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Housing Project Causes Stir In Dodge City

– A proposed low-income housing development in Dodge City is causing controversy.

Before a packed house – standing room only – citizens of Dodge City took their concerns to the Zoning Board Thursday night.

“Our biggest concern is the site, not whether we need them or not,” said homeowner Nancy Thomas. “It doesn't belong here.”

Thomas and others are concerned about a planned low-income housing development set to be built at 6th and Cedar Ridge. Many homeowners are worried their property values will go down if development goes in.

"So you have devalued our property value even though we don't get lower property value and we don't get lower taxes out of it," Thomas said.

But developers from Overland Property Group told residents not to be fooled by the term “low income”. They call the area “affordable housing” meant for the working class making up to \$32,000 a year. They say similar developments in Hays and Liberal have been positive for the community.

"If you go to Liberal, it is nothing but beautiful and it's an improvement and we need to move forward and do what's right for the city," said Billy Manning with the Dodge City Zoning Board.

"We are in desperate need of housing," said Joann Knight with the Dodge and Ford County Development Corp. “We continue to grow our businesses and our workforce and our housing situation is hindering us from some of that growth.”

Homeowners agree more housing is needed. They just don't want a development in their neighborhood.

"We need affordable housing too, but this is not the right place to put it," Thomas said.

The Zoning Board unanimously approved the development. It's now up to the City Council to vote on whether the project becomes a reality. It is expected to take up the issue August 16th.

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