

From: j wu <josephwuwu@yahoo.com>
Date: October 25, 2016 at 9:48:55 PM EDT
To: "rspiegel@gaitthersburgmd.gov" <rspiegel@gaitthersburgmd.gov>
Subject: Fw: Johnson Property Annexation
Reply-To: j wu <josephwuwu@yahoo.com>

Council Member Spiegel,

I am writing today regarding the Johnson Property Annexation. I am a 10 year resident of Montgomery County however am a new resident at the Quince Haven Community. I appreciate the development projects the city has taken on in the past few years however my concerns with the Johnson property proposed plans are:

- 1.) Developments that may increase students to our already overcrowded TMES and the QO Cluster.
- 2.) We understand that the annexation is in process to City of Gaithersburg but we would like the binding elements passed on from Montgomery County to be firm and followed through with once the annexation takes place. A.) Restriction on number of approved units built on Parcel E. B.) Park space included in Parcel E residential area. C.) Designated Parking for Park Space for visitors. D.) Maximum Height Restrictions on Residential and Commercial in all parcels. E.) Maximum of 100,000sq/ft of commercial space... now and in the future. minimum 20 years and beyond)
- 3.) Traffic density and vehicle/pedestrian safety where Darnestown Road merges to 1 lane on the northbound side.
- 4.) Increased traffic relative to safety for QOHS students who are directly across the street from the Johnson Property and pickup and dropoff on all sides of the intersection of Route 28 and Route 124.
- 5.) Kentland's style neighborhood to be built that does not reflect the density or look of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- 6.) Enclave that will be created by the annexation where the Johnson Property will be surrounded on 3 sides by Montgomery County jurisdiction and residents.

Thank you for your consideration. I understand that development must take place within our County but with the issues surrounding this particular area of development, we would like to keep the density of residential and commercial to match the surrounding area adjacent to the Johnson Property. (Majority Single family homes and single level commercial structures.) If the annexation is not approved by City of Gaithersburg, I

would like to see sports fields built -- which are sorely needed in the Darnestown area, or the original zoning of 30-32 single family units are acceptable as well.

Sincerely,

Joseph Wu
Quince Haven Community Resident

From: **Kuriacose Joseph** <kujoseph@verizon.net>
Date: Tue, Oct 25, 2016 at 9:08 PM
Subject: Johnson Property Annexation
To: jashman@gaithersburgmd.gov, msema@gaithersburgmd.gov,
nharris@gaithersburgmd.gov, hmarraffa@starpower.net, rspiegel@gaithersburgmd.gov,
rwu@gaithersburgmd.gov

Honorable Mayor Ashman,

I am writing today with regards to the Johnson Property Annexation plan. I am a 20 year resident of the Orchard Hills community in Montgomery County, the community adjoining the land that is about to be annexed by the City of Gaithersburg. While I do appreciate the development projects the city has taken on in the past few years (even though I live in an area that is not a part of the city), I have several significant concerns with the proposed plans for the Johnson property.

The overarching theme here appears to be that the development of the property will be good for the City of Gaithersburg and for the current property owner. The practical issue is that, as currently proposed, this development is going to negatively impact the entire neighborhood immediately surrounding the property, potentially in a very destructive manner. Those who will be left with new headaches after the development happens will be people in communities that are not a part of the city. So, while the city and the property owner profit, they can create problems for the rest of us.

I watched the video of the September 19th, Gaithersburg City Council meeting with some astonishment. For the most part it ignored the response of the local communities to this annexation process, something that had been captured in the [letters to the county](#). Since the county was completely powerless to stop the annexation process anyway, the City of Gaithersburg may feel justified in taking this approach, especially from a legal perspective. But this also creates the clear impression that the goal of the current process is to just rubber-stamp the annexation process and get on with it without actually addressing the real potential problems. I was surprised to hear folks deliberately misstate the current proposal in a manner so as to suggest that the number of homes being proposed was a reduction from the original numbers that we should be concerned with. There is an attempt to deliberately obfuscate the numbers in the public process. The annexation process will in reality lead to an increase in the number of homes being built on the property from what is currently allowed. Johnson has also taken the original long-term proposal for the commercial area off the table so that everything sounds more palatable, but it is also acknowledged that the long term proposals could also be changed through a public process, and at that point the local community surrounding the property will have even less say in the matter since the annexation has already taken place. Great! I was also shocked to hear support for the proposal from a gentleman who stated that this development would create local issues that needed to be dealt with, but acknowledged that dealing with some of these would not necessarily be the responsibility of the City. So this process creates issues for the local community who are not a part of the city, and the City of Gaithersburg need not take responsibility.

