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To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Cc: Smith, Chip <ChSmith@a2gov.org>; Warpehoski, Chuck <CWarpehoski@a2gov.org>; Kowalski, Matthew <MKowalski@a2gov.org>

Subject: Please reject Lockwood of Ann Arbor at 5/1/18 meeting

I understand the Planning Commission will be reviewing the Lockwood of Ann Arbor project on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting. I will be there, but I also want to provide some input ahead of time. I strongly urge the Planning Commission to reject the Lockwood proposal for a number of important reasons.

The land is zoned R1C – single-family. The City of Ann Arbor Master Plan specifically references this area of land and indicates “...additional commercial uses adjacent to this neighborhood would not benefit the area”. It goes on to conclude “...residential uses remain the preferred land use”.

While the Lockwood project could be considered “residential”, it would be commercial in nature. There would be a commercial sized kitchen and eating area. There would be many delivery vehicles and trash pickups. There would be plenty of light, noise and air pollution to the east of the Westover Hills neighborhood, which already is bombarded with light, noise and air pollution from the car dealerships to the north and west. The city master plan specifically warns about how “Light and noise from these adjacent businesses have diminished the quality of life within this subdivision”.

The proposed number of units (95) would exceed the current maximum limit (82) for that space (if it were zoned “R4D”). With 140 bedrooms, it only has 65 parking spaces planned. With probably over 20 employees parking and who know how many visitors/caregivers, it would create a constant parking crisis in the area. Overflow parking would be the norm, and the Westover Hills neighborhood would bear the brunt of the overflow (even though street parking is not allowed). The Westover Hills streets are already in bad shape with constant flooding (particularly at Westover and Ferry, due to poor drainage planning for excessive Habitat homes). This parking crisis would make things much much worse and would not be good for any of the parties involved.

Lockwood changed their site plan significantly from the one they communicated to neighbors in a letter and citizen participation meeting in December 2016. They enlarged the building (wouldn't even fit on a football field), moved it so it butts up against several Westover Hills homes, and reduced parking. They have been arrogant and dismissive regarding neighborhood concerns. They have contacted several neighbors of adjacent homes and have used fear-mongering techniques to get them to support Lockwood (warning bad entities could move in that space if Lockwood didn't develop there).

They purchased the land on the relative cheap with hopes that it would be re-zoned. I fear if they are approved, they would get their “foot in the door”, and would try to rationalize expansion to address problems that were so obvious from the beginning (mostly the parking problem). I could envision them buying up adjacent property or opening up road access at Ferry and/or Porter (road access at Ferry was in one of the preliminary site plans) or try to remove the “No Parking” signs.

While I understand some benefits to the project (temporary “affordable” housing and senior housing), this project is simply not appropriate for this space. The negatives far outweigh any positives, and it would be our neighborhood that suffers. Single family homes is the preferred alternative.

While there are many other compelling arguments against this project, I think I've touched on some of the more important ones. I cannot see how the planning commission, in good conscience, could approve this project (and re-zoning) when it goes against the master plan and would create a parking nightmare. Also, please don't “rubber-stamp” the project and leave it up to City Council to decide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Phil McMillion
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