

Dear
Mr. Anderson,

I'm
a neighbor of the Wildwood Manor Shopping Center on Berkshire Drive (Aubinoe property - 82008024b) and wanted to take this opportunity to share my concerns about the proposed site plan.

I
also wanted to take a moment to thank Amy Lindsey for discussing the plans with us. She's twice met with neighbors at some length after work, to answer a range of questions about the plans and the requirements. I'm grateful for her hard work on this project as well as her insight and engagement.

Before
moving to Wildwood Manor in 2016, my family lived in downtown Bethesda. There, we enjoyed the convenience and ability to walk to so many shops and restaurants. The Wildwood shopping center was a big draw for us when we decided to move, and we frequent both it and the medical building on the Aubinoe property.

My
concerns are that the proposed plan is too much building on too little space, and that the neighborhood will be negatively impacted. I understand that the owner wishes to make the most of this property and that this proposal is within the requirements of the Master Plan. But I don't believe it complies with the intention of the plan, which is that the commercial areas should be compatible with the established residential neighborhoods, not dominate them.

A
couple of specific concerns:

- I'm afraid that a new building - built on the existing parking lot - will encourage employees, visitors and residents to park on our street - making it more crowded and less safe. While the underground parking plan meets the minimum standard, it may be less convenient and more costly than parking on Wildwood Manor's residential streets. And a cut-through to Berkshire drive was recently added to accommodate the fact that the building is too large and the lot too small to allow a fire truck to leave the property any other way.
- As planned, the green space adjacent to Berkshire will not provide a visual barrier between our homes and the headlights of building visitors turning into the underground parking garage. The existing board-on-board fence does a good job of creating a visual separation, and we'd like to suggest maintaining at least that much of a barrier. As planned, we will also see and hear trucks that service the building at all hours both coming and going, beeping as they back out of the service bay. The proposed barbecue area and bocce court would be directly in front of my home and my girls' bedrooms.

If

the proposed building were situated closer to Old Georgetown Road, I truly don't think we'd be so concerned. But this plan maintains the lower profile buildings on the busy, commercial road, and places the multi-story mixed-use development directly adjacent to single-family homes. We'd be grateful for any efforts on the board's part to mitigate the impact of this project on our neighborhood - specifically to maintain or even enhance the barrier, as well as ensuring that the needs of the proposed building can be accommodated within the property.

We

love Wildwood Manor and our amazing neighbors, and we feel very fortunate to live here. Our kids walk to the bus stop in the morning, and ride their bikes in the streets on the weekend. In our own small yard, we've seen deer, foxes, bunnies, hummingbirds and hawks. I'm telling you, It's weirdly bucolic while being so convenient and urban. That's why we feel so protective of what we have, and are hopeful for a plan that makes sense in this environment.

I

look forward to attending the planning board meeting, but in the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

All

the best,

Thea

Joselow

6213

Berkshire Drive

301.332.1332

November 17, 2018

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Re: Plan Number 82008024B; Aubinoe plan for Wildwood Manor Shopping Center

Dear Chair Anderson:

We live at 6308 Berkshire Drive, five houses north of the Aubinoe parcel for which the indicated application has been submitted. We've had the opportunity to look at the proposed plan at three community get-togethers and have a number of concerns regarding the proposal.

1. Berkshire Drive traffic and safety after and during construction: Even though it is relatively narrow (three lanes total), Berkshire Drive presently serves as a collector street for both the older (1950s or so vintage) and newer (late 1990s vintage) parts of the Wildwood residential community. It has not only traffic from residents, but delivery trucks, repair vehicles, school buses, etc. While the newer areas have sidewalks on both sides, the older areas do not seem to have any sidewalks, with the exception of a new one installed along the east side of the particular Aubinoe parcel under consideration. Although this is helpful, it does not go along the entire backside of the Wildwood Shopping Center and is on only one side of the street. As a result, there are invariably people walking in the streets, whether students going to/from school, parents taking children for walks or pushing baby carriages along, people out for jogs or walking their pets, people walking to from the bus-stops for Metro and RideOn bus, young and older bike riders, etc.

