

January 15, 2015

To: City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission
From: Woodcreek Homeowners' Association Board
Re: Request To Deny "South Pond Village"

The WHA board, the elected representative of the 87 homeowners of the Woodcreek subdivision, calls on the Planning Commission to recommend to City Council DENIAL of the proposed "South Pond Village" development as currently configured.

1. It is already difficult and dangerous to exit Chalmers onto Washtenaw most of the day, seven days a week. There is no traffic light at this intersection; owing to the many other lights along Washtenaw, an additional light at Chalmers is unlikely. Chalmers traffic already has long waits to enter Washtenaw. And those who want to go east on Washtenaw have exciting adventures, dodging both westbound and eastbound traffic, and wondering who else will appear in the middle turn lane at the same time. There are occasional crashes, and near-misses occur, too. By adding 76 homes to the area, SPV would substantially increase traffic at this point, despite the developer's claims to the contrary. Additional traffic from SPV would not only include residents' vehicles (perhaps 150) but also visitors; USPS, Fed Ex, and other delivery trucks; and lawn and snow service vehicles. City traffic engineer Cynthia Redinger appeared to agree with us when, in her October 16, 2014 memo to Matt Kowalski, she said, "The traffic impact study in its current form does not concretely prove that the access to the site through the intersection of Washtenaw Avenue and Chalmers Drive will be either safe or convenient." PC should deny SPV and suggest its developer design an auto access route other than Chalmers.

2. Unpaved Chalmers Drive is often in unacceptable condition. It frequently has many holes, some of them deep and unavoidable, especially when drivers face oncoming traffic. Since SPV would greatly increase Chalmers traffic, its condition would worsen. The developer recently agreed to fund paving Chalmers by a property tax assessment on each SPV house, each Woodcreek house, and each Chalmers house. But under past practice, Chalmers homeowners have to approve. In the past, they have strongly opposed paving. First, they would have to pay a lot of money. Second, paving would increase Chalmers traffic considerably, turning it into even more of a cut-through between Washtenaw and Huron River Drive. We empathize with their views. Given all this, there is no assurance Chalmers will be paved. Instead, SPV would deepen and increase holes and craters. Again, a non-Chalmers access route is required.

3. We oppose use of Algebe Way as an auto route. That is because it would increase speeding traffic on Meadowside Drive. This road is narrow when cars are parked on both sides. Children who live along Meadowside play in and near the street. The developer says he would accept making Algebe an emergency-only route. But that is not what the current site plan says. Therefore, the site plan should be denied.

4. Over the years, WHA boards have supported a city park for active play in our area. A park should have been installed when Woodcreek subdivision was built. About 2001-2002, the Parks Advisory Commission endorsed a local park on the 48-acre site to the east of us. Just before that, Peters Builders attempted the first version of SPV, a proposal Planning Commission and City Council rejected. Chalmers resident Gary Gaub noted that given our area's population, the city's PROS plan (formula on page 65) called for 5.7 acres of city parkland. And that was without any population on the 48-acre site. SPV's September 2014 site plan omitted land for a park. Now the developer says he will allocate about one acre for a park. The developer must meet or approach PROS standards to respect both local residents and community standards. Until he does that, Planning Commission should deny approval.

5. Along the east and south edges of our subdivision, the developer proposes trees, shrubs, and land berms as visual and sound barriers. WHA prefers less permeable fencing or walls, especially along the access road right of way, which borders the back yards of Meadowside and Brian Ct homeowners.

To conclude, the 48-acre site is zoned for single family homes, and we do not oppose that usage. From the start, last July, we candidly shared our concerns with the developer. We wish he would have shaped his plan to satisfy those concerns. If planning staff or planning commission convinces him to solve our most significant objections (Chalmers intersection and Chalmers condition, Algebe Way, and parkland acreage), we would reassess our position.

Woodcreek Homeowners' Association Board

Kym London, President; Rich Mazzari, Treasurer; Michael Homel, Secretary; Blair Gerdes, Linda Plona