

**From:** Julie Weatherbee <[juliew@umich.edu](mailto:juliew@umich.edu)>

**Sent:** Sunday, November 29, 2020 11:50 PM

**To:** Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>

**Subject:** Questions and comments regarding Main and Davis Apartments

Hello Planning Commissioners (and Staff!)

The following comments pertain to the Main and Davis Apartments site plan being discussed December 1. My husband and I own the property at 108 E. Davis, which is the house to the east of 907 S Main and to the north of the back yard of 913 S. Main. We currently rent it to a professional couple. We live at 837 S Main, which is two properties south of 907 S. Main. So this is an area with which I am very familiar.

I do have several specific comments/questions on this project, especially how it impacts our property and the properties down E. Davis:

1. **Stormwater.** Since the Main and Davis site is higher than the properties behind it (especially the 907 side) and in the middle of the hill, there are already issues with runoff from properties upstream, I am concerned that the driveway points downhill right into our back yard. I do see from the plans that the driveway and parking areas are going to have a stormwater holding tank/cistern, which is great. However, I also note the line in the plan that says "in the event of a pump failure or other catastrophic event, there will be an emergency overflow pipe at the basement finish floor elevation (FFE) discharging to the east." As one of the properties directly to the east, this gives me pause. It would be helpful to have this system explained more.
2. **Shared retaining wall.** What is the plan for the four foot tall shared retaining wall between 108 E. Davis and 907 S. Main? As noted on the plans, it is not in good repair. It is not our property, although the only way to really access it currently is via our property and we are the ones who see it. How will this project address this wall, both during construction and into the future to prevent erosion, provide separation, maintain the wall, and protect both properties? (See attached image of the retaining wall from this fall. The picture was taken from the back yard of 108 E Davis, looking at the retaining wall, with 907 and 913 behind it.)
3. **Fencing, trees, and buffers.** We are very happy that our shared large walnut tree will remain (as well as several other landmark trees), and I am assuming that steps will be taken to protect them during construction and in the future. I see the evergreen hedge between 907 and 903 S. Main. What buffers will exist between the new building and 108 E. Davis to the east? Since the Davis and Main property is four feet above our yard, and the retaining wall is offset from the property line, it limits our ability to fence or landscape for privacy. Right now, there is an old fence above the retaining wall, which isn't in good repair, but does have greenery and lilacs that provide additional visual separation. How will this look once construction is completed? I am also interested in the physical buffer between the parking areas at the bottom of the driveway and our property as the driveway could get slick in icy conditions and I would hate to end up with a car over the retaining wall. I also have concerns about the snow storage being right on the edge of the retaining wall, both for runoff and concern about the structure of the wall.
4. **Lighting.** I assume the lights will be shielded from above, but since the property is already much higher than the properties on Davis and Brown, what steps will be taken to keep the outdoor lighting from impacting the properties to the east, which are lower?
5. **Sustainability.** We were happy to see the use of solar. Will the building be all-electric? Will there be electric car-charging stations? Are there other sustainable features?

6. **Open Space.** How will the open green space be used and maintained? Currently the areas behind the houses are being used for dumping of old mattresses and other trash on both properties and has not been maintained. How will maintenance be handled in the future? What is the management plan?
7. **Parking and Density.** I do not have a problem with the density of this building. While I don't particularly like the 6-bedroom configurations, especially in a post-COVID world, I understand that they are being built because of the R4C zoning regulations. The number of parking spaces also don't bother me. While it is true there is very little parking in the neighborhood, the building owner will bear the brunt of any parking issues and street parking is a public good, not specific to any property.

Please let me know if you have any questions for me. I look forward to watching the meeting on Tuesday! Thank you all for the work you all do!

--Julie

Julie Weatherbee  
837 S Main Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104



**From:** Thomas Bletcher <[thomasbletcher@aim.com](mailto:thomasbletcher@aim.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 01, 2020 12:05 PM  
**To:** Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>  
**Cc:** [smain-neighbors@umich.edu](mailto:smain-neighbors@umich.edu); [smain.neighbors@umich.edu](mailto:smain.neighbors@umich.edu)  
**Subject:** to Planning Commissioners, in re: 907-913 South Main Street...

