

November 24, 2018

To: Plainfield Board of Zoning Appeals

CC:

Plainfield Town Council  
Plainfield Plan Commission  
Plainfield Town Engineer  
Plainfield Town Manager

My name is Bob Craig, I'm 64-years old and I have lived in the Town of Plainfield since 1954. I was raised on a very small farm here in Plainfield and at that time it was considered "out in the country". What many of us refer to as "new" S.R 267 or now known as Quaker Blvd. is actually just East of my parent's former property. While as a young man my parents developed portions of their property into residential homesites and then subsequently built several homes. This led to the beginning of their business of real estate development and Craig & Associates Realtors here in Plainfield.

Following in my parents "foot -steps", I too have been a real estate Broker since 1975 and was President of the Board of Realtors in 1980. I started my career as a professional home builder in 1979 when I first started building homes in one-of my parent's subdivisions, Hadley Acres, a subdivision of homes principally consisting of brick and stone construction with limited accents of siding. As you know, these homes remain very attractive nearly 50-years later. I should also mention, while working at Craig & Associates Realtors, I spent considerable time performing countless real estate appraisals for a variety of individuals, corporate interests, lenders and legal firms. Following that time, I have spent many years as a Professional Home Builder and have built countless homes in Plainfield and surrounding communities. I have continued to strive to be informed about residential development, construction practices, housing trends and costs through my required continuing education and my membership with MIBOR, BAGI, The Indiana Builders Association and the NAHB.

In 1999 my wife and I purchased a 33-acre tract of ground where I built my family's home which is located at 5128 E. Co. Rd. 600 S. Our property is sided on the East and North by the Tim Mongan farm where Cal Atlantic (Lennar Homes) has proposed their idea for use of this land. As one would correctly assume, I purchased my property knowing full well that the growth of Plainfield would likely lead to the residential development of the surrounding farms and properties and was hopeful and anticipated that this growth may well include my own property.

With this all-in mind and like my parents before me, I consider myself not just a resident and property owner, but a business owner who has spent much of my life's work related to the growth and the resulting welfare of the Town of Plainfield.

Clearly, I have pro-growth interest for our Community but only if that growth will lead to the absolute best use of our treasured and very limited resource of land.

It is incumbent upon yourselves, as our leaders, as well as those with continued interest in the welfare of Plainfield to make very wise and the absolute best decisions as we anticipate and manage the growth for the Town of Plainfield going forward. As our leaders, the decisions you make now will have a long-standing impact not just now, but for years long after we have parted our life here and have left our community to our children and our children's children.

We need quality housing, housing that ignites the interest of people who want to be a part of a community that takes pride in supporting property values, low crime, quality schools and the value of family! We need not sell ourselves short on any one of these valued beliefs thinking it is our responsibility to create "low cost housing" or housing with cost suitable for the "first time homebuyer", our Town is already full of homes fitting that description. Again, we need homes with owners who would love to share and live in a Town like Plainfield with long-term plans to redevelop our Town and manage our resources with good decisions. **There is no room for mistakes, we need desperately to get this right!**

Again, I am pro-development and support growth including the "Mongan Property" but it is my considered opinion that the proposed development and use by Cal Atlantic or anyone with like interest does not constitute the best use of the "Mongan Property" and the subsequent lasting impact on the Town of Plainfield and our Community Values. I believe there are countless others, including my immediate neighbors and other Plainfield residents, who share this same opinion as that was evidenced by the significant number of individuals who first attended the "Neighborhood Meeting" hosted by the law firm representing Cal Atlantic and a representative from Cal Atlantic as well as a subsequent "Neighborhood Meeting" organized by neighbors with concerned interest.

