

6 October 2019

Dear Ms. Beaudry:

Please place my name among those of many other Ann Arbor residents - Ann Arbor Citizens - who strongly oppose the development plans of Jim Haeussler for the unique site at 2857 Packard Road.

There are a host of reasons for me to oppose this development. Yet as I have had to remind my own City Council representatives - repeatedly, none of them are that I personally oppose all development.

I oppose BAD development. I oppose overpriced housing, that is not sensitively located relative either to the specifics of the site or to its neighbors. I oppose lowest common denominator ticky-tacky building practices and cul-de-sac layouts that actively frustrate neighbors seeing each other AS neighbors in a common community. I oppose retention ponds with standpipes that replace wetlands. I oppose the destruction of irreplaceable tree canopy in my own under-protected part of the city, when the proof of climate change threatens my children's immediate future. I oppose the destruction of my neighborhood's unique history by those who have evidently decided that the past has no lessons for us today.

Most of all, I am opposed to my City Council rolling over simply because a litigious developer cries foul. I know my elected representatives are human, and humans will sometimes they make mistakes. City Council made a mistake when they rezoned this property to R1E. Now they are preparing to compound that mistake by refusing to do the hard diplomatic fence building and creative planning and architectural design necessary to fix that mistake. It will, unfortunately, cost us money our city should not have to spend to rid us of Mr. Haeussler's wretched proposals. Yet when you are dealing with a scare and precious resource - as this site surely IS - you canNOT simply throw up your hands, claim the law is only on the developer's side, or blame the neighborhood by claiming (incorrectly and yet repeatedly!) that my neighbors did not loudly oppose this development from the very beginning.

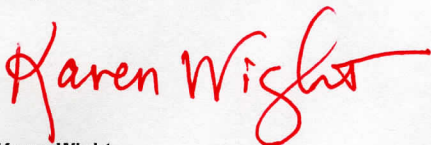
I have now met many residents who tried to reach out, who attended City Planning Commission and City Council meetings years before I came to understand this threat. Our Mayor and City Council representatives should be very troubled by the discouragement and rejection citizens feel after repeated instances in which they feel they have not been heard or valued by the people we elected. Some of my neighbors are so burned that they in turn are eager to discourage any political action, saying "City Council will just do what they want;" or "they never listen to the little guy anyway." I am not simple saddened by these voices. I am infuriated. My family is directly threatened - existentially threatened - by the current weakness of our democracy. You have lost important credibility with many citizens, many of my neighbors. That should worry you, too.

I seriously doubt that any City Council members would consider a Peters Building development like this next to their own homes an improvement! I believe we can do MUCH better, and we CAN add more affordable, and environmentally sustainable housing to this parcel. But first we need to remove Mr. Haeussler from the conversation, talk directly with the property owner and residents, involve the Greenbelt experts to look at ways we can preserve the significant natural features of this site and build on the wet meadows and rain gardens many of us have started and maintain to handle the rain events that are getting ever stronger. Then we need to put up a large table to start a fully informed discussion with ALL STAKEHOLDERS about the highest and best way to develop this site - one of the last remaining open parcels in this part of Ann Arbor.

There is a well-known saying that when shooting for good, fast, and cheap development, you only ever get to have two of those three qualities. Because of a zoning mistake, we cannot have cheap. It is too bad that it will cost us more money than we would like to fix this, but my neighbors and I - my daughters, and their children - will have to live with the consequences of all that happens on this site. They won't have 300 years to see how it all works out. My experience of development in this city and elsewhere has been that once the concrete has been poured, we never get a second chance.

Please share this official protest with all of my elected representatives, and all members of the City Council.

Respectfully,



**Karen Wight**  
2719 Cranbrook Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104