

July, 23, 2010

Dear Commissioners,

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the Special Meeting on July 27, for your continued consideration of the proposed G&V PUD revisions.

I appreciate the previous discussions that have taken place regarding this matter, and the additional, positive revisions to the proposal that have been made to date. However, as I stated during the Public Hearing on July 13, I still have some serious concerns regarding the proposed PUD.

One, I question whether criteria to develop under a PUD are being met, and is a PUD truly required in order to develop the property. Since the primary purpose of the original PUD was to allow some mixed use on the property, it would appear that the FB- overlay would accomplish this goal (provide flexibility, residential, office, commercial). The original PUD, after a great deal of input and discussion, allowed limited (35,000 sq ft) office/restaurant/retail. This was intentional on the part of both the Planning Commission and the City Council.

I understand the relatively restrictive/controlled plan presently in place, and the request for development flexibility. However, flexibility can be accomplished through the use of FB-1 Form Based development, not increased restaurant/retail square footage.

This brings me to my primary concern, the sustainability of additional restaurant/retail (50,000 sq ft) development. As I mentioned before, this is equivalent to placing another sixteen 5/3rd bank buildings along Rochester Road, or one side of downtown Rochester (University to Second streets) along Rochester Road. Besides the look and complete change in character to this segment of Rochester Road, I do not believe it's sustainable now or into the future.

There was a moratorium on retail/commercial development in the late 80s, early 90s due to the concern of over development of retail/commercial space that could not be sustained. Even as the present Master Land Use Plan was being approved, Planning and Council were well aware that Rochester Hills was already over developed with retail. Now that the economy has taken the present disastrous downturn, over development of retail/commercial space is very apparent with many empty buildings/shopping centers. Have you asked for a full count of the empty office/restaurant/retail/commercial spaces in our community, at least along Rochester Road?

Again, I certainly appreciate all the discussion that took place July 13 regarding the PUD revision, but I heard very little discussion or concern about the proposed square footage increase of office/restaurant/retail (75,000 vs the original 35,000). I believe you, as our Planning Commissioners, have an obligation to our community's future to discuss in depth the sustainability of further retail/commercial development in Rochester Hills. The world has changed. What do we want and need to do for a viable, sustainable future?

Does this development do either? As our planners, before you make your recommendation to Council regarding the proposed G&V PUD revision, please let the community hear valid discussion on the above.

Sincerely,

Melinda Hill