...Euclid vs Ambler Realty held that an "apartment building" might meet all the requirements, but still be in the wrong place, wrong time, and the Court was not going to judge the community decision to turn down such a project, as those questions were best settled at the ballot box...

...there are many difficulties with this project, some of which are disclosed in the staff report...if there were no other issue beyond the bizarre addition to the South Main streetscape, that would be enough for me to vote "no" on this project...

...and, I hope you will find it enough for your votes this evening...

Thomas E. Bletcher

834 Brown Street  
(734) 663-6772

1 December 2020

**From:** [kmccune@provide.net](mailto:kmccune@provide.net) <[kmccune@provide.net](mailto:kmccune@provide.net)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, December 01, 2020 11:42 AM

**To:** Planning <[Planning@a2gov.org](mailto:Planning@a2gov.org)>

**Subject:** Fwd: Feedback on Community Notification Process: 2111 Packard

Hi,

I am resending a letter I sent on 11/20 to Mr. Lenart and Councilperson Disch. I see it did not get included with the resident responses on tonight's meeting agenda and I didn't receive an acknowledgement that it was received. So, I am concerned that it might have gone astray since it was sent to individuals at the last Planning Commission meeting rather than to the general Planning Department email address.

If you could acknowledge receipt and ensure it gets to the Commission, I would appreciate it.

Thank you,  
Kate McCune

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**Feedback on Community Notification Process: 2111 Packard

**Date:**20-11-2020 06:46 PM

**From:**[kmccune@provide.net](mailto:kmccune@provide.net)

**To:**[blenart@a2gov.org](mailto:blenart@a2gov.org), [LDisch@a2gov.org](mailto:LDisch@a2gov.org)

Dear Mr. Lenart and Planning Commission Members,

I was one of the neighbors who called in for the meeting about the proposed apartment complex at 2111 Packard. At the end of the meeting Commissioner Abrons brought up community discontent with the notification process and asked for that to be placed on one of your upcoming meeting agendas. I would urge you to place this on your agenda sooner rather than later and will offer my notification experience for this project as an example of the current system's really startling inadequacy.

Below is the list of the three official notification methods. I pulled this from the City Planning site. In red under each method is an explanation of how it played out for the 2111 Packard project, as well as personal comments on effectiveness.

- 15 days before a hearing, a notice is published in the Washtenaw Legal News (visit [www.legalnews.com](http://www.legalnews.com), click on Public Notice Quick Search, and type in "City of Ann Arbor PH")
  - I have no doubt this happened but I have no idea what this website is and I am a pretty engaged neighbor. So it seems unlikely that the average Ann Arbor resident is keeping an eye on this website regularly to review upcoming legal notifications. Moments ago I followed the instructions above and tried to find this notice with the Quick Search function, as advised. I could not find a reference to the specific project and meeting. I'm sure it's there--but I can't find it. My point is that this is a very obscure notification method for the average citizen and has close to zero effectiveness as a true way of communicating with interested and affected neighbors.
- 15 days before a hearing, postcards describing the project and providing the date and time of the hearing are sent to property owners, residents and [registered neighborhood and business associations](#) located within 300 feet of the property being considered.
  - Perhaps there was a postcard. Again, I don't know because 300 ft includes only 3 house on each side of the project and perhaps 6 houses across the street. I, and most of the neighbors who attended the the Planning Commission meeting and previous developer meetings, live in the several blocks surrounding the project. I can't make an argument other than common sense for a postcard notification system based on a determination of project impact rather than mere abutment. Notifying only 15 households about a project that adds over 100 beds and makes official space for over 70 more cars seems at best inadequate--and at worst a "one size fits all" rule designed simply to check a step off on a

list without any intention of truly trying to notify affected neighbors or invite community engagement.