Berkshire Drive is also not flat, having a hill and then a dip and then back up to a slight curve, and cars and people can get hidden when driving along, especially as when walking one wants to be on the side of the street facing the traffic so one can be prepared for what is coming. As long as there are no cars parked on Berkshire Drive, things work pretty well, with most people driving toward the middle of the road, unless another car is coming, to keep a distance from (a) any pedestrians walking along, or perhaps suddenly appearing out of one of the doorway-sized exits coming out of Wildwood Shopping Center; (b) cars turning on to Berkshire from streets in the older part of the Wildwood residential area that don't have good visibility, etc. With occasional cars parked on Berkshire, generally in front of the few homes that front the part of Berkshire behind the entire shopping center, drivers are generally going slowly enough that they can pull over and wait for a driver coming in the other direction to proceed rather than force three abreast traffic (especially if other vehicle is a truck, school bus, etc.). With the recent construction going on at the south end of the main part of the Wildwood Shopping Center, we have had the experience the last few months of dealing with parking on both sides of Berkshire, and this is very problematic, with one vehicle having to wait, especially when pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. are on the road and want to get through. We've no objection to waiting a bit, but not everyone does. With the conflicting situations and the hilly nature of the road, the visibility for making safe decisions is really compromised.

If the development occurs and leads to parking along Berkshire (as seems inevitable given the current plan), a further problem is that vehicles heading north on Berkshire at some point will need to get turned around so they can return to Cheshire Drive. While residents can turn around at their homes, for those coming to the Aubinoe parcel will face a more challenging situation. Berkshire Drive would be wide enough for three-point turns were there no parking, the hill and dip situation will make it potentially quite dangerous. And if there are cars parked on the street, three-point turnarounds would be both difficult and dangerous. The alternatives also have problems; for example: (a) the side street intersections are pretty small and often seem to have nearby resident parking; (b) most trucks go well into the newer part of Wildwood to use the cul-de-sac or the intersection at the end of the road to turn around; or (c) drive around the block, which is problematic because the blocks are pretty large and the streets are quite narrow and often have cars parked in front of the homes on both sides (this not being so serious for residents on these roads as these roads are not really collector streets).

Pretty clearly, Berkshire is just not wide enough to have increased parking, especially if permitted on both sides of the street, now or in the future, and opening up a major access to the Aubinoe parcel certainly has the potential to increase parking along Berkshire, and if not allowed there, along the other narrow roads in the neighborhood. In our view, whatever is done really needs to be set up so as not to attract additional cars or delivery vehicles to use or park along Berkshire and in the residential areas near there. At the very least, parking would need to be limited to one side of the road, and steps would be needed so that there is not Aubinoe-related parking on the streets that intersect Berkshire. It at all possible, the fence and vegetation barrier along Berkshire Drive should be maintained.

The parking and safety problems discussed above seem likely to become especially an issue during construction, when the construction-restricted parking on the site would likely lead workers to park on Berkshire (as is happening now with the present construction project). We would urge a provision be added to any approval that would prohibit any vehicle parking along Berkshire by those involved in the construction, and indeed, would urge not allowing parking on more than one side of Berkshire at any time. In addition, construction related vehicles, especially those that are wider than normal should be prohibited from using Berkshire Drive.

- 2. Aubinoe parcel on-site parking after and during construction:** Being so near the shopping center, we frequently walk over to the shops there (and our dentist used to have his office in the existing Medical Building); it is all wonderfully convenient. In doing this, we have noted that the parking lots for the Medical Building are often quite full, as is the Balducci's lot. In looking at the site plan, the amount of surface parking around the Medical and proposed new building seems to go down substantially. Presumably, the required parking for those coming to, working in, or living in the present and new buildings must then be in the proposed underground garage. Given the current design creates a pretty involved entry into the underground garage, some sort of requirement or incentive (even more than free parking) should be required to encourage tenants of the medical building, shop owners and employees, and the occupants of the new building to park in the underground location. If this is not done, it would seem that there will be an unfortunate incentive for those based at the Aubinoe complex to park on Berkshire (which is not at all desirable, as indicated

above) or on the nearby side streets, which would be very troublesome, especially if the combined physical and visibility barrier between the Aubinoe property and Berkshire Drive is not maintained.

This parking problem seems likely to be particularly severe during the construction phase, when construction vehicles will surely need be taking up some of the parking spaces on the Aubinoe parcel. Indeed, it would seem that the construction process would have the potential to greatly disrupt the parking and traffic flow (a) around the Medical building, (b) along the Old Georgetown Road side of the project, and (c) in the northeast corner of the Balducci parking lot. With the underground parking not available until after construction, we do not see how serious disruption can be avoided for both the onsite businesses and the surrounding neighborhood.

