

Dear Commission,

I write to you as a longtime member of the South Pond neighborhood and as a former member of the Ann Arbor Township Planning Commission. I ask that as you consider the South Pond Village Proposal at your upcoming January 21st meeting, you review it in light of the strong opposition of the surrounding neighborhoods to this dense proposal. There has been resolute and continued opposition to any dense development on this land dating back to opposition to proposal from the 1960's (to which I can personally declare).

The opposition is due to the very nature of this parcel, it's location and relationship to the Huron River Valley and surrounding features. None of the factors have diminished in the intervening years with each development proposal and some have become ever more critical due to other growth and development on the east side of Ann Arbor. It is time for the City to recognize the value of this parcel to the entire City and the Huron River watershed and to make a determination based on a broader public and natural feature perspective than that of just the property owner and developer.

The troublesome traffic conditions in the Washtenaw Blvd / Huron River Drive / Huron Parkway surrounding area are well documented and are only deteriorating. The potential access points to this parcel are extremely limited.

The wetlands and surrounding highlands that drain into the wetland have value in and of themselves and are home to endangered and valued species. Both the highlands and the wetlands have a direct flow into South Pnd which is already a stressed waterway due to the course of both Mallets Creek and Swift Run Creek which flow through much of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti then merge in South Pond before flowing under the railway into the Huron River. If South Pond becomes further compromised by additional development immediately adjacent, it will no longer be a buffer to the Gallup Park or able to filter what would otherwise back up behind the Dixboro dam.

More importantly, this open space and natural preserve help provide a vital landscape for people recreating along the River, in Gallup Park, in South Pond, and along Huron River Drive. This is an important entry way to the City on the east and provides a definition between the City and urban areas to the East. It will never be possible to return the Washtenaw Blvd corridor to any kind of similar sense of boundary and entryway (though I do remember the days when Arborland was a farmers cornfield). We can however preserve the East Huron River Drive entryway to bookend how West Huron River Drive provides a natural enter luke to the west between urban and non-urban areas thus defining a border for the City on either edge of the Huron River.

I ask the City to expand the South Pond Wetland Preserve to include all the adjacent draining property including the slopes up to the highlands behind Arborland. additionally, I ask the City to consider designation of those highlands beyond the slopes as recreation South Pond Park. This will save the best interests of all the citizens of Ann Arbor.

Sincere regards

Elizabeth Wood
4061 Thornoaks Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Sent from my iPad