I heard a couple of critical issues raised for which there was a lot of hand-waving. One is the traffic nightmare that is going to ensue with a large community being formed in the particular location. The traffic situation is already very difficult here during certain times of the day, and folks are already on edge when negotiating this stretch of road during these times. It would be good to see at least one strawman solution for a practical approach here. What was presented at the meeting was completely impractical and is a joke under the circumstances. I cannot see any real solution here with the number of houses in the current plan that does not involve more traffic being routed into streets of the surrounding communities which are not a part of the city itself, streets that are not designed for through-traffic. The second big issue is the accommodation of the children of the families that would move in into the already overcrowded schools. Is this to be addressed after the fact?

I hope that the city at least considers the broader issues that are more critical and likely to impact those beyond their city boundaries more thoroughly and adequately first before moving on. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kuriacose Joseph
Orchard Hills

From: **TorvikFam** <torvikfam@verizon.net>

Date: Sat, Oct 22, 2016 at 10:36 AM

Subject: Johnson Proposal to Annex

To: jashman@gaithersburgmd.gov, msesma@gaithersburgmd.gov,
nharris@gaithersburgmd.gov, hmarraffa@starpower.net, rspiegel@gaithersburgmd.gov,
rwu@gaithersburgmd.gov

Dear City of Gaithersburg Mayor and Council Members,

My largest concern about a high density development in this area is the safety of 2000 high school students, many of who are walkers, commuting to the school on a daily basis. The congestion and near pedestrian accidents NOW is observed on a daily basis. To annex this property to a developer who may or may not sell the property with the mixed used designation is not acceptable. This area is already unsafe and more homes and businesses will put students at risk.

DO NOT ANNEX the Magruder Properties and DO NOT accept mixed use for any property so close to a high school with a large percentage of walkers!

Thank you.

Lisa Torvik

Community Resident

Mayor and City Council
X-7067-2015
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From: **Manju Subramanya** <manjusb2@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Oct 26, 2016 at 4:06 PM

Subject: Opposition to Johnson Annexation

To: jashman@gaithersburgmd.gov

Cc: msesma@gaithersburgmd.gov, nharris@gaithersburgmd.gov, hmarraffa@starpower.net, rspiegel@gaithersburgmd.gov, rwu@gaithersburgmd.gov

Honorable Mayor Ashman and council members,

I am writing today regarding the Johnson Property Annexation.

We just moved into the Hidden Ponds neighborhood in Gaithersburg this past June. One major draw was that the neighborhood appeared so peaceful and lovely, despite being so close to the busy intersection of Quince Orchard Road and Darnestown Road. So we were horrified to find out that the city of Gaithersburg is planning to annex the land near Safeway and build four times the allowable density of homes and condos in the first phase.

What is the city thinking? This development on that small parcel would be overwhelming! It would bring more traffic, strip the vegetation on the parcel, reduce our property values and our quality of life. Have you considered the impact of more traffic on an area that is already congested? And the impact on Quince Orchard Library and the Quince Orchard High School?

We live in the corner house abutting the parcel and would be most adversely affected by the outcome. Right now, we enjoy privacy in our backyard, beautiful birds and the occasional deer. All that would be gone with the annexation and the 180 units being planned.

Build a green park there so that the adjoining neighborhoods can enjoy the space. Even the 30 to 32 houses that are allowable under the current county zoning would be acceptable. Not 113 houses crammed into that little space.

We also are upset that you are allowing an extension into Nursery Lane from the development. We have a long driveway and backing into traffic would be a nightmare! I am sure many will use this as a cutthrough from Darnestown Road into the neighborhood.

Please don't turn a lovely space into a dense urban jungle!!

This is not what we bargained for when we checked the zoning before we moved here.

