

7-I-13-RZ - cor Neal

THE NEAL LAW FIRM

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 51930
KNOXVILLE, TN 37950

TELEPHONE 865-312-9135
NEALLAWFIRM@COMCAST.NET

STREET ADDRESS:
1240B OLD WEISGARBER RD.
KNOXVILLE, TN 37909

June 17, 2013

Mayor Madeline Rogero
400 Main Street, PO Box 1631
Knoxville, TN 37901-1631

7-I-13-RZ
7-D-13-PA
7-E-13-SP



Dear Mayor Rogero:

I am writing to express my opposition to Tennova's plan to build a new hospital on Middlebrook Pike. I realize that they have not yet submitted an application to change the zoning, but, all the same, I wanted you to have my concerns in mind.

I am opposed to this project for several reasons. I live at 6657 Ridgerock Lane, so my back yard abuts directly onto the project site. In addition, my office is at 1240 Old Weisgarber Road, so I am directly across the street from the project. In other words, I will be subjected to whatever noise the project generates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I thought about this project long and hard before forming an opinion. Obviously, there are advantages to having a hospital next door. On the other hand, my neighbors and I are already subjected to a large number of sirens every day, because we are situated between Papermill Road, Kingston Pike, Weisgarber Road, and Middlebrook Pike, and close to the Weisgarber fire hall. Sometimes it seems that every siren in West Knoxville comes close to our home. We are also in one of the flight paths for McGhee Tyson airport, so we get frequent airplane noise. As I write this letter there is a piece of heavy equipment working at the site, directly across the street from my office. That noise is extremely distracting, and I am confident that construction of a hospital and ancillary facilities will be much worse. In my opinion, this project is going to make living on Ridgerock Lane miserable for me and all of my neighbors.

I also do not see how Tennova can actually justify this project. Two months ago my 92 year old aunt fell and broke a vertebra while at the Pinnacle theater. The ambulance took her to Tennova's facility on Parkside Drive, which would be the closest hospital to the theater. She was in the hospital several days while she was awaiting surgery. I was amazed to find that the hospital was virtually empty. The entire time I was there I did not see another patient, nor did I see any families visiting other patients. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday there literally was no one in the hospital lobby, the lights were turned off, and the reception desk was empty. And even with few patients, it was obvious that the hospital staff were poorly managed and the left foot had no idea what the right was doing, as we received contradictory instructions from the doctors and staff. I cannot fathom how Tennova thinks it could justify another West Knoxville facility when the Parkside Drive hospital was virtually empty that weekend.

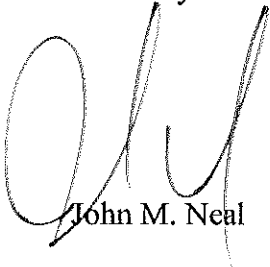
When I was first married, in 1975, my wife and I lived in Fountain City. Our first son was born at St. Mary's. I know from personal experience that the folks who live north of downtown rely heavily on St. Mary's for their treatment. Closing St. Mary's would essentially abandon the folks who live in Middlesboro, Kentucky, Claiborn County, Union County, Halls, and Fountain City. I cannot comprehend how Tennova can rationalize buying and closing Baptist Hospital, buying and closing St. Mary's Hospital, and moving to West Knoxville when West Knoxville already has plenty of medical care. It is the people who live up Maynardville Highway, all the way to Middlesboro, who actually need medical care, and would be greatly inconvenienced by the closing of St. Mary's. And, if Tennova hoestly believes those patients will all come to the new hospital, I think they are mistaken. Why? Because those patients will first come to UT Medical Center and Fort Sanders.

Yes, I realize that many of my feelings are selfish because of the noise and disorder that will be forced on me personally. However, the bottom line is that with Tennova's inability to fill even its Parkside facilities, and the loss of service for people who live north of Knoxville, I cannot think of a single good reason why Tennova should build on Middlebrook.

Incidentally, I have lived adjacent to that property for more than 25 years and I am convinced its highest and best use would be as a park. Although we have Lakeshore close by, and I use it several times a week, the Middlebrook property would be a unique opportunity for a more naturalized environment, with wooded walking trails and, possibly, even an agricultural facility to teach city children who have never touched a cow in their lives. If I had the money I would have done it myself long ago. You may not know this, but I hear voices behind my house all the time. The old horse trails are still being used as walking trails by the residents of West Hills. In addition, the area is replete with wild life, including deer, wild turkeys, racoons, birds of prey, and the Knoxville local coyotes.

Obviously, I urge you to oppose any of the various applications Tennova will be filing in connection with this project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,



John M. Neal