

Your community has survived more than 150 years of you and your neighbors deciding for yourselves how your land will be used. In all that time, the sky has not fallen. Those who want to take away your freedoms are lying to you.

Truth: Once you've lost your freedom of choice, it's too late to change your mind.

Lie #7: "I still own my land even if I must pay yearly rent to keep it, and can't decide how it's used."

I'll admit it: even the pro-zoners don't tell this lie. It's too obviously false. This is the Big Lie; the conclusion that Lies #1-6 are supposed to lead you to reach on your own.

Trading the right to decide how your land is used in exchange for empty promises of security, then claiming the trade has somehow "added value," is ridiculous. Try this at home: Pull a dollar out of your wallet and tear off one corner. Hold a piece in each hand, and ask any small child to pick one. Which one will he choose? Even little kids know that only the bigger piece will spend.

The yearly rental-tax makes the county the true legal owner of your land. There are only two other main sticks in the bundle: The right of use, and the right to sell. Zoning will restrict your freedom of use, and place limits and conditions on your right to sell. What will you have left?

Truth: Whoever has the most sticks in a bundle of rights is the real owner.

Do you normally hand your wallet to strangers for safekeeping? Trust lawyers with blank checks? Have you given local government a duplicate housekey, or the deed to your land? If you're in favor of zoning then you may as well answer "yes" to all the above.

Under zoning, if you want to own a home, raise a family, or run a business, you'll have to do it the Goons' way or not at all. **Zoning is People Control.** I'd prefer to think you have enough sense to manage your own affairs, as I insist on the right to manage mine. If not, maybe you'd like to buy some Florida swampland, or Enron stock? Or maybe you'd be in favor of zoning?

(This space reserved to print contact information for local groups organized for the purpose of opposing zoning initiatives:)

The author, Gregory Allan, is the editor for the Lawful Path, at <http://www.lawfulpath.com>.

This document can be downloaded free of charge, in PDF format, at the following link:

<http://www.lawfulpath.com/ref/7LiesOfZoning.pdf>

Provided no changes are made, you are encouraged to print and distribute as many copies as you please, particularly in areas where local governments are trying to steal the land through Zoning.



The Seven Lies of Zoning

by Gregory Allan

Bad ideas, like bad pennies, turn up again and again. Are you facing the question of whether to accept zoning?

Zoning is one of those ideas that seems more complicated than it is. Most people think zoning helps the community control land, but it doesn't. Zoning is a way for a few elites to control everyone else. **Zoning is "people control."**

It's so simple. Just as Esau sold his birthright for pottage, we are asked to trade our land and homesteads for lies. Let's identify and expose those lies, and maybe we can avoid tragedy:

Lie #1: "Zoning will protect us from pollution and noise."

This lie is easy to expose. We already have laws to punish those who damage property and disturb the peace. No additional laws are necessary. Examples abound where zoning actually helped corporations do shady things they could not have done without zoning in place. The "will of the community," although opposed, was powerless because they'd given all their power to the zoning board.

Truth: Zoning helps persons with enough money, do things for which they would otherwise be punished by existing laws.

Lie #2: "My neighbor will have to clean up the junk in his yard."

Half-truths always work better than outright lies, and this one is no exception. Most of us have a neighbor or two with unsightly junk we'd like to see cleaned up.

Trouble is, once we start forcing people to clean up their property, the only question is, "where do we draw the line?" We all know everything government does is a one-way ratchet. How often have you known the real tax-rate to go down, or seen a single bad law repealed?

Zoning boards, like other government bureaucracies, always gain more power over time.

Face it: a zoning board is nothing but a pack of thieves; a "goon squad."

People who live under zoning are familiar with the "red tag." A red tag on your door means you have only a few days to comply, or face a stiff fine. At first only the worst junk is "red-tagged." But after their first pass through the county, the Goon Squad must label more stuff "junk" just to keep their jobs, otherwise who needs Goons? Soon anything in your yard, no matter how neatly stacked, may be classified as junk. Does the old car in your yard have a current license plate? If not, remove it quick, or you will be fined and sent a towing bill. You'll receive no payment for your lost treasure.

