

To: MPC File # 11-D-13-RZ  
#11-C-13-SP

From: Carolyn Greenwood

RE: Comments on Proposed Revision to Northwest County Sector Plan and Rezoning of Butler Farm  
(Agenda Item #28, Agenda Date: 11/14/2013)

Date: 11/13/2013

My name is Carolyn Greenwood and I live at 3224 Boomerang Lane, off of Garrison Road in Karns. I am opposed to the proposed amendment to the Northwest County Sector Plan and the rezoning request related to the Butler Farm property. Please allow me to provide you with a little background about Karns as a context for consideration of the proposals.

I have lived in Karns since I was pregnant with my first child 22 years ago and have lived in the house I am currently in for the last 18 years. I moved here because Karns is a great place to raise children and I loved the fact that it still had agricultural land and a rural feel despite being conveniently located between Knoxville and Oak Ridge. I have loved that my kids got to see cows on the way to school every day. I have loved living close to all three excellent public schools – Karns Elementary, Karns Middle, and Karns High School. I have also loved the stability of the neighborhood, where being a resident for 18 years still makes me a relative newcomer.

I love Karns so much that a couple of years ago I started a Facebook Group called “I Love Karns!” which now has over 400 members who share what they love about Karns, events that are happening, etc. From the birthday banners hanging on the pedestrian bridge over Oak Ridge Highway, to the collection of old-timers that gathers every morning at Hardee’s to go over what’s happening in the community and even the KHS Pride messages spray painted on the railroad underpass, Karns has managed to preserve a rare small-town feel while remaining one of Knox County’s most rapidly-growing communities.

Whether Karns is able to remain a desirable place to live and raise children depends on continued careful planning and adherence to sound design principles. I am grateful to the Metropolitan Planning Commission for all the effort that has been put into developing and updating the Northwest County Sector Plan. I understand that it is time to review and update the Plan and I look forward to participating once again. It is this kind of planning and collaboration with the community that allows us to continue to grow while preserving that sense of place that promotes civic pride and prevents Karns from becoming just another unremarkable and redundant suburb.

Karns is fortunate to have its schools, library, parks, much of its commercial business, and soon a new Senior Center, located in a relatively compact geographical area, with Beaver Creek and its smaller tributaries providing natural beauty throughout. This provides a wonderful opportunity for future linkages via sidewalks, bike paths, greenways, and mass transit, so we can reduce our dependence on automobiles, and everyone from teens and pre-teens who are too young to drive, to seniors getting too old to drive, can remain active in the community. The current Sector Plan recognizes the special

opportunity for a pedestrian-oriented center for the Karns community at the intersection of Oak Ridge Highway and Byington-Beaver Ridge Road (an intersection known locally as “the Karns red light” since for many years it was the location of the only traffic signal in Karns). The plan notes that the upcoming construction of the Karns Connector will reduce the amount of traffic on Byington-Beaver Ridge Road, thereby reducing the need to widen this road beyond a three-lane section. The plan then envisions pedestrian facilities along Oak Ridge Highway and Byington-Beaver Ridge Road that would tie together schools, churches, the library, parks, shopping centers, offices, residences, and other community facilities.

**The proposals related to the Butler Farm directly conflict with the direction envisioned for Karns in the Northwest County Sector Plan.** A business park on the Butler Farm property would significantly increase traffic along Garrison Road and Byington-Beaver Ridge Road since nobody approaching the business park from the east or southeast is likely to go all the way up to Oak Ridge Highway in order to access the business park from the Karns Connector when they can go straight in along Garrison Road. Yet the proposal cites the Karns Connector as a new road that makes development of a business park on the Butler Farm property feasible. This subverts the purpose of the Karns Connector because the Connector was designed to ease traffic on Byington-Beaver Ridge Road, while a business park in that location would greatly increase it.

**There has been no change in conditions warranting an amendment to the Sector Plan.** The Development Corporation has not put forth any changes of conditions that would warrant an amendment to the Sector Plan.

**There has been no introduction of significant new roads or utilities that were not anticipated in the plan and make development more feasible.** The Development Corporation cites the Karns Connector as a new road, but the Connector was already anticipated in the Sector Plan. The Development Corporation also acknowledges that the proposed development would generate sufficient additional traffic that improvements would likely be required to Garrison Road. This does not justify an amendment to the Sector Plan, particularly since, as noted previously, the increase in traffic that a business park would bring conflicts with the goal in the Sector Plan of easing Byington-Beaver Ridge traffic.

