



August 15, 2016

Mayor Taylor and Members of Council:

The Sierra Club, Huron Valley Group is a 2,300 member organization representing individuals throughout Washtenaw, Monroe, and Lenawee Counties dedicated to the protection preservation and enjoyment of the natural environment, both locally and globally. My name is James D'Amour, and I am Vice-Chair of the Group.

We urge Council to once again deny the Ann Arbor Manchester LLC South Pond Village Proposal as it will damage an existing wetland that is the site of an important nature area designated by the City of Ann Arbor that is in close proximity to the Huron River.

We note that the current proposal is pretty much one that has been before you that both you and Planning Commission have rejected.

We concur and share with the Woodcreek Neighborhood Association their concerns that this project as proposed has terrible localized impacts they would sustain. We will also maintain, as we have done before that there are additional reasons to look at this project as a detriment, and a public and private nuisance to the health, safety, and welfare of not only the adjoining neighborhoods but also having a severe impact to the natural features near the site, impacting the water quality of the Huron River and the South Pond Nature Area.

In particular, we have great concern over the construction of a retention basin abutting and on top of steep slopes that fall toward South Pond Nature Area, and state recognized land abutting South Pond, as well as the Huron River.

We also note the removal of several woodland and landmark trees that currently help prevent erosion during rain events.

We are here again. The message is clear. Despite the City Master's Plan, this type of development is too massive and too impactful on the important existing natural systems, the South Pond Nature Area, and the Huron River. Be it with an access road emptying northbound unto Huron River Drive, and having built a road within a wetland, creating additional harm, or building access through an existing neighborhood, you are creating harm.

NONE of the options that have been proposed in the past and now to the Planning Commission and Council are acceptable and Council should reject the current petition. The developer DOES

NOT “by right” have the right to do this type of harm both to the natural environment nor an existing neighborhood.

Moving forward, the city should take steps to revise the zoning recommendations of the City Northeast Area and as has been suggested before, review our Natural Features Ordinance. In addition, perhaps a review of re-engineering Chalmers Drive with no reduction of trees and not turning it into an artery between Washtenaw Avenue and Huron River Drive. Runoff from Chalmers is likely damaging Mallett’s Creek and South Pond and this should be addressed.

This parcel should be considered a gateway into the city with a special status or use with a low impact upon the environment.

Thanks for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

James D’Amour
Vice-Chair, Executive Committee
Sierra Club, Huron Valley Group, Michigan Chapter