

My name is Margie Grace. My partner Dawn Close and I own the property at 8815 Sevierville Pike, which abuts the north side of the proposed development at 8802 Sevierville Pike, Knox Planning Case numbers 11-F-21-RZ and 11-F-21-SP. We have watched the shocking wholesale destruction of forest, infilling of waterways, and wanton disregard of property lines over the past several months on the subject property, currently zoned Agricultural and lying within the Rural Area of the Sector Plan.

We request the change of zone and sector plan for this property be denied. Agricultural-zoned land allows for one house per acre, a density consistent with the character of the surrounding area and a density which we can support, assuming site-based issues and good neighbor issues are addressed.

### **GOOD NEIGHBOR ISSUES**

Good-neighbor issues—issues that impact the character of the neighborhood and local residents' quality-of-life and safety—must be addressed in any development scheme for the property. They include:

1. Provide buffer zone from neighbors
2. Provide natural-looking vegetative screening
3. Cluster housing to maintain the rural feel of the area
4. Preserve wildlife corridors to support the wildlife currently enjoyed by all
5. Limit ingress/egress to the development to Valgro Road only—to keep the bulk of the development's traffic off Sevierville Pike, a dangerous two-lane, curving, shoulder-less rural road, commonly travelled at speeds well in excess of the posted speed limit.  
Valgro can easily support up to two access roads to the new housing area.

The developers have been anything *but* good neighbors to date. They have torn down several neighboring property's fences and landscaping. One neighbor filed a police report to force the return of his stolen ("salvaged") fence posts by the developer! Given the demonstrated lack of respect for property boundaries, the developer must stop clearing the property until a survey and staking identifying property lines is completed to assure no further damage to neighboring properties.

### **SITE-BASED ISSUES: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY REQUIRED**

An EIS regarding the proposed development on the subject property must address the following concerns:

1. Hydrology of the site (see my analysis below)
2. Increased stormwater runoff
3. Change of historic runoff. We are adjacent to a FEMA flood zone and expect the development to increase both flood peak and velocity
4. Erosion on denuded slopes and in-filled water courses
5. Siltation in creeks, waterways and artesian springs due to erosion

6. Impact to the large existing bat cave (our area is listed as *Important* bat habitat on maps)
7. Impact to the two beaver dams just downstream from the property
8. Impact to existing wildlife and wildlife habitat
9. Loss of agricultural land, especially in the context of the rate at which ag land is being lost in eastern Tennessee
10. TDEC issues – there are two active TDEC cases on the subject property, concerning grading, clearing and erosion alterations to Channel 3 and Channel 5 observed on site (see September 10, 2021 GEOServices document “Hydrologic Determination Report”, referenced below and attached to this letter/portal). Based on our observations, we believe several federal wetlands and waterways violations have occurred and remain unmitigated to this date.

## **HYDROLOGY REVIEW**

The subject property is crisscrossed with streams and is home to several springs, at least one of which I understand is a source of water for the Knox Chapman Utility District. Concerned about these streams, springs, water quality, flooding, etc., I reviewed the public record for more information. Please see my conclusions below, based on the following:

1. Documents in the proposed re-zoning and sector map change from the [knoxplanning.org](http://knoxplanning.org) website regarding case 11-F-21-RZ and
2. The September 10, 2021 GEOServices document “Hydrologic Determination Report”, obtained through public records with TDEC.
3. Also, I have reviewed various State and Federal wetland guidance documents, USGS maps for 1979 and 2019, and NRCS soil series classifications information. In addition, I accessed Google Earth Pro to look at historic photographs.

I have identified two points in my review:

1. Characterization of Channel #5; and
2. Hydric Soils.

### **Characterization of Channel #5**

Channel #5 is determined to be a “Wet Weather Conveyance” rather than a “Stream”. I have attached Figure 2 Water Resources Map from the September 10, 2021 report (includes locations of channel determination), Google Earth photos from March 1992, March 2002, and October 2017. Review of the photographs indicates that the existing stream channel was altered prior to 1992. The stream channel appears to change from a natural sinuous stream channel on the east to a straight ditch on the west. The straight ditch appears to be less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Channel #5 within the proposed development. I have added arrows to identify the two areas. The September 10, 2021 Figure 2 shows that the characterization of Channel #5 was conducted on the western straight ditch. Although I have not been to the site, it would appear that characterization of Channel #5 should occur on the eastern 75% of the channel, as the native sinuous stream would appear to be more representative of site conditions.

## Hydric Soils

The project site area soils are mapped on Figure 4 Web Soil Survey. Channel #5 and Channel #1 (which appears to be Hines Creek) both are primarily listed as “St” on the Figure (Steadman Series soils). Figure 4 is also attached. It is noted on PDF page 3 of the report that the Steadman Series is a hydric soil. Hydric soils are commonly associated with wetlands.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service defines hydric soils as “a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part.”

Tennessee State Rule (0400-40-07-03) defines “wetlands” and “constructed wetlands” as:

*“Wetlands” means those areas that are indurated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances to support, a prevalence of vegetation type adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.*

The Steadman Series soils appear to meet the definition of wetland soils.

## Suggestions

Please note, I am not a professional engineer nor a professional geologist in the State of Tennessee. Nor am I a biologist/botanist qualified to map wetlands. The suggestions provided below are provided from a “reasonable person” perspective. Further, I have not been paid to conduct the review provided herein.

That said, I suggest that a supplemental channel determination be conducted for Channel #5, and that the channel determination should be conducted on the eastern ½ of the channel. In addition, a wetland delineation study should be prepared for the project site to establish the presence or absence of wetlands within the project area.

## Close

I have included material from NRCS and Tennessee on hydric soils and wetlands as attachments.

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

### **Please VOTE NO to re-zoning.**

One house per acre, as allowed per the current Agricultural zoning, is consistent with the character of the neighborhood and causes far fewer impacts—environmentally and in terms of neighborhood compatibility, safety and quality-of-life issues—than the density being requested by the developer.

## **Please VOTE NO to changing the Sector Plan.**

The community, local agency staff and elected officials worked long and hard to develop the Growth Policy Plan, as mandated by Tennessee Public Chapter 1101, and adopted by Knox County in 2013. We negotiated in good faith—as a community of neighbors and stakeholders—to create the Growth Policy Plan, grappling with many difficult issues. We consider the Plan to be a sacred contract with our elected officials and our local government. A vote to grant a Sector Plan change is a breach of trust with all South Knoxville residents. The Growth Policy Plan is meaningless if it is so cavalierly changed to suit the desires of out-of-town developers.

This property is currently shown as Rural Area on the Sector Plan. There is ample land within the existing Growth Policy Plan currently designated as Growth Area to meet our need for additional housing without adding this acreage.

## **Please VOTE NO to handing a windfall to one out-of-town developer at a GREAT COST to area residents.**

## **Finally, please require the following conditions be met for ANY development on the subject property:**

1. Provide an Environmental Impact Statement appropriate to the proposed development, to include, but not limited to, the above-listed issues
2. Provide competent federal agency study and review vis-à-vis the National Wetlands Inventory (US Fish and Wildlife Service) and other applicable land protection mandates, including recommendations and/or mitigation measures
3. Address the current TDEC cases
4. Implement “Good Neighbor” issues, including those outlined above

Respectfully submitted,

Margie Grace