- One week before the hearing, an orange sign is prominently posted on the property being considered. The sign contains:
  1. The name of the petition
  2. The time and place of the hearing
  3. How to get more information
  4. The date the property was posted
- I walk through this property pretty much 4-5 times a week and never saw this sign last week. So, yesterday afternoon I walked down to the property with my wife and tried to find it. I couldn't; she did with some searching. I have attached pictures of the placement. There is a single sign on a streetlight pole, facing traffic and not visible from the sidewalk. From the street it is also not legible to cars driving by or walkers on the other sidewalk.

If I had not attended a number of Planning Commission meetings in the past and seen first hand this committee's serious commitment to doing right by the planning process, my takeaway would have been that this public notification effort was pretty cynical and conducted in bad faith.

Instead, I know for a fact you want more community participation. I've written my experience simply to lay out the ways it does not work for the very people you want to engage. I assume the Legal News posting is some kind of legal requirement. That's fine. But it's useless as an actual effort to notify people affected by the project.

The other two notification efforts can easily be improved: 1. Come up with a better metric for determining the scope of who is affected by a project and send them all a postcard that arrives at least two weeks before the meeting. The 300 foot rule is great when a single house wants to put up a shed in the backyard and half a dozen neighbors are affected; in the case of an apartment building that will affect the life of hundreds of people on the Packard corridor? It feels absurd. 2. Signs are cheap; how hard would it be to post more--and to consider the placement and locations that might actually be seen by the people who live and walk in the neighborhood? And why only a week before? One smallish sign in an obscure location a few days before a public meeting... People try harder to find their lost cats.

Beyond that, I think you should consider adding official routes of electronic notification--and to that end, several of us are working to form a neighborhood association so you will have a registered outlet in this section of the Packard corridor.

Now we are in a position where your commission has whole-heartedly approved a project that involves neighbors who are still just learning about it through word of mouth. They didn't have a chance to hear your thoughts or voice theirs. Instead, building will start in 2021 and a sizable portion of this neighborhood will feel blindsided and railroaded by a City that is changing their neighborhood, seemingly indifferent to their concerns. A lot of that feeling won't be justified; this is a thoughtful project and you had a chance to explain that to people involved enough to participate. But you didn't take advantage of that.

As a side note, I would like to say that the neighbors I have worked with are primarily concerned not about the project itself, but about the increased traffic and potential shifting traffic patterns that could push up to 100 cars back through the residential streets in an effort to avoid the intersection of Packard and Stadium. The traffic study only looks at impacts on Packard and at the Packard/Stadium intersection--and it does find what we already know: that the intersection a bit of a pressure point. From the beginning of the project we have asked first the developers and then this committee to study potential traffic pressure in the neighborhood behind Packard. That hasn't really been addressed in any significant way. If it's possible, we ask that this concern be included in your recommendation to the City Council.

I appreciate you reading through this long letter. I think you do good, important work for the future of the city. But a dated notification process really undermines community buy in for that work. I would be happy to be involved in efforts to improve this process should you want input or volunteers after you revisit the process in your working meeting.

Thanks for your attention.

Kate McCune  
1912 Anderson Avenue  
734-276-7542





**From:** [Dennis Gala](#)  
**To:** [Gale, Mia](#)  
**Subject:** Re: 12/1/2020 City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission Agenda  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 25, 2020 9:51:00 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Thank you for your email today. This email is directed to the City of Ann Arbor Building/Planning Department.

I am hoping that my letter here would be read publicly and recorded as such. I would like everyone to hear what our feelings are about the following proposed project just next door to our property. I am writing to you in regards to the homes at 907 and 913 South Main. Both homes may soon be torn down and a single apartment building may be built as their replacement. This new proposed building will have 35 bedrooms with a potential of up to 70 residents. Parking for this proposed new building will be very limited to about 15 spaces. I am horrified to think that the city would allow such a building to be built with so little parking and hope those on the panel would have the good sense not to let it happen. It will also create a congested traffic mess to put it politely.