And it isn't fair to the adjoining neighborhoods to hoist this on us.

Please reconsider!

Manju Subramanya
Hidden Ponds neighborhood

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mary Silva** <maryjeffsilva@verizon.net>

Date: Tue, Oct 25, 2016 at 12:14 PM

Subject: Johnson Property Annexation into the City of Gaithersburg

To: jashman@gaithersburgmd.gov, "Michael A. Sesma" <msema@gaithersburgmd.gov>, Neil Harris <nharris@gaithersburgmd.gov>, hmarraffa@starpower.net, Ryan Spiegel <rspiegel@gaithersburgmd.gov>, "Robert T. Wu" <rwu@gaithersburgmd.gov>

Cc: maryjeffsilva@verizon.net

Mayor, Jud Ashman jashman@gaithersburgmd.gov
Council Vice President, Michael A. Sesma msema@gaithersburgmd.gov
Council Member, Neil Harris nharris@gaithersburgmd.gov
Council Member, Henry F. Marraffa, Jr. hmarraffa@starpower.net
Council Member, Ryan Spiegel rspiegel@gaithersburgmd.gov
Council Member, Robert T. Wu rwu@gaithersburgmd.gov

Dear Mayor Ashman and Gaithersburg Council Members

My name is Mary Silva and I am writing today regarding the Johnson Property Annexation into the city of Gaithersburg. My husband and I are 22 year residents of Willow Ridge, one of the Montgomery County neighborhoods surrounding the subject Johnson's property.

The Johnson family currently states that it plans a development on their property of up to 82 townhomes, 28 single-family homes and an additional 10,000 square feet of commercial space.

The Johnson family claims that they listened to community concerns, and that the Johnsons have actively contributed to the community for many years.

I disagree. In the first place, the Johnson's did not listen or change anything about their plan based on the community meetings. They simply are only proposing development of a portion of their original plan. And leaving out the more difficult portion related to commercial development until after the plan is approved. If you were to compare the first and current plans side by side, you will see this is obvious.

Stuart Barr, a land use and zoning attorney with Lerch, Early & Brewer representing the Johnson family, explained during the city hearing that long-term commercial development considerations were removed from the plan because

these were creating anxiety within the community. The Johnson team's initial redevelopment proposal that was withdrawn had asked for an additional 285,000 square feet of commercial space. "We decided to remove it to just concentrate on the near-term 14-acre proposal for residential to just try to build support for the annexation plan that just proposed 10,000 square feet additional. ... It was creating concerns that given how distant in the future that would happen we just didn't feel it needed to be figured out at this point."

In the community meetings, the Johnson's consistently ignored any mention by residents of traffic concerns, overall school crowding and road construction. They repeatedly stated, that is a county problem and that the Johnson's are not responsible for that.

But, current residents will have to deal with those issues.

The Johnson's plan is flawed because it requires traffic to exit through light at the current Safeway – I ask each of you to drive over to the Safeway intersection during rush hour and see how bad it is currently. The proposed plan is severely flawed in this regard. I think that this intersection will be a complete mess and the Johnson family will be gone and not held accountable

In summary, I strongly believe this plan should not be approved because of its impact to the local area residents and the environment including:

1. Significantly increase traffic in an area that is already congested resulting in safety concern for Quince Orchard students and residents in the area.
2. Significantly burden elementary, middle and high schools in the area that are already overcrowded.
3. Have a further burden on utilities and infrastructure in the area not to mention environment.
4. Create an area that is a part of the city of Gaithersburg surrounded on all sides by neighborhoods that are not part of the city of Gaithersburg.
5. Does not discuss responsibility for maintenance of the proposed one-acre park, the mix of affordable housing proposed, or how future residents will get out to the signalized intersection,

6. Expects current residents to pay for the impact of the development since the developer's requested a 10-year tax abatement on the commercial area.

We realize the property needs to be developed. However, we believe there are moderate development alternatives that – including retaining existing zoning, that would be better for the surrounding neighborhoods and probably the city and county – Suggestions include Parks, Soccer/Baseball fields, A recreation center, A School, Single family home under the current zoning which would result in only 30 homes being built.

Sincerely,

Mary Silva