

**Knight's Market proposed renovation
Comments from Steve and Nancy Schewe
428 Spring St.**

I am here tonight to speak in favor of the Knights' request to rezone 306 and 310 Spring Street. We have known the Knight family since 1973 when we bought our house at 428 Spring St, six houses up the street from the market and the Knight's homes. The Knights are a classic, hard-working "Midwestern family". They are wonderful neighbors and we have complete confidence that they will make improvements in their family-owned and family-operated market that will improve the quality of life in our shared neighborhood.

The Knights have a long history in our neighborhood. Before going into the Korean War, Ray Knight worked in that market. He saw that the "mom and pop" small grocery store was doomed against the onslaught of the giant supermarket chains unless he could come up with a specialty niche. After returning from the war, where he was trained as a butcher, he decided that special niche would be high quality meats. He bought the market in 1952 and it has been a huge success ever since. Many of the best restaurants in the Ann Arbor area depend upon Knight's Market today for their steaks and burgers. Lines form up the aisle of the store before holidays as families pick up their meat orders.

We are so lucky to have a neighborhood store. Most families must jump in their cars to drive to a giant Kroger store each time they need a gallon of milk. Not in our neighborhood! We just walk a short distance to Knight's Market where the children and grandchildren of Ray and Mary Knight sell us some milk---and everybody knows our name. How many people can say that?

The Knights are good neighbors. Ray let neighborhood people run "tabs" on their grocery purchases until their next payday. Sometimes these paydays were rather far apart during lean times, but Ray always "carried" his neighbors until they could square their food bill. Nowadays after a heavy snow fall---even before I've had my second cup of coffee---Chet Knight has run his snow blower and cleared the sidewalk of the entire block with a double pass. And Vernon Bedolla, a long-time Knight's Market employee and Spring St. neighbor, has cleared the other side of Spring St. When a murderer escaped from the courthouse and was hiding in our neighborhood, it was Bob Knight, armed with a baseball bat, who escorted Nancy home and checked out the safety of our house.

Knight's is the classic small family-run business that comprises what we Americans love to refer to as the "backbone of our country". Knight's Market supports other local small businesses whenever possible. Sherry is making a real effort to stock local products, including Mighty Good Coffee, Metzger's Potato Salad, Monique's Spaghetti Sauces, Ann Arbor Tortilla Factory chips and Dry Bucket Farms eggs. Knights is now selling prepared food from their restaurant kitchen—another local business. There is so much demand for these foods that they are seeking additional space to prepare them. They have asked to use a property that they already own for this purpose--a very conservative business move. The Knights don't make reckless moves. They are slow and cautious, and that is why we trust that they will not abuse this request for rezoning.

In sum, the Knight's are wonderful neighbors and responsible business owners. They aren't running a 7/11. They have neighborhood-friendly business hours: 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. They maintain their property. They have a vested interest in maintaining the residential nature of the neighborhood. We have every confidence that they will continue to revitalize and improve their family-run business, an anchor in our neighborhood since 1952.