- 3. Vehicle and service access to the proposed building after construction:** While there are a number of parking locations for automobiles, the site plan does not seem to show temporary, near-to-the-entrance parking by food and package delivery vehicles, ambulances and Metro special needs vehicles, etc. while providing services for residents and those occupying the shops and offices. The streets do not seem wide enough to allow easy passing of such temporary parking (or double parking) nor to allow such vehicles to turn around. With the official front of the building facing west on the proposed “private” road (that is needed also for passage to the main part of Wildwood), it would seem that there needs to be a pull-out zone if all sorts of traffic snarls along the front private road are to be avoided. We just do not view the proposal that all vehicles delivering or picking up residents (e.g., taxis, Uber, etc., especially as those in 55-plus apartments may, at least at times in their lives, be using walkers, etc.), delivery trucks, etc. are going to find or use spaces that are not near the entrance and be able to maneuver in and out without causing all sorts of traffic congestion.

We also expect that temporary parking and congestion caused by delivery vehicles (e.g., Fed Ex, UPS, USPS, etc.) to the proposed shops seem likely to have the effect of blocking up the relatively narrow roadways needed to get to the underground parking area. We just do not think that the issue of where delivery trucks (e.g., pizzas, flowers, packages, etc.) and vehicles (e.g., friends, taxis, Uber, etc.) are going to park for short-term deliveries and drop-off and pick-up has been adequately thought through and accounted for.

In our view, much more accommodation is needed to ensure easy circulation and short- and long-term parking, or the attraction of those who might operate shops or might live there is likely going to drop so low that there will be all sorts of vacancies and the developers will end up with a white elephant or be petitioning to weaken the over-55 constraint on occupancy.

- 4. Berkshire Road access for emergency vehicles needs to not facilitate jay-walking and jay-scooting, etc.:** While it is understandable that access and egress needs to be provided for fire trucks, it seems to us vital that the entry point not be a location where bicycles, motorized scooters, etc. simply dump out onto Berkshire Drive. We raise this point because there is considerable neighborhood traffic on Berkshire Drive and great care will be needed to make sure that all interactions are safe. The best way to do this would seem to be to retain the existing fence, which has only narrow sidewalks for pedestrian access and egress

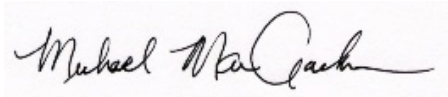
to the overall Wildwood Center. A second option would be to put in a pullout lane so that those coming out of the Aubinoe parcel have a bit of space to realize they are no longer in the shopping center, but are directly interfacing with cross traffic, etc. A third alternative to the proposed bollards, which have spaces between them that would allow through bicycle egress, would be some kind of gate (I would think opening one gate would be easier for the fire department than moving several bollards) or an offsetting fence that makes sure any passage requires making multiple turns over a short distance, so would slow down those passing through on bicycles, scooters, etc.

- 5. Disrupting the neighborhood character:** Since its beginning, there has been a fence that separates the neighborhood from the shopping center, high enough so there are not views of what is on the other side. This has been an important asset for the residential community for six decades or so. While the frequent sirens of fire and ambulance vehicles on Old Georgetown Road and I-270 remind those living here that we are in a very developed area of the County, the fence plays a very important aesthetic role, helping us all feel part of a distinct residential community. In trying to jam so much into the Aubinoe-proposed building that the Fire Department is requiring a breaching of the long-standing fence and associated vegetation, seems a significant over-reach by the developers and one that will create a much more visual and sound connection of the community to the shopping center's traffic and the busyness of Old Georgetown Road. If the fence does indeed have to be breached, we would urge retaining as much of the existing new fence and vegetation as possible. In general, however, our view is that this project is just much more than should be jammed onto the limited space available next to a neighborhood that for over 60 years has existed as distinct and separated from the shopping center. It is not that there is not a right to develop the parcel, but this should not be to the detriment of its longtime neighbors.
- 6. Bicycle trail:** Our concern regarding the proposed trail is safety at its endpoints, on Old Georgetown Road and on Berkshire Drive. Setting the end points up so that riders cannot just continue freely past the end of the trail without encountering cross-traffic needs to be very clear (and this would apply for pedestrians and cyclists as well). We also presume some sort of arrangement would be made that to exclude motorcycles and vehicles. This passage will likely become a major route to Walter Johnson School and so making sure the interfaces between trail users and the traffic are safe will be quite important.
- 7. Storm water interface:** We are encouraged that the developers are planning to deal with storm-water runoff. As a climate change scientist, I (Michael) would just note that there are century-long trends on all continents (save Antarctica) showing that the fraction of precipitation coming in extremely heavy events is increasing as a result of climate change. I would hope that Montgomery County is updating its standards and including projected changes in its setting of the standards; otherwise the storm water management systems being designed will be overwhelmed in the future, causing water to be rushing down the older streets in the Wildwood area, which could lead to significant damage.
- 8. A much better possible alternative:** With all the problems the Aubinoe parcel construction would present, we would like to suggest a possible alternative for the developers that

