

Eric Berg

From: Lauren Karr <vanduyn@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 3, 2018 3:48 PM
To: Eric Berg
Subject: Letter regarding re-zoning for 12/3/19 Meeting

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lauren Karr, and I live on County Road 521 East, just south of the proposed Montgomery/Mongan project. I strongly object to the proposed use of the farm land, and I strongly oppose the plans to build an R4 subdivision at this location. I would like to take time to present a few of my concerns with you so that I can feel confident that you are making educated decisions for our community-- not merely based on the financial gains that the town of Plainfield stands to benefit from if this proposed subdivision is passed; but instead, comprehensively, based also on: the desires and opinions of those in the affected neighborhoods and community; community impact; short- and long-term effects of the destruction and depletion of farm land; construction of more homes leading to over development; and many types of environmental pollutions that may impact the town, the developed land, and the surrounding farms and homes.

One of my primary concerns is the increased traffic to 600 south that this subdivision will bring. The current and existing infrastructure on 600 south simply can not support the amount of traffic that these proposed homes will bring to the road, and of course that is not taking into consideration the additional need for increased infrastructure to support the elementary school that will be opening at the corner of 600 south and Moon Road. Adequately supporting this growth will require a significant amount of road work. Moving forward in my letter, please note that these concerns (increased traffic and increased road work to create adequate infrastructure) are jointly combined with my concerns of the proposed subdivision- as they are coupled hand-in-hand, and it is unlikely that the subdivision would be able to move forward without requiring additional infrastructure construction to support it.

Additionally, the need for increased infrastructure brings the very clear threat of making our quiet, dead-end road (521 East) a through-street, by extending it to the south. Taking away our quiet, dead-end road will devalue our property, takes away our land due to easements, and brings increased danger to our family and neighborhood—including the threat of forcible annexation. The subdivision may or may not be the first domino to fall, but it is very clear, as proposed in the Town of Plainfield's current comprehensive plan, that this is the direction in which the town of Plainfield would like to go. Some of these concerns may not happen directly with the building of this subdivision, but they will be a direct consequence that follows the building of the subdivision due to the need for increased infrastructure. These are long-term consequences that **MUST** be considered.

My family and I currently live in a very safe and quiet rural neighborhood on a dead-end road. One of the major reasons we purchased our home was due to the safe nature of our dead-end road with large home lots and very few neighbors. We do not fear for the safety of our children when they are playing in our front yard. We do not fear for the safety of our children when they walk to the road to check our mailbox. We do not fear walking back and forth across our street to visit our neighbors, nor fear for their safety while they are walking to visit us. We have a very close relationship with our neighbors. We have a true sense of community on this road. It is common for us to walk back and forth to visit each other, bring each other meals or treats, babysit each other's children, lend a helping hand, allow our children to play together, and the list goes on. Neighborhood families walk and children ride their bikes up and down our road, and parents have absolutely no fear. The only traffic on our road is that of our neighbors cars, and I can say with confidence that we are all very considerate of each

other's safety-- especially when it comes to the children playing. The need for increased infrastructure to support this proposed subdivision along with the increased traffic of over 500 cars that the proposed 261 new homes would bring severely threatens the quiet neighboring areas and bring substantially increased traffic to our currently safe and rural neighborhoods. In addition, the complete truth that needs to be exposed here is that this proposed subdivision will bring along with it the distinct threat to our neighborhood of turning our road- 521 East- into a through-street, by extending it to the south. This is laid out in the Town of Plainfield's current comprehensive plan as something the town is considering in the future. This can not be swept under the rug or thought of as a separate event. This would be a direct consequence of the proposed subdivision.

Personally, my family and I see this as even more of a direct threat to our safety because we have a child with autism. A 2012 study published in the medical journal Pediatrics shows that 49% of children with autism have a tendency to wander away from or bolt from safe environments and into dangerous ones (Anderson, Kiely Law, Daniels, Rice, Mandell, Hagopian, & Law, 2012). 65% of these incidents include a close call with traffic; 56% of families reported that elopement was the most stressful behavior that their child exhibited; and 43% of parents reported that this behavior interfered with their ability to sleep at night (Anderson et al., 2012). A 2017 study completed by the National Autism Association found that nearly 1/3 of all autism-related missing person cases related to wandering and elopement ended in death or required medical attention (McIlwain & Fournier, 2017). 18% of those deaths were caused directly by the child being struck by a vehicle, and children ages 5-9 years old showed the highest number of deaths in this study (McIlwain & Fournier, 2017). My child with autism is 5 years old. Fear of my child eloping or wandering has kept me up at night. It's something that his medical team addresses. I have a very safe neighborhood. I chose that for my family and for my child. This is one of the primary reasons I purchased my home. This proposed R4 subdivision brings over development to our rural neighborhood. This proposed project and the increased infrastructure that would be needed to support this development makes me fear for the safety of my child should, God forbid, something terrible ever happen. These proposed changes bring a direct threat to the safety of my family. This over development makes my neighborhood less safe for my family.

