

Subject: Request to deny the South Prairie Permit (Ward 2) that AAPS and Gilbane are seeking

From: Margaret Baker

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Greetings City Officials,

As a long-time resident of Ward 2, who has brought up five children in the Ann Arbor Public Schools and been an extremely active school volunteer for over two decades, I **IMPLORE** all of you to do what is in your various powers to DENY the permit that would allow AAPS to turn our thriving Thurston Nature Center into an impervious paved road. The area in question is the South Prairie portion, which has now been revealed to be Ann Arbor CITY (not AAPS) land, a fact that AAPS must have known but kept quiet.

As you undoubtedly know, because of truly heroic collaboration on the part of over 1000 residents, parents, teachers, and even students, there has been a unified, intelligent, thoughtful campaign to engage with AAPS over the proposed Thurston building plan. This is all outlined in the “Let Thurston Play” website, with which some of you are possibly familiar.

Many of us who have worked together on behalf of this community together for years have been appalled by the way AAPS has been railroading through this build. The preposterous plan began taking shape three or so years ago, when the very small (two-person) Bond Committee of the AAPS Board (and the very eager contractors from Gilbane, who I believe was engaged without the requisite three-bidder minimum) planned to locate the new school just adjacent to the Nature Center, in what is essentially a swamp. No one outside of these few individuals knew this information until the very contentious (and shocking) community meeting at Thurston last September, 2024, when we learned of this hugely flawed plan and began to mobilize.

I am thankful that so many public figures, including Representative Debbie Dingell, have been supportive of the Let Thurston Play efforts. For now, the most important thing for you all is to deny the South Prairie permit, which will result at least in pausing this whole ill-advised debacle from proceeding. The project is slated to begin June 12, so swift action is critical.

Hoping that you all will see that the permit must be denied.

With thanks,

Margaret J. Baker, Ph.D.
The University of Michigan