would be much less costly to construct and really contribute to solving problems rather than creating them. Our suggested alternative would be to keep the land proposed for the building as a parking lot and to cover the parking spaces with a solar array set up on pillars to serve as a roof (or series of roofs) that would shade the parked cars. In that the proposed building site is on the southern side of the Medical building, the area has an excellent solar exposure (toward the south and the west). All that would need to be done would be to take down a few trees, realign the parking lanes, and then install the system. The array could provide power for the Medical building and more, adding energy to the local electric system at a location that seems to be a bit of a distance from where power is otherwise added to the grid. To fit in an even larger system, one might also utilize the space on the roof of the existing building and to seek an agreement to similarly cover the Balducci parking lot and perhaps even more of the shopping center parking area. Such an effort would be in good accord with the County's efforts to go green. We've had PV solar system on our roof for six years and it has performed wonderfully (and newer systems are even better). Covering the parking area with an elevated solar ray would seem to benefit the developer (a relatively low investment for a reasonable return on investment because there would be no need to keep the shops and the apartments rented and to pay for significant building and site maintenance, benefit those who park there (shade on sunny days), not upset the neighborhood, and do something positive for the environment (being a pace setter in the area).

Given the indicated problems with the proposed development and projected impacts on the community and traffic and safety in the community, we would urge the Planning Board to, preferably, turn down the project, and, if not, impose conditions that would ameliorate the traffic, safety and community character issues that are raised above. Better yet, we'd urge the developer to reconsider their proposal and instead retain the space as parking and mount solar cells above the parking spaces. If additional revenue is needed, then slip a modest-sized restaurant or similar establishment in under the solar cells to the extent that two layers of underground parking and other expensive site costs are not required. Were that done, the neighborhood and developers could celebrate a pioneering project together.

Respectfully yours,



Michael and Sandra MacCracken
6308 Berkshire Drive
Bethesda MD 20814
mmaccrac@comcast.net
Tel. 301-564-4255

Copy to:

Ms. Amy Lindsey, Montgomery County Planning Department
Amy.Lindsey@montgomeryplanning.org

Casey Anderson,Chair
Montgomery County Planing Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring,Maryland

Regarding Site Plan #82008024B, a 5 -story apartment and retail building proposed by Alan Aubinoe Wildwood Medical Center, LLC,to be built directly across Berkshire Drive from Wildwood Manor homes.

Dear Chairman Anderson:

As neighbors whose house is on the corner of Berkshire Drive and Chatsworth Lane, We are concerned that if the Aubinoe project is built, people will park on these neighborhood streets, especially if the number of on-site parking spaces is limited or people have to pay for parking. The side walk we have now does not go to the length of Berkshire Drive so people would walk in the street, and there is a school bus stop located on Berkshire. We feel this would be accident waiting to happen.

The existing wooden fence that Aubinoe has now along Berkshire should be allow to stand, and a solid locked gate should be installed on the proposed emergency access route so fire and rescue vehicles could get in when needed. The solid gate would block headlights glare from vehicles going into the proposed building parking garage. The wooden fence and gate,plus additional landscaping would provide visual and noise screening and help prevent lighting from shining into neighborhood homes.

Sincerely, Jean and James Waldron

Dear Planning Commission:

My name is Mikhail Zhurkin, and I live at 6213 Berkshire Drive — on the other side of Berkshire Drive from the proposed Aubinoe Management development on the corner of Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Boulevard (Wildwood Manor Shopping Center Parcel C - 82008024b)

