

David Palmer
428 Pine Brae
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

February 5, 2015

Mr. Jeff Kahn, Project manager
City of Ann Arbor Planning & Development Services
301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Dear Jeff,

I am writing today in advance of the City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission public hearing on February 18, 2015, in order to gain clarification of the "Special Exception Use" status regarding Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA) and their on-going and future athletic field developments. Specifically, how previous athletic field improvements have been allowed to take place under the guise of a "Grading Permit?" More specifically, how these significant improvements were allowed to happen prior to a formal public hearing and a Special Exception Use approval by the Ann Arbor City Council.

Since the beginning of summer 2014 the residents of Pine Brae have met informally on several occasions with officials from CUAA to hear the details of their master site plan. Each time we met we learned more about the specific details of their master plans for phasing-in various athletic field improvements. Not surprising, each time we met we grew increasingly fearful about the impact these plans will have on our continued safety and enjoyment of our neighborhood.

One issue that is particularly contentious is CUAA's determined efforts to phase-in stadium field lighting on multiple athletic fields; football field, baseball field, softball field, tennis courts, and soccer fields. Athletic field lighting has been and continues to be the greatest concern to our neighborhood's well-being, quality of life, and the value of our property. It would not be accurate to think of the athletic field lighting issue as simply one issue of relatively minor importance to be dealt with via "Administrative Permitting." On the contrary, this issue has been the central concern of our neighborhood for the past year, and the one in which, the university has been unwilling to yield in any significant way.

As a neighborhood we fully understand the motivations CUAA has for upgrading and expanding their athletic fields and their desire for lighting them. Doing so provides obvious benefits to their recruiting efforts and the opportunity to increase the number of intercollegiate sports teams they can offer, while providing broad latitude for both before and after school practices and field events. Lighting the athletic fields as proposed allows CUAA to effectively shift day time athletic activities and events to night time and with it, the undesirable consequences of night time noise, and congestion and safety concerns for our surrounding neighborhood.

We as a neighborhood have expressed our collective opposition to this proposal from the very first time we met with them about their development plans. However, it is profoundly regrettable that the university has not engaged the neighborhood in a meaningful way over our legitimate concerns regarding their master plans for installing stadium field lighting.

As a neighborhood we are emphatic that the issue of field lighting be treated as part of CUAA's final site plan and their "Special Exception Use" petition and NOT on an "administrative permit" basis. Doing so ensures that any future plans CUAA may have for phasing-in stadium lighting would be subject to compliance with existing city ordinances, thus, affording the residents of Pine Brae and our surrounding neighborhood with much needed residential zoning protections.

Once our concerns for stadium lighting have been adequately addressed, we as a neighborhood will make every effort to remove our resistance to other aspects of their master plan we find objectionable; resulting in our being more supportive of their final site plan approval. In dealing with these contentious issues over the course of the past year, we as a neighborhood fully understand the importance of a strong and successful university in our midst. Ideally, we would like to fully support the university's master athletic field plan, as many aspects of it are quite appealing.

Sincerely,

D. T. Palmer

David T. Palmer, President
Pine Brae Neighborhood Association