

April 20, 2021

Dear City Commissioners,

I am writing to you as a voice of **support** for the proposed redevelopment of what used to be St. Michael's Episcopal church at the corner of NW 43rd Street and NW 23rd Avenue. This item will be on your agenda on Wednesday, April 28.

I think it is important to begin this letter by telling you that I live in Suburban Heights and I am an affected party. My home shares a property line with the subject property. I was also one of the original leaders of the group is strong opposition to the original proposal on this same property that ended with a City Plan Board vote of 6-0 against the development. My main concerns at that time were the conservation area, the traffic, and the overall intensity of use.

After the proposal's original defeat, the developers reached out to the neighborhood and told us they intended to move forward with a new proposal with the Land Use designation of a Planned Development and were requesting input from the neighbors. Knowing that the developers were moving forward with another proposal of development, I felt that it was in the best interest of the neighborhood to be involved. In no way did I enter these conversations with intentions to support the redevelopment of that property. However, I knew that with a new proposal, there came a new chance of approval. The only way to ensure that our concerns were heard and protections were placed in the PUD to safeguard our neighborhood and community, was to be involved. So, I have spent the past year (and more) arguing for the cause directly with the developers and incorporating mitigation efforts for the entirety of our neighborhood into the PUD. I now feel that my property, neighborhood, and community are well protected by the restrictions within the PUD and because of that, I am now supporting this proposal. More specifically, I support this proposal because:

1. The conservation land is protected in perpetuity by a Conservation Easement that is placed on the property as a deed restriction. This will continue with the deed of the property and provides an additional layer of protection of this green space beyond what we have ever had.
2. Any future redevelopment under the current office zoning is not sustainable. During the pandemic, we have all adapted. We realize office space is no longer a necessary expense. Companies and organizations of all sizes are limiting or eliminating their use of office space. I know this, because the company I work for with over 200 employees has decided to continue with their work-from-home model post-pandemic and our office space has always been in Crowne Point (about a tenth of a mile from the subject property). Office is not compatible with the needs of our neighborhood.
3. The developers have limited the intensity of the development dramatically. They have downsized from 3 drive-thru style businesses, to only 1 and have decreased their number of buildings from 7 to 4. This is a much more compatible intensity for the residential area, while also infilling desirable and walkable businesses to service our needs.
4. They have incorporated into the PUD restrictions that ensure traffic will not increase through our neighborhood and that they are responsible for mitigation efforts to ensure we remain unaffected. I personally believe, as a neighborhood, we at least stand a chance of having some of our CURRENT traffic issues resolved or lessened by these same traffic calming measures

resulting in an overall net benefit of the development on our neighborhood traffic. While this will not be known until traffic studies are done post-construction, it is AT LEAST as feasible as the bold and baseless assumption of the opposition that 294 additional cars will be using our neighborhood streets as a cut through every day.

5. Overall, I am very tired of living next to the current situation on that corner. We have tents just beyond our back fence line. We have had displaced individuals using our fence as a place to hold and store their belongings. We have even had them come and knock on our door to ask us if we would run an extension cord over to their campsites so they could have power. I'm tired of having my kids playing in our backyard and hoping the bottles and needles have been cleaned up on the other side of the fence. I'm tired of the overall vibe that the corner brings to our community and the reminder of the deep social issues we are facing and ignoring.

This property is a prime piece of Gainesville real estate that holds the power to really benefit our neighborhood and community. It will not live up to its full potential with the current zoning and it will fail to meet the needs and desires of our neighbors with the current zoning as well. In many ways, the PUD is a more restrictive designation for this property that allows for all the benefits of smart and innovative infill with the restrictions that will protect those living nearby. I strongly urge you to support this proposal and allow this prime property to become an asset to our community.

Thank you,

Tracy Staples, PhD

Affected Party

2011 NW 43rd Terrace