

STATEMENT OF SARAH K. LARSON

Resident of 1013 Chieftain Lookout (Summit Woods Neighborhood)

January 5, 2021 Common Council Meeting

Statement in Support of Agenda Item 2 (Legistar File # 63304)

Re: Appeal of Plan Commission Decision on 4606 Hammersley Road (Legistar File # 62600)

I've lived on Chieftain Lookout for 20 years, and I filed this appeal on behalf of the Summit Woods Neighborhood Association. Most public comments will be presented at the January 19 hearing, but I wanted to be here tonight to answer any questions and to make 3 main points.

First, our neighborhood would fully support a development that is consistent with the City's comprehensive land use plan and prioritizes affordable housing, but *that's not what this development is*. According to the land use plan and the City's own equity data, what *should be* here is 50% medium residential, but prioritizing the "missing middle" of smaller multi-family housing, such as townhomes or row-houses, including 3- and 4-BR units for families. The other 50% of this parcel should be commercial to serve our neighborhood as a mixed use transitional area. But that's not what this is. There are no 3-BR units and only 15% are 2-BR. The other 85% (45 units) are studios or 1- BR units. Only a fraction of the parcel (about 7%) is commercial space. How is this affordable housing for low-income families? We don't need more studios and 1 BR's in our area.

Second, the Plan Commission did not adequately explain its decision, as is required. We, as taxpayers, deserve an explanation. This council, as the reviewing body, cannot properly evaluate the decision, because there are few, if any, factual findings. The commission ignored the plan's 50-50 mix of commercial and residential, and said we should "expect" this kind of development here, but it did not explain why it approved this huge building form which is not at all context-sensitive in design, scale, or scope in our neighborhood of predominantly 1950's modest ranch-style homes. There was no explanation as to why it needs to be so big, so tall, so modern, and so close to the sidewalk. There was no explanation as to why there is virtually no green space or a rain garden in a known flooding area. I could go on, but here's my point: If this council does not hold the commission accountable for explaining their decisions and adhering to the proper conditional use standards, then who will?

Third, our neighborhood's voice was not adequately represented in this process. The commission basically rubber stamped the developer's plans and our written input was largely ignored. We also have significant concerns about the developer's flawed traffic study. 60+ cars will be added to our very narrow and rural road. Until the city decides what will happen with the Pontiac Trail reconstruction, this development should not have even been considered. We would like the city to conduct an independent traffic study and an urban forest canopy study, and gather further neighborhood input on the Pontiac reconstruction *before* this development is approved. I also find it very troubling that, in a public hearing, our agenda item did not come up until 11:30 at night, nearly 5 hours into the meeting. Why wasn't our agenda item tabled until a later meeting so more of our neighbors could attend and provide input?

Our appeal asks that this council overturn the commission's decision so the neighborhood's input can be properly considered, addressed, and explained. I'd be happy to take any questions from the council at this time. Thank you.