

**KNOX COUNTY MPC
2015**

**Proposed Cambridge Shores Subdivision
JOHNSON**

Thursday October 8,

ROBERT O.

**File # 10-SD-15-C # 10-G-15-UR
13**

Agenda Item #

My name is Robert O. Johnson. I and my wife Rexana L. have owned and lived in our home at 10642 Sandpiper Lane in the Wood Lake Acres subdivision for 28 years. I want to make it very clear that I and my wife are opposed to this proposed subdivision. We are not opposed to development at a lower housing density, with preservation of the mature hardwood forest that is present on and surrounding the property, and with minimal or no alteration to the existing topography. Ladies and gentlemen of the MPC, please include the following technical, historical, and informational considerations in your planning and decision-making process for this proposed subdivision:

1. *High Proposed Housing Density:* This is the wrong type of housing to build in the middle of subdivisions such as Wood Lake Acres, Rivermist, Northshore Commons, and Riverlake which have spacious, well separated homes on large lots. This not-in-kind, high-density construction causes residents to leave Knox County. This undesirable situation decreases the aesthetic and monetary values of this neighborhood. Some homes in the Rivermist subdivision are now rental properties due to the anticipated volume of Beacon Park. This proposed high-density development will increase the number of these rentals and cause a decline in property values as well as tax base. None of the subdivisions in the immediate neighboring subdivisions have homes separated by only ten feet. I have driven around the immediate neighborhood and cannot find homes separated by less than approximately thirty feet. I have not gone up on private property with a tape measure and I am not saying there might not be a few homes separated by a lesser distance. However, the spacing of homes being proposed by D. K. Development is the outlier, is not the norm, and does mesh with the immediate neighborhood.
2. *Mature Woods & Existing Topography:* The clear cutting of all the majestic mature hardwoods on this property violates recommendations set forth in the Southwest County Sector Plan. I have at least seven mature hardwoods whose trunks touch the existing fence. The proposed grading will destroy the roots of these trees. These trees will ultimately die after D. K. Development is long gone. The developer would profit at my expense. The new homes could be marketed by pointing out the beautiful woods that surround much of the proposed subdivision. The developer also should explain to his clients that the roots of many of these trees have been destroyed by grading and that their lifetime will be minimal. In my opinion, there is no need to alter the topography along the back of my property. Additionally, there is no need to destroy other mature trees located between an

existing house on the property and the fence. I am referring to the opposite side of the fence along the back of my property.

3. *Geotechnical Engineering & Setback:* The Rivermist subdivision is upland from the proposed subdivision. Little has been said about the steep slopes that exist along the Rivermist side of the proposed subdivision. Many houses in the Rivermist subdivision will be well above roof lines in the proposed subdivision. It appears that no slope-stability issues nor issues related to karst were identified by the Knox County Engineering Department. No stabilizing structures will be required. A clear statement expressing this conclusion should appear on drawings. I request that binding statements be written and signed off by responsible persons that setback reductions will not be granted along the Wood Lake Acres side of the proposed subdivision. Since there is neither slope-stability nor karstic issues, this should not pose problems. There will be no hardship issues for home builders, and no need to relocate the proposed subdivision closer to the Wood Lake Acres fence line by requesting setback variances caused by geotechnical problems along the Rivermist side. I am opposed to any setback reductions along the Wood Lake Acres fence line regardless of the reason.
4. *Economic Justification:* An unbiased profit/loss analysis of this proposed action should be submitted as part of the docket file and prior to MPC decision making. The analysis should be performed by experienced professionals, have quality assurance, and binding signatures. At present, your decision will be based on the biased statement from D. K. Development that there is a viable market for these homes. I do not believe this is true. The statement is unsubstantiated. Arcadia is now attempting to sell to a different part of the housing market than D. K. Development. Arcadia is offering five-acre lots and larger homes because of traffic problems at the Chandler Road intersection. In this same context, Leadenhall and the Beacon at Northshore subdivisions are cleared areas. These two subdivisions were not successful. Many small lots are readily available in these two subdivisions on which to build the type of homes to be offered by D. K. Development. The bond issue that is part of the proposed development must be large enough and held for a long enough period to address issues that have been discussed above. If the proposed subdivision is unsuccessful, money would be available to replant large trees, not seedlings, and to reimburse surrounding residents whose wooded properties are impacted by grading and clear cutting. The back part of the proposed subdivision is situated more or less in a ravine and its desirability is questionable. Clear cutting, grading, and filling further increases this undesirability. Do not allow D. K. Development to walk away from damages that would be incurred if the proposed subdivision fails.
5. *Property History:* There is a great deal of history regarding this piece of property and what was known as the Beacon at Northshore subdivision located directly across Northshore Drive. The hot pursuit of quick money during the housing bubble caused problems. For instance, the representative of the previous attempt to

develop this property stated publicly at this podium that all problems had been resolved with the neighbors. If you had the paperwork of comments submitted by concerned citizens it probably would be at least a foot high. Signed petitions were also submitted. Clearly, all issues and concerns had not been resolved. Just how bad did things get? After the decision was made to set the density at up to three homes per acre, the present property owner threatened my wife and I as we left the Knoxville City-County Building. His mental state was being excited by the previous developer who was pushing his buttons. A police officer was called to the scene within the City-County Building and a report of this threat is also on file with the Knox County Sheriffs Department. I was concerned that the situation might decline further. Let me just say, that if you are not familiar with the lengthy history and paperwork concerning this property you will be making a terribly uninformed decision.