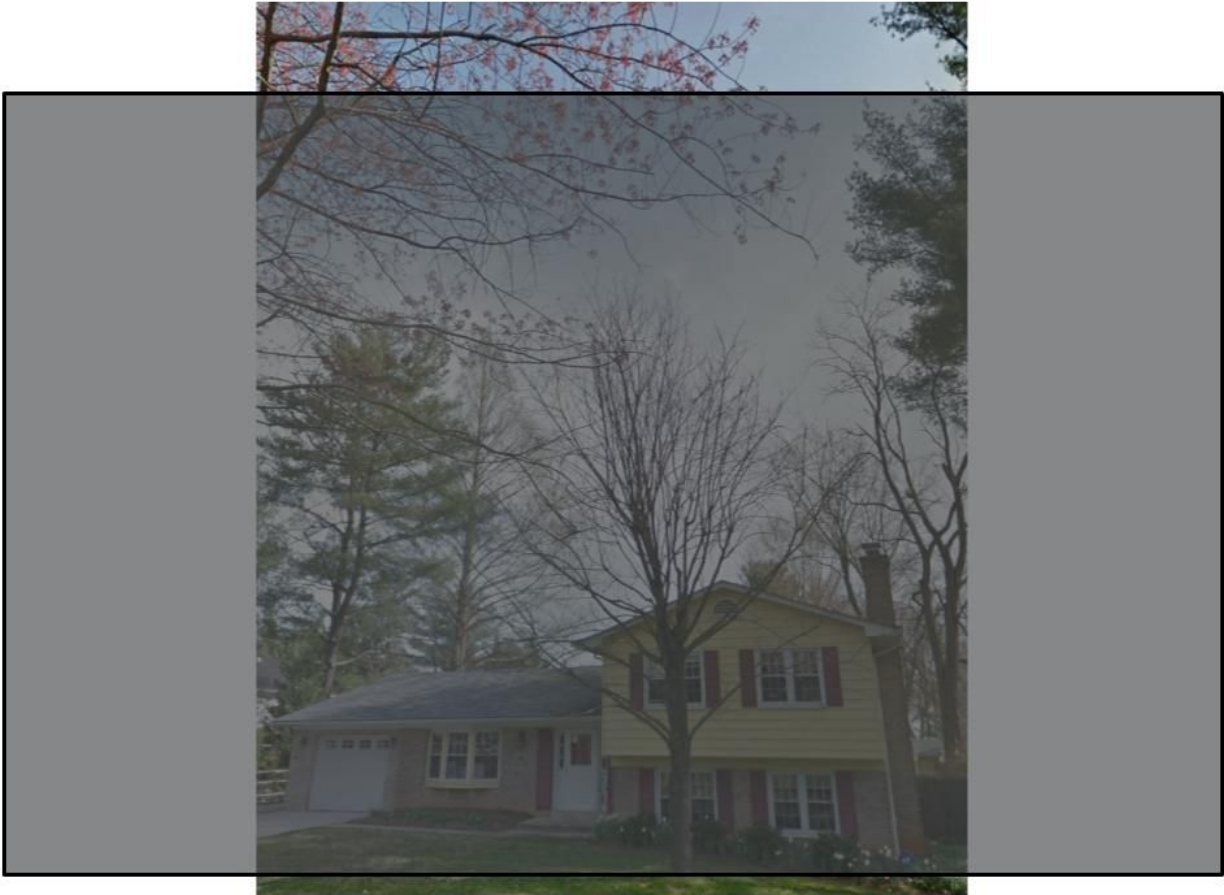
While I by no means oppose development (including development of that specific property) the current site plan worries me greatly. Allow me to get right to the facts.

This is the house where my daughters Julia (5 y.o.), Veronica (8 y.o.), my wife Thea, and myself currently live, as depicted by Google StreetView:



The highest point of the house roof is 21 feet from the ground level.

This is the view of the house with the outline of the proposed building's facade overlaid over the house image (H-50 plus 8 feet of allowable architectural decorative elements — measured, as proposed in the site plan, from the Old Georgetown Road frontage of the lot, despite the fact that the lot's elevation slopes more than 10 feet down to the Berkshire Drive.)



This is the current view out of the bedroom window of my 8 year old daughter, Veronica:



If the building is constructed according to the currently proposed plan, the building will be virtually all we see. In addition, simple astronomical calculations show that if the building is constructed as proposed, the front of our house will receive direct sunlight for less than one hour per day 4 months of the year.

I believe that the dimensions and specifics of the proposed building as currently outlined in the site plan are not compatible with the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood, and that the proposed development goes completely against the spirit of the Development Master Plan's aims to create more harmonious, character-consistent and integrated environments around the newly developed area.

Furthermore, the proposed development plan will increase the flow of cars to the retail area (which by itself is wonderful and spurs business development.) However, any parking overflow already results in the Wildwood Shopping Center visitors parking their cars on Berkshire Drive.

This is the Berkshire Drive a few dozen feet south from our house:



This is what this road looks like with cars parked on each side of the road, each one positioned less than 12 inches away from the curb — completely in accordance with parking rules and local ordinances.