I became part owner of 903 South Main in 1995. In 2001 my good friend who owned and lived in the home there originally, passed away and left the home to my wife and I. In 2002 we tore the house down to the foundation and after much painstaking planning built a new home no larger than the original footprint. The original home was built in the 1800's and moved there in the 1940's. It was in very poor shape. We built a new home that mimicked what was there and would fit into the neighborhood. We wanted it to be appealing to the surrounding neighbor's homes. We strive very hard to keep our home at 903 in great shape. I would hope the owner of the two properties would consider following suit and build something with consideration of the neighboring community.

Again, this new proposed building definitely does not fit into the neighborhood. It is massive, extremely unattractive, and will house way too many people. South Main Street is already a race track. I can only imagine the amount of traffic such a building would create, once it was built and occupied. I would like to ask the panel of people overseeing this proposal to turn this proposal down and not allow such a monstrosity to be built. It simply is too big for such a small area and lack of parking is also a huge concern. Although I realize there is nothing illegal about who owns property in the city, It does however concern me that individuals come from out of town or out of State, build unsightly buildings in our fair city and then they are gone. It would be much more appreciated if the proposed building fit in more with the adjoining properties and was not so massive. Please stop this project in its tracks. In my opinion it would behoove the new owner of the properties to work with the neighboring property owners and come up with a more compatible plan.

Just yesterday I had a conversation with Tom Crawford, the interim city Administrator for the city of Ann Arbor. We spoke about an entirely different subject, but during our conversation out of the blue he complimented me on our property at 903 South Main, and what we have done with it. To have a building built right next door like the one proposed, would be a real shame after we have built something that truly fits the neighborhood and the landscape. Please reconsider the plan before you. I can be reached at 734-846-5864. My email is as above [dgala208@gmail.com](mailto:dgala208@gmail.com).

Barbara Gala , Owners of 903 South Main Street.

Thank You Very Much, Dennis and



On Wed, Nov 25, 2020 at 6:42 PM Gale, Mia <[RGale@a2gov.org](mailto:RGale@a2gov.org)> wrote:

Dennis,

We'll be happy to provide your comments to the Commission.

***Please note Planning Staff are continuing to work remotely and are committed to responding as soon as possible. Updated contact information is below.***

**Mia Gale**, Administrative Assistant

Planning Services

City of Ann Arbor | Guy C. Larcom City Hall | 301 E. Huron, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor · Ann Arbor · MI · 48104

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[mgale@a2gov.org](mailto:mgale@a2gov.org) | [www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org)

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**From:** Dennis Gala <[dgala208@gmail.com](mailto:dgala208@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 25, 2020 5:13 PM

**To:** Gale, Mia <[RGale@a2gov.org](mailto:RGale@a2gov.org)>

**Subject:** Re: 12/1/2020 City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission Agenda

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Thank you. If I respond to this email with my concerns will that be sufficient enough to be read at the meeting?

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 25, 2020, at 4:54 PM, Gale, Mia <[RGale@a2gov.org](mailto:RGale@a2gov.org)> wrote:

Hey Dennis,

I'm forwarding you the agenda, as promised, for next week's Planning Commission. Please let me or Chris Cheng know if you have any questions. *Happy Holidays!*

This is the Zoom webinar for the **City Planning Commission Meeting** of Tuesday, **12/1/2020** at 7:00 p.m.

This meeting will be broadcast live on CTN Cable Channel 16, ATT Channel 99, and online at [a2gov.org/watchCTN](http://a2gov.org/watchCTN)

To speak at public comment call:

**206-337-9723** or **213-338-8477** or Toll Free 877-853-5247 or 888-788-0099

Enter Meeting ID: **975 1994 2176**

*eComments* for the Commission may be left via our Legistar calendar page (column to the very right) <http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

***Please note Planning Staff are continuing to work remotely and are committed to responding as soon as possible. Updated contact information is below.***

**Mia Gale**, Administrative Assistant

Planning Services

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