**There is no obvious or significant error or omission in the plan.** The Development Corporation does not cite any significant error or omission in the plan. They simply note that the LI designation would be an extension of that designation from the southeast. The Sector Plan’s lack of any mention of expanding the LI designation is certainly not a significant error or omission in the Plan. In fact, the reason Karns High School is adjacent to a light industrial area is because it would otherwise have had its vocational campus in a different location from the rest of the school and that was thought to be a worse decision than locating next to an industrial site. That does not mean it is a good idea to expand that industrial zoning around to other sides of the school property. To the contrary, to allow an expansion of industrial zoning into the Butler Farm property would put the students, faculty, and administrators, as well as the families and others that attend events at the school and its ball fields, at risk of exposure to elevated levels of air pollutants from trucks, trains, and manufacturing facilities. Moreover, it would severely

impair the image of the school within the community. People come from all over to attend band competitions, sports competitions, etc. It is important to the pride of the community to have a school that is visually appealing, clean, and safe. Rather than expanding the light industrial designation, it would be more appropriate to encourage the kind of change that happened recently when a manufacturing facility moved out (Tom's Potato Chips) and a clean new business moved in (Knoxville Volleyball Academy). Also, there has been some talk about expanding rail onto the property. If rail is expanded onto the property, that would further isolate the High School from the rest of the community since it would become a significant barrier to plans to unite Karns schools and other community facilities via bike paths, greenways, etc.

**There have been no changes in government policy, such as a decision to concentrate development in certain areas.** The Development Corporation does not assert that there have been any changes in government policy.

**There are no trends in development, population or traffic that warrant reconsideration of the original plan proposal.** The Development Corporation does not assert that there are any trends in these areas that would warrant reconsideration of the original plan proposal. In fact, they recognize that everything has remained the same for a long time. Their assertion that reconsideration of the original plan proposal is warranted in order to bring light industrial businesses "into consistency" is meaningless.

**The proposed amendment is not necessary because of substantially changed or changing conditions in the area and districts affected, or in the city/county generally.** The Development Corporation describes some of the features of Employment Center (EC) zoning and claims it is the most appropriate zoning but never states any changed or changing conditions that would necessitate the proposed amendments.

**The proposed amendment is not consistent with the intent and purpose of the applicable zoning ordinance. It also would adversely affect Karns High School and the surrounding community.** Interestingly, the Development Corporation emphasizes job creation as the reason this zoning is appropriate, but fails to point out that EC zoning permits a number of different types of manufacturing businesses, such as plastics manufacturing and pharmaceuticals manufacturing, many of which are allowed, under EPA rules and Knox County rules which incorporate the federal rules by reference), to emit tons of pollutants per year. Many such businesses also emit significant amounts of pollutants through leaks and not just through their stacks or may have malfunctions resulting in excess emissions. These kinds of businesses should never be located in close proximity to a school, or especially its athletic fields, where students will be exerting themselves outside.

Understandably, the zoning ordinance does not allow elementary and secondary schools in EC zones. (Section 5.51.02.J) Basic planning principles, and a basic understanding of risk management, demand that you must not allow such a zone immediately adjacent to a school.

Likewise, this proposal is incompatible with nearby residential development. I live in Clearview Estates, which currently has a quiet and beautiful view of rolling pastures and nearby ridges. Numerous birds pass through this area – on one occasion I saw approximately 1000 birds swarming above and on the field. Prior to the recent filling of a pond on the property, there were also a lot of frogs that could be

heard as you passed by (which also raises the question of whether there are significant wetlands on this property and will they simply be filled in as well?). If this proposal is accepted, it will adversely affect property values in my neighborhood and even more so for people living on Garrison Road. There will be increased traffic, noise, and pollution, in addition to the loss of valuable open space and agricultural land. There will be increased stormwater issues, which is already a problem on the west side of the property where Beaver Creek is. The road to the back of Karns High School already floods so badly that it has to be closed at times. The proposed development would add significantly more impervious pavement, further jeopardizing the health of Beaver Creek and exacerbating the flooding problem.

Having the right to object to a development plan later is no substitute for getting the zoning right to begin with. And job creation, though important, will never trump the safety of our kids. This is especially true when you realize that there are two large business park properties located a mile or so away, one of which is almost completely undeveloped. No good reason has been established for burdening the Karns Community, and Karns High School in particular, with this incompatible land use in such an important part of our community.

In conclusion, there are so many reasons this proposal should be denied, perhaps most of all because the Development Corporation has not even established any legitimate changed conditions that would necessitate changing the Sector Plan and rezoning this property. There are actually many good reasons for Knox County to buy this property, but not for a business park with EC zoning. Please allow the Karns Community to discuss this property as part of the upcoming Sector Plan Review and let us have a voice in determining a much more appropriate use for this beautiful piece of land.

Thank you.

Carolyn Greenwood  
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Knoxville, TN 37931  
[cdgreenwood@cs.com](mailto:cdgreenwood@cs.com)



KHS is adjacent to Butler Farm



Flooding at rear entrance of KHS



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## Fwd: Zoning near school

1 message

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**Sarah Powell** <sarah.powell@knoxmpc.org>  
To: "Mahan, Betty Jo" <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

Wed, Nov 13, 2013 at 3:00 PM

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

From: <jonesfamilyknoxville@yahoo.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 13, 2013 at 2:24 PM  
Subject: Zoning near school  
To: "contact@knoxMPC.org" <contact@knoxmpc.org>

I'm emailing regarding MPC case #11-C-13-SP for sector plan amendment 11-D-13-RZ

I want to adamantly oppose this amendment.

Chris Jones

[865-227-2303](tel:865-227-2303)

3309 Byington Solway Rd. Knoxville, Tn. 37931

Sent from my iPhone