

December 2, 2016  
1914 Old Orchard Court  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Matt Kowalski  
City Hall  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Mr. Kowalski and Members of Planning Commission,

Thank you for taking additional time to consider the development of 312 Glendale in order to clarify how stormwater handling was determined and exactly who owns the property.

As demonstrated via our neighborhood survey presented at the previous public hearing, stormwater is a great problem in our area, costing homeowners significantly both to prevent and to remediate flooding, including sewage in basements. The orchard does not exacerbate this problem - stormwater does not flow off the property even in heavy rains, but is sufficiently absorbed by the clay soil. However, we are deeply concerned that when a large portion of the orchard is covered by asphalt and steep roofs, runoff will occur into the downstream and downhill neighborhood. Current detention plans for 120% of a 100-yr rain seem inadequate, with future guidelines increasingly calling for containment of 500-yr rain levels. Runoff from the development will add to the flow from Allen Creek and put the neighborhood at great risk of extensive flooding damage. Perhaps at greatest risk are the 3 condos adjacent to the north side of the property, just a few feet from the bottom of the very steep slope. If one looks at the contour map, it is hard to believe that the slope will not funnel water from the front and side of the building and parking lot directly into the basements of those condos. We are not at all reassured by the current plan for stormwater handling. Increasing detention to include the upstream Hillside Terrace should be required.

In the past Hillside Terrace and 312 Glendale had common ownership. In 1994 Hillside planned to add an expansion of the retirement home onto the Orchard, a plan that did not materialize. Lynn Borset and Kathy Boris of our neighborhood provided letters for this meeting documenting the complex partnerships that now "separately" own Hillside and the Orchard and difficulty in determining the membership of the LLCs. However, Hillside Terrace continues to advertise on tv and in print that "their" 10 acres of grounds includes gardens and an orchard, an inaccurate statement since at least some of the gardens are the Project Grow gardens. However, they imply that they do indeed own the orchard. It would make sense that there is common ownership – would a separate entity build a Memory Care facility adjacent to an existing retirement home already housing Alzheimer's patients, thus competing with them while sharing a private road and other facilities? It is only logical that this is, in reality, an expansion of Hillside Terrace.

The issue of ownership is critical, because if this is an expansion of the existing facility than the entire site is required to upgrade its stormwater system, including Hillside and the two rental houses at the south end of the orchard (which are on the current site but do not seem to be included in the stormwater plan). According to city law, this is what has been done in previous expansions, for example of Zion Lutheran Church. Bringing Hillside Terrace stormwater handling up to date was recommended by the the Stormwater Calibration Study and Analysis to reduce flooding of the downstream neighborhood.

The neighborhood has expressed great concern regarding the impact of this development on flooding, as well as the poor fit of the large building backing onto Glendale with the existing area of small homes. It will be unsightly to say the least, and loom over the adjacent condos as well as the neighbors across Glendale. Importantly, if this development is approved, who will bear responsibility when it brings harm to the welfare of the neighborhood? Will the City offer compensation for flooding damages and loss in home values and ultimately in the tax base? Given existing concerns regarding stormwater and unresolved questions regarding the relationship of this business with the Hillside Terrace Retirement Community, I urge commission members to either reject this proposal or at least table it until these concerns are thoroughly addressed.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Diane M. Robins