

Voting lawsuit

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Donald Trump’s administration seeks to weed out immigrants who are in the country illegally. According to reporting by USA TODAY, courts have unanimously rejected the DOJ’s demands for voter lists with personal information such as addresses, dates of birth and driver’s license and Social Security numbers, which local officials contend would create a “sweeping surveillance tool.”

According a ruling issued by U.S. Dis-

trict Judge Claria Horn Boom, a Trump appointee, the court decided that the unredacted voter registration records are not subject to disclosure under Title III of the Help America Vote Act.

The release states Boom’s opinion relied on the Sixth Circuit’s recent decision in United States v. Benson, which “found that disclosure requirements cited by the federal government do not extend to the sensitive voter registration information at issue in the case.”

The Jefferson County Clerk’s Office intervened in the lawsuit in March, arguing the office has an interest in the case given its responsibility for maintaining voter registration information

for Jefferson County.

“I was proud to be the first Clerk in the nation to intervene in the lawsuit brought by President Donald Trump and the DOJ in defense of the United States Constitution and our local laws,” Yates said. “Jefferson County has always turned over our full voter files to our Kentucky Secretary of State, and we were proud to have stood with our Secretary of State in opposing President Trump’s illegal attempt to exert national control of our local elections.”

Jefferson County Attorney Mike O’Connell, whose office represented the clerk’s office in the legal proceedings, slammed the DOJ for seeking Kentuck-

y’s voter data at a July 24 news conference. He noted the case was dismissed with prejudice, meaning the DOJ cannot make the same claims in another lawsuit against Kentucky.

“The Department of Justice, which is a shadow of what it used to be, should be embarrassed to the hilt that they even brought this,” he said.

The DOJ filed a notice of appeal with the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals July 24.

USA TODAY reporter Bart Jansen contributed. Reach reporter Lillian Metzmeier at lmetzmeier@usatodayco.com. Reach reporter Killian Baarlaer at kbaarlaer@courier-journal.com or @bkillian72 on X.

Plan blocked

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project “stands to overwhelm the local infrastructure, like exaggerating an already undesirable traffic flow.”

“Even if a project’s design meets the zoning requirements ... it still may clash with the fabric, scale and character of its neighborhood,” he said.

Attorney Cliff Ashburner, representing the developer, noted his client had agreed to provide a turn lane from Watterson Trail onto Bluebird Lane, going beyond what his team’s traffic study found was necessary.

Many who spoke against the project said while they weren’t opposed to development of the land or even opposed to residential, they but took issue with its height and apartment count.

Others voiced a desire for it to be a different type of housing, such a single-family houses or townhomes, while others wished for an exterior aesthetic they said would be more fitting with nearby historic structures.

Still others voiced a desire to have known about the project much further in advance than the required noticing process.

Many similar points were raised in May, when the development plan went before the Louisville Metro Planning Commission. That body voted unanimously to recommend approval to the City of Jeffersontown, which has ultimate approval authority.

As the case worked its way through the Louisville Metro review process, the



A proposal to bring Bluebird Luxury Lofts to Jeffersonville was denied in a July 22 city council vote. Envisioned were 161 apartments across three 4-story buildings on a 5.5-acre plot of mostly vacant land at 10619 Watterson Trail. PROVIDED BY CITY OF JEFFERSONTOWN



A public notice sign stands on the site of the proposed Bluebird Luxury Lofts, a 161-unit apartment community in Jeffersontown, in July. MATTHEW GLOWICKI/COURIER JOURNAL

“Even if a project’s design meets the zoning requirements ... it still may clash with the fabric, scale and character of its neighborhood.”

Randy Lawson
Jeffersontown resident and former fire chief

developer reduced the plan from an originally introduced 189-unit project across two 5-story buildings and one 4-story building.

Bluebird developer Aaron Phillips also addressed the city council, saying the project would include many amenities, including a fitness center, rooftop patio, dog park, and pool, among others. He said his team has been responsive to community concerns, adjusting the plan as issues were raised.

“Bluebird Luxury Lofts is more than just needed housing,” he said. “It’s a cat-

alyst for a vibrant, walkable town center.”

Ashburner argued the project was compatible with the county’s plans and codes steering development, and stressed the land had been zoned for multifamily residential use for over four decades and has twice before been the subject of approved development plans that included mid-rise apartment buildings.

After about 45 minutes of deliberation, the council voted 7-1 to deny the development plan, with a stated ratio-

nal that the project didn’t meet multiple conditions of the Land Development Code, such as those dealing with transportation and compatibility of site design and land use with existing area conditions.

A spokesman for the developer declined to comment on the decision or possible next steps.

Reach growth and development reporter Matthew Glowicki at mglowicki@courier-journal.com or 502-582-4000.

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