

Andy Kass

From: Brad Deets
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 3:09 PM
To: Andy Kass
Subject: FW: [EXT] Proposed Rezoning, Ashworth



Brad Deets, AICP, Development Services Director
City of Waukeee
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Please Note that our offices have moved to 204 W Hickman Road just south of Waukeee City Hall

From: Cody Kilgore <blackcapphotography@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 2:47 PM
To: Courtney Clarke <CClarke@waukeee.org>; Anna Bergman <abergman@waukeee.org>; Charlie Bottenberg <cbottenberg@waukeee.org>; Christine Crone <ccrone@waukeee.org>; Larry Lyon <llyon@waukeee.org>; Ben Sinclair <bsinclair@waukeee.org>
Cc: Tim Moerman <tmoerman@waukeee.org>; Brad Deets <bdeets@waukeee.org>
Subject: [EXT] Proposed Rezoning, Ashworth

Dear Mayor Clarke & Council Members,

I am writing to express opposition to the proposed rezoning that will be reviewed by the Rezoning Commission on September 15th and scheduled to be presented to the City Council on September 21st. The proposed rezoning is for land on the south side of Ashworth, east of the intersection of Ashworth and U Place. Currently the land is zoned A1 and farmed, and the proposed change by a developer is to rezone it for R2, R4, and PD1.

I have reviewed the current Comprehensive Plan and understand that this rezoning request is within the current plan guidelines and therefore encouraged and supported by the Development Services Department. It is disappointing to note that this new plan differs so greatly from the prior 20 year plan for Waukeee, with the prior guidelines indicating it was beneficial to Waukeee to develop this area with properties of two acres or larger in order to maintain its natural topography, beauty, and rural way of life.

My disappointments regarding this particular rezoning are much the same as I've expressed prior, but with additional concerns.

- The current pace and density of residential development is erasing Waukeee's rural character, which is part of its history and often reasons for moving to this area.

- Residential development of the density proposed immediately adjacent to rural farms forces farm families--who chose and wished to live rural lives--to forfeit their way of life without choice or voice.
- Waukee currently does not have any component in its development processes to study, evaluate, or consider environmental concerns for proposed development projects. The impact of this particular development will further endanger natural habitat and wildlife that is an important and appreciated part of living in this part of Waukee.
- As Waukee erases its rural life component, we will rush Waukee's assimilation and homogenization into the Des Moines metroplex, further diminishing the quality of life and reasons for moving to Waukee. The immediate benefit of new development will be our future regret.
- The process for rezoning gives little if no opportunity for adjacent landowners, residents, and neighbors to have any input or opportunities to express concerns until the project is well into the approval process. By the time the notice goes up, developers have already been given the cooperation and approval by the Development Services Department. This effectively makes the Development Services Department more an ally and agent for developers than it is for Waukee taxpayers and citizens.
- The lack of any email addresses or contact information for the Zoning Commission officers makes it impossible to reach out to them by email or phone to express any concerns. This further inhibits any concerned citizen's ability to give input.
- Development of rural land, or "progress" is not necessarily all good just for the sake of it.

Beyond those points, I have these serious concerns about developers and their practices in this area:

- This proposed development will place R2, R4, and PD1 property residents within a quarter mile of a large hog confinement (CAFO, or Confined Animal Feeding Operation) to their west. There are arguable health and quality of life concerns for families who will be living in that close proximity to a CAFO.
- The properties will be immediately adjacent to large agricultural fields which are routinely treated with pesticides, often by way of aerial application methods. We ourselves have suffered damage to our crops and had to file complaints with the Iowa Department of Agriculture.
- Most egregiously, developers and realtors are careful to avoid making potential home buyers aware of the large CAFO immediately to the west, at any point in their marketing process. I have met several of the new homeowners in the Daybreak subdivisions who have asked me what the overwhelming odor is when winds are out of the west. When I've informed them of the CAFO, they've expressed great dismay that they were never made aware of the CAFO when they purchased their home. I think it is the responsibility of Waukee leadership, if they approve this rezoning, to assure that potential home buyers in the area are made aware of the CAFO prior to their purchase by the realtors or developers. Otherwise, the city is complicit in the developer's deceit by omission.

Waukee currently has 17 residential developments in various stages in addition to its commercial space developments. I would ask that we don't just sign off on another and take a closer look at the need, the area, and the impact before approving this rezoning.

Thank you for your time. I would welcome any conversation regarding this matter. I hope one or more of you might contact me for more discussion.

Sincerely,

Cody Kilgore
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