

Kirk Eby

From: Suzie Ward <psaward@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 5:29 PM
To: Jud Ashman; Robert Wu; Neil Harris; Jim McNulty; Lisa Henderson; Kirk Eby
Subject: Support - Annexation of Walnut Hill Shopping Center - Annexation: X-9510-2020

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Dear Mayor Ashman, City Council Members, and City Planners:

Thank you for your service to Gaithersburg and its Citizens.

As a resident of Deer Park, I would like to comment on the proposed Annexation of Walnut Hill Shopping Center, Annexation proposal: X-9510-2020, into Gaithersburg City limits.

I want to express my support for the proposed annexation of the Walnut Hill Shopping Center into the City of Gaithersburg. Walnut Hill Shopping Center was once a vital part of the neighborhood. In later years it has become run-down and has fallen into disrepair. Since the closing of the Weis grocery store the Owners have been unable to find a store willing to commit to coming to Walnut Hill and becoming a part of our community. I used to frequent the shopping center supporting the businesses there, but there remain few merchants extant to patronize.

Initially, I was not excited about the prospect of another gas station here on the East side of Gaithersburg. Our *absolute need* is for a **grocery store** to return to the Walnut Hill Shopping Center. There is an urgency to have Walnut Hill Shopping Center revitalized into a place with more green space, where there are shops and merchants providing services to fulfill our needs and desires. We want a destination where we can feel comfortable taking our families, sitting outside, and enjoying the venue and each other. Granite Canyon Properties has proposed to provide these things and more. They propose eventually installing 9 EV charging stations in the shopping center. Aldi's has even potentially agreed to installing solar panels in the future. These are environmental pluses. Another bonus - Granite Canyon Partners are going to commission local artists to create and install art to beautify the Center.

Annexing the property into the City will allow Granite Canyon Properties the easiest path to accomplish these goals at Walnut Hill Shopping Center. Ultimately, this annexation and revitalization will be good for the immediate area, its citizens and the City as a whole. It will very much benefit all residents as well as those traveling through who take advantage of and utilize these newly proposed amenities. As Walnut Hill Shopping Center is positioned near the gateway to Gaithersburg, it is **imperative** to provide a *revitalized face* to the City's entrance.

I encourage your support of this annexation.

Please enter this letter into the record for this Annexation.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Suzie Ward
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