

From: Carly Woolheater <carlywoolheater@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 05, 2015 9:10 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: Johnson Property Parcels 06-02952482, 06-02952493, 06-0039571 and 06-03411400
Annexation by City of Gaithersburg
Attachments: Woolheater _ Letter to Montgomery County Planning Board.docx

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

My name is Carly Woolheater. My husband, my young daughter and I recently purchased a home in beautiful Orchard Hills, just outside of the Gaithersburg city limits. We have longed to live in a single family home with a nice yard, quiet streets, and general tranquility for years. We saved, made sacrifices and worked hard so we could afford a home in this quiet suburban setting to raise our children.

I recently attended a community meeting held by the Johnson family regarding their plans for their property located adjacent to our neighborhood. The first step in this plan is to request annexation to the City of Gaithersburg in order to change the zoning from Montgomery County's R-200 and NR-0.75, H-45 to the City of Gaithersburg's MXD.

Subsequent steps in their proposed plan include heavy development and redevelopment of the property. Including a proposed additional 180 residences in the form of single family, townhomes and multi-family homes. Further, the property owners propose redeveloping the existing neighborhood commercial property to include mixed use buildings, up to six stories tall with an additional 125 housing units.

I would like to respectfully request the Montgomery County Planning Board consider recommending the Johnson Property not be annexed and / or rezoned to MXD for the following reasons:

- The proposal to annex circumvents the Montgomery County Master Plan^[1] for the area for a "new local park [which] would provide two rectangular fields for active recreation.... [or] the parcel may be appropriate for residential use including single family detached and townhouse units" [pg. 61] and that the area "retain the existing residential and commercial zones and maintain the established character of these neighborhoods" [pg. 63].
- The sketch plan proposed (attached) seeks to significantly change the housing density and overall character of the existing area and surrounding communities. The property owners stated that no actual determinations for sewer, water and school capacity had been made prior to submission of the sketch plan and a traffic impact study had not been conducted.
- The Annotated Code of Maryland was amended in 1971 to preclude municipalities from offering zoning as an incentive to annexation; now the Johnson family is pursuing annexation into the city of Gaithersburg and rezoning to MXD, thus presenting the appearance that rezoning is occurring for the sole financial benefit of the Johnson family without regard to the impacts to the neighboring communities.

- Annexing the Johnson Property creates an enclave nearly completely surrounded by Montgomery County, thus almost creating an “island” of City of Gaithersburg MXD within a largely Montgomery County R-200 zoned area.

As those most impacted by the development and redevelopment of this property, we urge the Planning Board to consider the impacts of this proposal to the neighboring communities. We are very concerned that allowing MXD zoning and significantly higher density housing will:

- Worsen already congested major roadways (specifically Route 28) without plans to safely accommodate the increased traffic in the neighboring municipalities
- Create cut-through traffic in the neighboring residential neighborhoods; which increases noise, pollution, safety issues and reduces overall quality of life
- Significantly overload the already over capacity schools in the area (Quince Orchard school cluster is already forecasted to be at 108.3% utilization for the next 5 years)[2]
- Potential negative impact to property values of single family homes in neighboring communities due to increased traffic and light / noise / air pollution
- Change the character and culture of our neighborhood from a quiet, family-oriented suburban community to a bustling town center

In closing, while we have no direct objection to the Johnson’s petition for annexation, we are very concerned about the request for rezoning and development plans.

Maintaining zoning that limits construction to primarily single family detached housing on the currently vacant Johnson Property keeps with the intent to maintain the established character of the neighborhood and avoid significantly over-burdening the local infrastructure.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carly Woolheater

[1]
http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/viewer.shtm#http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/gaithersburg/documents/GSSCAppevedandAdopted_web.pdf

[2]
http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2014/documents/item8aFY2015AnnualSchoolTestResults_final22.pdf (pg.6)

Carly Woolheater
12157 McDonald Chapel Dr.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
November 4, 2015

Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

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1

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Sincerely,

Carly Woolheater

Sketch Plan for Annexation

