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To: Knox County Planning Commission
Re: Proposed Rezoning of 627 S. Gallaher View Road
Current Zoning: Agricultural
Proposed Zoning: Planned Residential
Case Number: 10-G-26-RZ

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing as a neighboring property owner to formally express my concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of approximately seven acres of land located directly behind my home from Agricultural to Planned Residential.

I respectfully ask that the Commission give careful consideration to the substantial impacts this zoning change could have on existing residents, public safety, drainage and erosion, wildlife habitat, and the established character of this area. My concerns are not simply about change or development; they are about whether this particular rezoning is appropriate for this particular location and whether its consequences have been adequately evaluated before the zoning designation is changed.

1. Traffic and Road Safety

The proposed change from agricultural use to planned residential use could substantially increase the number of vehicles entering and leaving this property on a daily basis.

The existing road infrastructure and surrounding residential streets were not necessarily designed for the additional traffic that could result from a residential development of this scale. Increased vehicle trips would also mean additional exposure to pedestrians, bicyclists, children, existing residents, delivery vehicles, emergency vehicles, and other road users.

Before any zoning change is approved, I believe the Commission should have a clear, documented understanding of:

- The number of residential units contemplated;
- The expected number of daily vehicle trips;
- The proposed location and design of access points;
- Sight-distance and turning-safety conditions;
- Whether the existing roadway can safely accommodate the additional traffic;
- The effect on emergency-vehicle access;
- Whether road improvements would be necessary; and
- Who would be responsible for those improvements.

A zoning change should not be considered in isolation from the transportation infrastructure necessary to support the development it enables.

2. Construction Traffic, Noise, and Long-Term Disruption

The conversion of currently wooded and agricultural land into residential development would create a significant period of construction activity for neighboring homeowners.

This could include heavy equipment, excavation, grading, tree removal, construction vehicles, dust, noise, lighting, and repeated truck traffic. Depending upon the duration and scope of construction, these impacts could substantially affect the daily lives of existing residents.

I respectfully request that the Commission consider not only the completed development but also the temporary, potentially prolonged impacts associated with clearing and constructing it.

If the rezoning proceeds, appropriate safeguards should be established concerning construction hours, truck routes, dust control, noise, tree clearing, drainage, and protection of neighboring properties.

3. Loss of Mature Trees and Wildlife Habitat

One of my greatest concerns is the potential loss of the existing wooded area and the wildlife habitat it provides.

This property is currently part of an established natural environment that supports deer, birds, and other wildlife. In July, rehabilitated owls were released in the nearby area, which further demonstrates the importance of the surrounding habitat to local wildlife.

Clearing seven acres for residential construction would permanently alter that environment. The consequences are not limited to the removal of trees. Clearing can

eliminate nesting and shelter areas, fragment habitat, alter wildlife movement, increase human-wildlife conflicts, and change drainage patterns across the property.

I respectfully request that the environmental consequences of the proposed development be evaluated before the zoning designation is changed, including an assessment of existing mature trees, wildlife habitat, nesting areas, drainage patterns, and any applicable protected species or habitat considerations.

4. Stormwater, Runoff, and Erosion

The conversion of wooded or agricultural land into residential development would also increase impervious surfaces and alter the way rainwater moves across the property.

Tree removal, grading, roads, driveways, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces can change runoff patterns and potentially increase the volume and velocity of stormwater reaching surrounding properties.

This raises legitimate concerns about:

- Soil erosion during construction;
- Sediment entering neighboring properties or waterways;
- Increased stormwater runoff;
- Drainage onto adjoining properties;
- Loss of natural absorption provided by trees and vegetation;
- Potential flooding or standing-water problems; and
- Long-term maintenance of stormwater-control measures.

These issues are particularly important because correcting drainage problems after development has occurred can be considerably more difficult than preventing them during the planning and design stages.

I therefore request that appropriate drainage, stormwater, and erosion-control studies be completed and made available for public review before the rezoning is approved.

5. Compatibility With Existing Land Use

The existing Agricultural zoning provides a different intensity and character of land use than planned residential development.

Changing the zoning would establish a new development framework for this property and could permanently change the character of the area surrounding existing homes.

The Commission should therefore consider whether the proposed residential intensity is compatible with the existing surrounding properties, road network, natural features, drainage characteristics, and established development pattern.

The fact that residential development may be possible somewhere in the broader area does not necessarily establish that this particular seven-acre parcel is suitable for the proposed density or configuration.

6. Potential Impact on Existing Property Values

I am also concerned about the potential effect of a substantial residential development immediately adjacent to existing homes.

I recognize that property values can be affected by many factors and that it would be inappropriate to assume a specific dollar impact without a professional appraisal or market analysis. Nevertheless, the introduction of construction activity, increased traffic, reduced privacy, tree clearing, noise, lighting, and changes to the surrounding landscape are legitimate factors that may affect how neighboring properties are perceived and used.

For that reason, I respectfully request that the potential impacts on existing adjacent properties be considered rather than assuming that the rezoning will have no effect on surrounding homeowners.

7. Request for Careful Review Before Any Zoning Change

This property currently provides open space, mature vegetation, wildlife habitat, and a relatively low-intensity use immediately adjacent to existing homes.

A rezoning decision is consequential because it establishes what type and intensity of development may occur on the property in the future. Once the land is cleared and developed, the existing wooded habitat, natural drainage characteristics, and present rural/agricultural character cannot simply be restored.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Commission:

1. Review the proposed residential density and number of units;
2. Require an adequate traffic and road-safety analysis;
3. Evaluate emergency access and roadway capacity;
4. Evaluate stormwater, drainage, and erosion impacts;
5. Evaluate the loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat;

6. Identify mature trees and environmentally sensitive areas;
7. Consider construction traffic, noise, dust, and duration;
8. Evaluate compatibility with surrounding properties and existing land uses;
9. Provide neighboring property owners with an opportunity to review relevant development plans and studies; and
10. Carefully consider whether the proposed rezoning is appropriate for this specific parcel given its location and surrounding conditions.

I respectfully ask that the Commission **not make a zoning change without first establishing, through adequate documentation and public review, that the proposed development can be accommodated without creating unacceptable impacts on public safety, neighboring properties, drainage, erosion, wildlife habitat, and the existing community.**

I appreciate your consideration of these concerns and request that this letter be entered into the official record for the rezoning case.

Respectfully,

Hannah Stuart