucas: There's got to be someone I can talk to about this.

City: Like Nathan Torgelson, the Director of Planning?

Lucas: Yes, exactly! Nathan! The Director of Planning! He'll understand this isn't right.

City: No, he doesn't care.

Lucas: Of course, he will care! Please! Just ask him!

City: (Pause) Hi, this is Nathan.

Lucas: Oh, my goodness, Nathan. OK, look, you recognize I've spent 2 years and \$100k designing this project to be exactly in accordance with your directions?

Nathan: Yes, I see that.

Lucas: OK, great. Phew. This was almost like a bad dream. And you have the authority to approve my project, right?

Nathan: Absolutely.

Lucas: Awesome. OK, thank you so much. Really appreciate it.

Nathan: But I won't.

Lucas: Wait, what?!! We did all those silly things and accommodated every one of your comments! What about actually building housing?

Nathan: I don't care.

Lucas: You! The Director of Planning! Don't care about building housing? What could you possibly say to defend that position??

Nathan: **We like rules. Sometimes we create extra rules. If you don't follow them, you cannot build.**

Lucas: Gotcha.

If any of you know Nathan Torgelson tell him I said he's a beautiful human!