6. *Traffic Congestion (comments 6 to 9)*: There is clearly a traffic problem associated with the proposed subdivision. The best way to appreciate this statement is to drive down Rivermist Lane, and then try to re-enter Northshore Drive. I did this during a recent yard sale. It is very dangerous. Rivermist Lane has approximately half the number of houses as the proposed subdivision. The new subdivision will increase this traffic problem.
7. The capacity of existing schools for additional students has been evaluated as adequate. However, the school traffic associated with the new subdivision has not been included in the evaluation. Traffic attributed to the Northshore Elementary School backs up to Carl Cowan Park. The proposed subdivision and additional students will increase the length and duration of this traffic back-up.
8. While I am on the subject of traffic let me discuss something that I had some notes on whose source I have been unable to retrieve. I recall discussion of acceleration/deceleration lanes either on this piece of property, or what was known as the Beacon at Northshore directly across Northshore Drive from this proposed subdivision. I will comment on this in a rhetorical question. Given the high-density of the proposed subdivision, would not the installation of an acceleration/deceleration lane and a center turn lane be a good way to alleviate some of the traffic problems and to promote public safety? These lanes should include Rivermist Lane and the intersection at Chandler Road. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the large Arcadia subdivision (previously known as Beacon Park) is now offering five-acre lots and larger homes because traffic and access problems on Chandler Lane have decreased property valuations. The infrastructure in this locale cannot support an increase in the number of homes without massive improvements.
9. Consideration should be given to placing the entrance into the proposed subdivision at the rear, or cul-de-sac. Rogers Island Road runs approximately 400 feet from the back of the proposed subdivision and connects to Chandler Lane. A

right-of-way would have to be obtained across the undeveloped, wooded, and private property over which a rear entrance would have to cross. Traffic regulation would be provided at the intersection of Chandler Road and Northshore Drive and would partially alleviate some of the ever increasing traffic problems.

10. *Availability of Sanitary Sewer System:* The sanitary sewer system is being made available to the proposed subdivision. I am disturbed by this situation. My home was built in the late sixties and I may have to add trenches to my septic system. Repeated requests have been made for the sewer system to be made available to Wood Lake Acres with no success. One resident in the Rivermist subdivision has expressed a similar concern about no availability of the sanitary sewer system.

Ladies and gentlemen of the MPC, in summary, I urge you to deny this proposed subdivision. This is the wrong type of development to build between Wood Lake Acres and Rivermist subdivisions. I urge you only authorize relatively spacious, well separated homes on large lots built on this parcel. These homes should be built on existing topography and preserve as much of the mature woods as possible. The entrance to this subdivision should be located at the rear onto Rogers Island Road, and not onto Northshore Drive.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Respectively submitted,

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Concerns to be reviewed by the Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commissioners:

In reviewing this proposal for the Cambridge Shores Subdivision I wondered if Knox county development uses the same guide book as coal company strip mining operations. Historically strip-mining clear-cut the land, extracted maximum dollar under the law with disregard for the environment and community. This was legal but it was not right. This proposed subdivision development plans to clear-cut the land, mass grade or bulldoze the site to squeeze in the maximum easy-build lots under the zoning regulations with disregard for the natural beauty of the neighborhood. This style does not contribute to, nor compliment the existing neighborhood as one would hope for in residential planning oversight. The action of the developer may also be legal but it is also wrong for this site.

What I would like to see for this tract of land would be 10 to 20 houses maintaining much of the natural habitat that is currently occupied by birds, squirrels and the occasional deer. The current proposal destroys the very attributes that make this tract of land attractive to the market – the natural beauty of the surrounding area. On our property among many large oak trees we have a beech tree that is over ten feet in circumference and this apart of the woods that covers the rear part of this proposed subdivision. The eradication of the trees up to the property lines will damage the trees on the adjacent properties for years to come at a cost to those neighbors for later removal of dead trees.

It is my understanding that because this plan falls within the regulations - it is as they say a “done deal.”

So at the minimum, here is my request of the MPC ~

In order to reduce the impact of immediate and residual damage to the natural habitat of mature hardwood trees on our property, **we request that MPC stipulate that within the required 35 foot setback from the periphery boundary for the section with the proposed lots currently numbered 13 thru 19 there be a no-cut vegetation/ tree buffer and no-fill or excavation within the 35 foot set-back.** This would address the drip line for most of our trees. **We request that MPC have this requirement noted on the final plat.** –Thank you

I would also like to point out that there is not a shortage of building sites in this area. Within sight of this very location is the Leaden Hall subdivision that was developed ten years ago with 40 building lot and only 4 houses have been built there to date. Across the road Beacon at Northshore was scraped of vegetation for ten houses and none were built. And nextdoor is the Beacon Park/Arcadia development for large number houses that is currently under construction. So with this in mind we question the need to pack the thirty six lots on this site.

Last Wednesday a dozen or so of the neighbors met to discuss their concerns for this proposed subdivision. I think you have received many of their comments. Primary concern was to the number of proposed lots. Another concern was the impact to traffic on an already problematic stretch of road with curves and hill and very limited sight distance. Another was the stormwater runoff & slope stability issues. Then a sad common theme was that they felt their comments would be on deaf ears. Well I am here because I think the MPC Commissioners will take the concerns of the neighbors into consideration before approving this proposed subdivision as it is currently presented.

Please authorize my request for the no-cut buffer and consider our other comments in your decision.
Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns.