

MEMORANDUM
July 20, 2007

TO: Ruekert-Mielke, Fitchburg Plan Commission, Town of Dunn

FROM: Elaine Andrews and Christopher Honeyman, 3142 View Rd.

RE: Comments about the City of Fitchburg- Northeast draft Neighborhood Plan

Thank you for Ruekert-Mielke's conscientious efforts to engage the community surrounding Fitchburg's NE neighborhood in the planning process. While we feel that RM is inflexibly supportive of applying Fitchburg's urban land use plan goals to this rural area – both in the tone of its presentation and in the acceptance of Fitchburg's guidelines about population density, we recognize that RM has made substantial efforts to explore and accommodate NE community concerns in their draft plans, maps, and recommendations. We encourage acceptance of many positive elements of the draft report, but would appreciate attention to values expressed by RM that may not reflect the values of the community surrounding the NE Neighborhood.

Sample RM overt support for stated Fitchburg goals:

The neighborhood is **designed to respect the City's policies** with regard to residential development **at urban densities**" (Plan highlights and land use, Summer, 7/12/2007)

The initial review of opportunities and issues in the Northeast Neighborhood illuminates the fact that this plan is being undertaken in a timely fashion for **an area that has a high degree of potential from nearly every angle, and few restrictive limitations**. (draft report, p. 16)

We would like to encourage the Fitchburg Plan Commission to accept several positive elements of the draft proposal:

1. Variety in proposed land uses and range of population density within the designated area.
2. Attention to the topography of the area and land use design that complements the topography and considerations for the woodland environment.
3. Designated recreational opportunities and open space availability
4. Delineation of wetlands and recommendations for buffers
5. Situation of housing lot design to provide a gradual transition from a dense area near MM to the rural setting on Larson Road.

We would also like to encourage the Fitchburg Plan Commission to consider several revisions:

1. Revise the overall required population density requirements for this area to more closely reflect the region's rural quality. Urban densities are not consistent with a rural quality of life

and their imposition may reduce property values for the area. This trend applies particularly as the development moves east from MM.

2. Identify solutions to a general concern about problems likely to arise from directing traffic from the proposed subdivision to Meadowview Road – the most convenient route to the Beltline going east and to the new Walmart Super Store. Meadowview Road is not designed to support urban levels of traffic – either in the quality of its road surface or in its width. There is no protection for pedestrians using the roadway for recreation. At the current level of vehicle use, the rural nature of Meadowview Road is not a safety or maintenance problem, but road surface quality and safety would be problematic with substantially increased use from the proposed subdivision.

3. Reduce access from the subdivision to Larsen Road. In particular, please note that the proposed access to Larsen Road across from Nora Lane is very close to the proposed access to Meadowview. Is there a need for two eastern exit points so close together? Nora Lane is a narrow residential street with no sidewalks. The Meadowview subdivision is populated largely by families with small children. Increased access to Nora Lane is likely to lead to increased vehicle traffic and speeding through the Meadowview subdivision and potential accidents with pedestrians, especially children.

4. Review the proposed route for the road linking E. Clayton Road with the proposed subdivision that goes through the woodland area and over the drumlin. The positioning of this road is crucial, as it would be easy to cause an unsightly change to what is now a beautiful area.

5. Carefully review any proposal to change the layout of the E. Clayton bike path.

We'd also like to make a general comment about the process. Typically, when a governmental unit is proposing such a large scale change, there should be an effort to review potential impacts on the quality of life of the surrounding community. The RM study does not address this issue at all. While area residents have had an opportunity to respond to planning elements, residents have not been objectively studied to determine or incorporate their values and preferences related to economic, cultural, and lifestyle issues. Not only does the community surrounding the proposed subdivision value the views, aesthetic appeal, and wildlife of the farmland and surrounding woodlands, but it also uses the area for walking and biking, including use by families and children. Current uses will be severely altered by the proposed development. How is Fitchburg working with the Town of Dunn to investigate and develop ways to mitigate these impacts?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.