Like it or not, that "junk" car or tractor in your neighbor's yard has a value. Under zoning, sentimental value is irrelevant; plans he may have had to restore it and sell it for a higher price someday are gone. No one else in the county will buy it because they also fear the Goon Squad. If he sells it at all it will be for much less than its true value-- probably it will go for scrap. There's no way around it folks, that man's property was stolen.

Truth: Zoning makes it legal to steal peoples' property. Zoning boards are made up of thieves, and everyone who supports them is an accomplice.

Lie #3: "Zoning will raise my property value."

Another half-truth. Under zoning, permit fees are raised and building codes are made more restrictive. It becomes much more expensive to build new structures. Supply and demand then forces up the price of existing structures.

If you're not planning on selling your home, you can look forward to rising costs. Just as others have found under zoning, local property owners can expect their property taxes to double, or even triple within a few short years. You need only look as far as the nearest zoned County to see this trend in action.

If you plan to build a new barn, garage, or make some other improvement, be prepared to comply with the Goon Squad's new rules, and pay between 50% to

200% more to finish the project-- that is assuming that the Goons approve it at all (much less likely than you may think).

If you're planning to sell your home, you might want to do it quickly, before zoning goes into effect. "But what about that higher property value I'm expecting," you ask? Zoning regulations typically require that a house be brought up to current "code" before it can be sold. Even with its newly inflated value, the expense of upgrading might make it more cost-effective to tear it down and rebuild.

But be careful about tearing down existing buildings. Although they are usually grandfathered in areas where they violate new regulations, if the building is torn down or "accidentally" burns, the Goon Squad will almost certainly prohibit you from building another structure, even if it's intended for the same use as the one it replaces. Scores of family businesses are lost this way.

Of course you can do as you please if you have enough money to bribe the Goons, but that's illegal so we're supposed to pretend it doesn't happen.

Truth: Zoning raises the value of your property by making it more expensive to own and improve.

Lie #4: "If we don't get zoning my property will lose value."

Nobody wants to admit it, but none of us really owns land. Each year we must pay property tax on "our" land. If we don't pay the tax, then the county takes it away and sells it to someone else who will. So let's call it what it is: rent.

So long as we pay our yearly rent we can do pretty much what we want with the land. But under zoning, our bureaucratic landlords will write a book of rules to tell us what we can and cannot do with "our" land. It will grow thicker every year with more rules enacted "for your own good." It no longer matters what you plan, as your planning will now be done by the Goon Squad, and enforced by the Sheriff.

Imagine a bundle of sticks. Each stick represents a single right you have in your land. Grouped together, the bundle is your total right of ownership. The right to

keep your land without rent doesn't belong to you, that stick already belongs to the county.

Under zoning you lose rights in your land; Goons decide how the land is used. If you can't use it for what you want then the land (to you) is now essentially worthless. You don't even get paid! That's right folks, you surrendered your rights for nothing. You didn't even bring home a handful of magic beans.

But there is still hope! The county will sell back some rights, one at a time, in the form of a permit. If you want to do something that's against the Goon Squad's rules, you can apply for a variance. If you're politically connected you'll have no problem getting one. What, you don't own any politicians? No problem-- if you have lots of money. The wealthy buy variances all the time. They hire local attorneys to handle this for them. Attorneys know this, which is why they are nearly all in favor of zoning.

Truth: The only value land has to us is in its use. If we lose the right to decide how land is used, then it has lost value.

Lie #5: "Other people may be effected by zoning, but not me."

I have to say it: This one is just plain stupid. Unless you are an actual member of the Goon Squad, or you are one of a half-dozen people in the county rich enough to own your own Goon (you know who you are), then you too will lose your property rights. Everyone who is in favor of zoning thinks it will be the other guy who loses his rights. By the time they see the truth, it's too late.

Truth: Zoning benefits the very wealthy, the very privileged, and the bureaucrats who administer the system. Everyone else suffers.

Lie #6: "Things will change for the worse if we don't adopt zoning."

One thing is certain: with or without zoning, things will change. Everything always does. Most folks in this area are polite to each other. That's not unusual-- free people are naturally polite. But start regulating them, and they turn nasty. Is that the kind of change you want?