Specifically speaking and, as you know, Cal Atlantic has provided a preliminary layout for use of the Mongan and Montgomery properties consisting of a total of 126.18 acres with a proposed design producing 261 residential lots. While I do not have the total acreage that will be consumed to create the necessary streets and retention ponds within the project, the proposed layout clearly overdevelops and over saturates the use of the available property. As you are already aware the Cal Atlantic design calls for 58.531 acres to be rezoned to an R-2 District for a Minimum Lot Area of 15,000 sq. feet or approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup>. of an acre and 67.650 acres to be rezoned to a R-4 District for a Minimum Lot Area of 6000 sq. feet or approximately 13% of a single acre. Simply stated, only 77 lots or 29.5 % of the homes would meet the R-2 requirements while 184 lots or 70% of the homes would meet the R-4 requirements.

**It is my opinion and that of countless others, that none of the proposed site should be rezoned for anything less than an R-2 District.**

The rezoning and use of either R-3 and or R-4 Districts exposes the potential use of this property for the building of homes that are not only unneeded in our community, given the abundance of countless other like valued and construction type homes, but also will not provide a lasting support for the surrounding real estate values of homes in the Plainfield community and will potentially produce homeowners who lack support for our long term strategic Community Values going forward. **Once again, The Town of Plainfield should not support any zoning changes for the subject property for anything less than an R-2 Zoning District.**

The individuals who represented the Cal Atlantic project described the architectural design of the homes to be “**some**” masonry features, no vinyl or aluminum siding but rather the use of a siding described as “fiber cement siding”. Some might know this siding by the original manufacturer of this product as Hardie Board, Hardie Plank and a host of other names. **The Cal Atlantic representatives wanted to speak of fiber cement siding as the equivalent of a masonry product. As a Professional Builder, I should share with you, no one should be fooled into believing Hardie Siding or any like type facsimile should be consider to be an acceptable substitute for true brick or stone, as is not the same quality, nor does it possess the lasting values of traditional brick or stone. Simply stated, fiber cement siding should not be considered a “Masonry” architectural product but rather a “step-up” over its wood siding counterparts.** These statements can easily be verified by a simple drive through some of our subdivisions and see with your own eyes that we have an excessive number of homes with siding and very little brick or stone exteriors. Unfortunately, the appearance of some of these homes speaks volumes about the early decline in cosmetic appearance and resulting values as several with siding are already showing a need of attention and repair.

**I believe it necessary that we support the Plainfield property values going forward with homes that are required to have a minimum of true masonry brick or stone facade of not less than 80% of the total exterior surface area.** With this single requirement the Town could provide a lasting and positive impact on appearance, the economic life and continued values of future homes. This comment would be evidenced by the many homes in Walnut Hills, Hadley Acres, Hawthorne Ridge, Hickory Woods, Williamsburg in the Woods, Ridgeline Estates, South Hill Estates, Hardin’s Creek Side and countless other local subdivisions whose values continue to be supported despite their age.

**The Town of Plainfield presently has an abundance of homes and home sites that already conform to the zoning standards and architectural requirements that create the so-called starter home!** As our leaders, please do not be fooled by the likes of a Cal Atlantic or Lennar Homes or any other like type developer / homebuilder. I am very well acquainted with land values and particularly construction costs of building of new homes.

The desire of any such Builder / Developer to oversaturate our land on extremely small lots, that is anything less than an R-2 District along with compromised architectural features is nothing more than the ploy of an **out-of-state** Builder / Developer that would prostitute the Town of Plainfield's resources for the sake of making money.

**Please take particular note in the fact that these homes would not be creating jobs for local people. After working 30-years in the residential construction industry I can assure you, I see it daily in our other communities, these subdivisions and homes are not being created, framed, roofed or receiving mechanical applications provided from suppliers, vendors and or subcontractors from within our own community!**

**Lastly, if you have not yet taken stock in anything I've shared thus far, please spend a moment at your computer reading the unending negative reviews and complaints of Cal Atlantic / Lennar Homes, I sincerely urge you to not allow the use of this beautiful land resource of Plainfield to be rezoned to anything less than an R-2 District, particularly by a Builder with such a very poor reputation!**

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue, I and countless others would greatly appreciate your consideration of our sincere interest and facts as you consider this project.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bob", written in black ink.

Robert W. Craig