



Rhett Fussell <rhett@ralt.org>

in support of RALT Idlewild

Jonathan Melton <jonathan@jonathanmelton.com>

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To: Rhett Fussell <rhett@ralt.org>

To Whom it May Concern:

I'm writing in support of Raleigh Area Land Trust (RALT), specifically their development project in the Idlewild neighborhood of Raleigh. I've been a resident of this neighborhood since 2011, first as a renter and then as a homeowner. I first moved to Idlewild as a recently-graduated lawyer, working for the NC Court of Appeals. At that time, I made less than \$60,000 per year, and, like most young professionals in their 20s, I had credit card and student loan debt. I struggled to find something I could afford in a neighborhood close to where I worked, downtown, and close to amenities. I was lucky to find my house in Idlewild, because the then-landlord was related to one of my friends from college. He rented my house to me at an affordable rate, and then a few years later, I was able to buy the house from my landlord.

Not everyone is as lucky as me, to find a path to affordable homeownership in an amenity-rich, walkable neighborhood. We need more developments like RALT's project in Idlewild to make that dream a reality for more folks. In the more than 10 years I've lived in the neighborhood, I've seen it become increasingly more expensive and less diverse, as the high cost of housing and exclusionary zoning rules have pushed most new developments into the area and many longtime residents out. The need for RALT's project was great in 2011, and there's an even greater need now. The 18 units they're planning to build, at or below 60% of the area median income, will be a lifeline to folks who are just starting out in their careers and young families. And the path they're also offering from rental to homeownership is also extremely important and will allow more folks to establish generational wealth.

I am proud to support their efforts and this development project, and I hope you will too.

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Jonathan Melton
Raleigh City Council Member, At-Large
919-749-7105
<https://jonathanmelton.com/>