Another major concern that I have is the destruction and depletion of farm land in our rural neighborhood. This goes directly against one of the 12 key Community Values laid out in the Town of Plainfield's current comprehensive plan, that states: "Respect for the Environment: Respect for the environment is defined as taking actions which protect our natural resources." The proposed R4 subdivision brings over-development to a rural area in which most homes are at or over 1 acre in size (most being 1-10 acres in size, or larger). This over-development does not only bring destruction to a valuable natural resource of farm land, it also removes the natural habitat for many native and natural species of birds and wildlife.

Every neighbor that I have talked to has made it very clear that we all purchased our homes with the idea that we desire and benefit from living in a rural setting. Bringing this unwanted over-development to our rural neighborhood will most definitely affect us not only emotionally, by forcibly stripping away the beauty we found when we purchased our homes in this lovely, rural setting, but will also potentially affect us with environmental pollution in many forms. Again, these go directly against the 12 key Community Values, as listed above. Some of these environmental pollutions that will almost assuredly affect us are as follows:

1. Light Pollution. The house lights of 261 homes, the accompanying approximately 500 cars, plus all of the proposed street lights and lighting in proposed common areas would bring a significant amount of light pollution to our rural skies. Light trespass would not only be a nuisance and limit the visibility of our night sky, it would certainly also increase energy consumption and disrupt our local ecosystem and wildlife- especially in nocturnal animals and birds. This is a permanent pollution that will not go away with time, nor can it be lessened once it is established. In fact, it is likely to only increase as Plainfield continues to bring more proposed growth to our rural area, as laid out in the town's current comprehensive plan.

2. Noise Pollution. The noise caused by the construction of the proposed subdivision and the necessary road work to support this over-development will take place, undoubtedly over the course of years. After the construction has been completed, there would then be, in its place, the noise to 261 homes, the accompanying approximately 500 cars, and the additional traffic on 600 south. This would bring an incredible and substantial amount of noise pollution to our currently very quiet, rural neighborhood. The construction noise pollution alone will most definitely affect my family for years, and the sustained noise pollution will permanently affect my family, my neighborhood, and without question, the value of my rural hobby-farm property. This also personally affects my family in a unique way, as our child with autism has a noise sensitivity. We chose our quiet, rural home to best suit his needs, and this proposed R4 subdivision would strip away that protection for him.

3. Potential ground water pollution and water quality issues for neighboring wells. Building this subdivision in such close proximity to our rural neighborhood could have lasting and potentially very hazardous consequences to the quality of our ground well water. Our families depend on having safe, drinkable water for ourselves, our children, our animals, our gardens, and our farm land. Ground water pollution and water quality issues caused by this construction could cause major health concerns for our families. No parent should ever have to worry about if the water coming from the faucets in our homes is safe for our children to drink. Water quality testing, inability to use our wells for drinking water or for watering our gardens and livestock, and/or being required to connect to city water due to forcible annexation would certainly cause financial burdens for families in our neighborhood-including my own family.

Lastly, I would like to clearly communicate my opposition to the fact that the proposed subdivision from Cal-Atlantic is R4 zoning. Not only would this devalue the land and the neighboring areas (including my own home and land)- I also strongly believe that it devalues the entire town of Plainfield, by bringing in cheaply made cookie-cutter homes that may sit empty due to over-development, may bring increased crime rates, and may have permanent and lasting environmental effects on our valuable natural resources. This proposed over-development brings severe disruption and danger to my family, our home, our neighborhood, and our town. Not only that, but the poor customer service and reviews of the Cal-Atlantic company are deeply disturbing, and the Town of Plainfield planning commission must demand the highest standards for our town. It is clear that the Cal-Atlantic company does not hold to the same moral and ethical values that we strive to live by, and that should be unacceptable to our town's leadership.

The Town of Plainfield leadership has chosen 12 key Community Values to morally and ethically guide their decision making for the town, as laid out in the Town of Plainfield's current Comprehensive Plan. Not only do I strongly oppose and object to this current proposal, I also feel that the destruction and depletion of farm land to build this proposed subdivision, the environmental pollution and hazards that could occur with the construction of the proposed subdivision and the subsequent road infrastructure needed to support it, and the dangers that come to our town and neighborhoods due to over-development not only conflict with many of these 12 key Community Values, but in some cases, it directly breaks them.

I urge you to use these 12 key Community Values to help guide your decision, including: Honesty, Respect for the Environment, Integrity, Justice, Dignity, Responsibility and Accountability, Respect for the Rights of Others, and Kindness. I urge you- do not allow this valuable natural resource to be rezoned as an R4 district. Demand higher standards, larger lots, better quality materials, and building companies that treat their customers with the same Community Values that we, the Town of Plainfield, strive to live by.

Sincerely,
Lauren Karr

References:

Anderson, C., Kiely Law, J., Daniels, A., Rice, C., Mandell, D. S., Hagopian, L., Law, P. A. (2012). Occurrence and Family Impact of Elopement in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Pediatrics*, 130 (5), 870-877. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2012-0762

McIlwain, L. and Fournier, W. (2017). Mortality & Risk In ASD Wandering/Elopement 2011-2016. Retrieved from <http://nationalautismassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NAAMortalityRiskASDElopement.pdf>