

Aaron Panko

From: Liz Backer <lizmail217@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 11:34 AM
To: Aaron Panko
Cc: geoffreyjames@comcast.net
Subject: [SUSPECTED SPAM] Proposed Subdivision Case No. SUB21-09 (Meyer Farm Subdivision)

Hello Mr. Panko,

I am writing in response to the Notice of Filing for **Subdivision Case No. SUB21-09**. This was an interesting issue for me to consider, as I have mixed thoughts about this proposal.

I appreciate and acknowledge our city's need for housing, and improvements to our current transportation system are always welcome. The development of land within the Urban Growth Boundary is to be expected, and I am aware of the goals the strategic planning committee has set for street and traffic flow improvements in the Morningside neighborhood. This proposal appears to offer solutions for a few of those issues, however I do have concerns that all relevant information to this specific proposal have not been considered, or worse - disregarded.

This proposal suggests creating a new roadway, linking Hilfiker to Hillrose, with connection at the corner of Hillrose and Pringle/Battlecreek, and Hilfiker and Commercial. The proposal claims this is to be considered a "B Side Collector Street".

Traffic at the intersection of Hilfiker and Commercial is already bad, especially at peak times. The Traffic Impact Analysis conducted by Kittleson & Associates states that traffic at this intersection is currently operating "acceptably within city standards". While that may be true, this proposal appears to indicate that it expects traffic to only treat this new roadway as a collector street – meaning traffic would mainly use the new roads to travel to and from the neighborhood, not THROUGH the neighborhood. In my opinion, that is an inaccurate assumption as traffic will absolutely use this new roadway as an arterial street from Commercial to Pringle/Battlecreek.

While that may be an acceptable change to some, the proposed changes to the intersection of Hillrose and Pringle/Battlecreek may not be sufficient. One left-hand turn lane on Battlecreek is offered as mitigation for an estimated traffic increase of 1.5 by the year 2023. I am concerned that the TIA conducted in May 2021 by Kittleson & Associates only uses current traffic flow and traffic count data from 2018-2021, as its source. This means traffic moving straight through Pringle/Battlecreek, not added flow from Commercial.

In addition, and of a larger concern, it does not take any future increase in traffic on these affected streets from the upcoming opening of the new Costco location on Kuebler. I realize that the future traffic count information as the result of the new Costco could be difficult to predict at this time, however to omit the inevitability that traffic will increase much more than an increase of 1.5 on Pringle/Battlecreek once Costco is open is, in my opinion, a major oversight.

The intersection of Hillrose and Pringle/Battlecreek is a difficult corner to address. It is a blind corner with the added hitch of a steep hill with limited sight distance directly to the South. I worry that encouraging the flow of not just new neighborhood traffic - but the guaranteed additional Costco traffic and through traffic from Commercial - will potentially create significant safety issues that are not addressed in Kittleson's TIA if this new roadway is created as proposed.

The other major topic that I have been thinking about is the potential loss of open green space and protected trees that this unique property currently provides. While the proposed subject property is within the Urban Growth Boundary, and while I agree that a property owner should have the right to do with their property what

they want, there is so much more potential for this property that will be impossible to put back once lost if this proposal is approved as-is. I believe that there are additional options for this land: incorporating all or part in with the adjacent Hilfiker Park, designating it as Open Green Space with community entertainment in mind, or even a combination of a smaller number of the proposed single-family homes and a larger percentage of the proposal set aside for park/open green space. A connection to The Woods designated space across the Pringle/Battlecreek intersection could even create an in-city urban park space similar to that of Forest Park in Portland. Destroying over 70% of the existing tree canopy, including at least six protected White Oak trees does not feel like it keeps in line with Salem's identity as a "Tree City". I and many other neighbors question the accuracy of the submitted tree preservation plans as the number of protected trees keeps changing, and the listed diameters of many trees appear to have been reduced to avoid including them in the total tree count. Also appearing to have been removed or not included in the tree preservation plans are the number of trees that have already been cut down this year.

My point is, just because we can do something, doesn't always mean that we should. This property is the last remaining parcel of land from Joseph Waldo's 304-acre donation land claim of 1852, and I believe it is important to protect and preserve Salem's significant historical properties.

We do not have to develop every square inch of land within the Urban Growth Boundary, even with a need for more housing. The neighboring 275-acre Fairview Mixed-Use land has the approved designated space for 2000+ residential units, as well as businesses, offices, schools, and a multitude of other public facilities, some of which have already been built or are currently under construction. The loss of that land to development will greatly help with the city's need for more housing, but also means the loss of homes for wildlife. This is a loss that cannot be replaced once gone. Adding these 30 acres to that loss will be detrimental to the deer, birds, and other local wildlife currently residing within that also deserve to keep their homes, and will destroy a last-remaining piece of our area's history. Salem has the potential to create a variety of unique spaces within its Urban Boundaries that can benefit people AND wildlife, but that potential is gone if this proposal is accepted as-is.

We need to not be so quick to act. I very much appreciate the city taking the public's thoughts into consideration, and genuinely hope that concerns about the continued enjoyment and livability of our neighborhoods are heard and considered through this process. I see this as a very complex issue that likely does not have a black-and-white answer. While I may not know what that correct answer is now, I do not believe this proposal being accepted as-is would be the right one.

I thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Backer

4527 Sunland St SE

Cc: Geoffrey James, Land Use Chair, Morningside Neighborhood Association