This leaves 16 foot-wide area for a car to pass through. Width of the e.g. 2015 Chevrolet Silverado — frequently used by the landscaping crews, as well as by MCDOT — is 80.5", leaving a little over 9 feet to pass by anyone on the roadway (there are no sidewalks) and greatly reducing freedom of maneuver in any emergency. A regular school bus traveling through a 16 foot wide opening leaves only 7.5 feet of open space total on both sides.

This situation gets worse if one takes into account natural lines of sight and curvatures of the road:



The bicycle seen in the earlier picture is still between the two cars on the road — but the earliest anyone driving over this hill would see the bicycle (and a child who would be riding it) is from approximately 120 feet away.

If a car is traveling even 10 mph over the posted speed limit of 25 mph (which is unfortunately all too common,) these lines of sight would give the driver less than 2.5 seconds to notice anything in the roadway, identify it, decide on the course of action, and react accordingly.

With the cars parked on each side of the road, the room to steer around any obstacle is greatly reduced, and a child on a bicycle has less than 2.5 seconds to notice a coming car, identify the nature of the challenge, make the plan of action, and react accordingly (while correctly guessing which side of the open area the oncoming car is aiming at) in order to position themselves inside a small remaining safe pocket.

If this happens to a group of children whose attention is taken up by play, as so often happens — the problem is exacerbated further, time available for decision is greatly reduced, potential for confusion is greater, and relatively simple mishaps can easily become extremely dangerous.

In addition, if this takes place in the afternoon — the time of high retail activity for the Wildwood center — and happens to coincide with the time of the school bus doing afternoon drop-offs, any cross-traveling traffic will detour through side streets or find open “pockets” between parked cars, which are already too few and far between during times of peak parking demand.

Drivers taking unusual routes, possibly confused and frustrated about necessary route changes, and doing it under additional perceived time pressure (in case of e.g. delivery vehicles) are more likely to create situations that would be incredibly dangerous to pedestrians or children playing in the neighbourhood, especially in the narrow roadways with limited lines of sight.

I believe that the amount of the currently proposed parking as outlined in the site plan, as well as very high likelihood of parking fees being charged, will result in massive overflow of parked cars on Berkshire Drive, and will both impede local traffic and endanger any pedestrians happening to be on the road at the time.

I believe that this aspect of the proposed development on that lot goes completely against the grain and spirit of the Development Master Plan which aims to “encourage a more sustainable, connected, and pedestrian-friendly development pattern.”

For the above reasons, I strongly urge you to reject the proposed development plan, or to apply significant modifications to it before it can be allowed to go forward.

Respectfully yours,

Mikhail Zhurkin.

Dear Chairperson Anderson,

We have been made aware that the Planning Board has a meeting scheduled for December 20th, 2018 to review the Preliminary Plan No. 11989271C and Site Plan No. 82008024B.

As we have affected neighbors and two Neighborhood Associations that this development affects, unfortunately the date of December 20th conflicts with holiday travel plans for many homeowners who would like to have the opportunity to testify and have their voices heard by the planning board.

We respectfully request to have the meeting moved to a date in January, or one that is not during the Christmas holiday week. Additionally, we would like to request that an evening meeting time be scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of neighbors who are unable to attend a daytime meeting.

Please let us know at your earliest convenience and we thank you for your kind consideration.

Best regards,

Linda Lizzio, President
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

Michael Villa, President
Wildwood Estates Homeowner's Association

Dear Chairperson Anderson,

I hope you and your family had a nice Thanksgiving Holiday!

I'm not sure that you saw my message below, so I'm resending it.
Please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,
Linda Lizzio, President
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

On 11/15/18, 5:43 PM, "Linda Lizzio" <Linda.Lizzio@Longandfoster.com> wrote:

Dear Chairperson Anderson,

We have been made aware that the Planning Board has a meeting scheduled for December 20th, 2018 to review the Preliminary Plan No. 11989271C and Site Plan No. 82008024B.

As we have affected neighbors and two Neighborhood Associations that this development affects, unfortunately the date of December 20th conflicts with holiday travel plans for many homeowners who would like to have the opportunity to testify and have their voices heard by the planning board.

We respectfully request to have the meeting moved to a date in January, or one that is not during the Christmas holiday week. Additionally, we would like to request that an evening meeting time be scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of neighbors who are unable to attend a daytime meeting.

Please let us know at your earliest convenience and we thank you for your kind consideration.

Best regards,

Linda Lizzio, President
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

Michael Villa, President
Wildwood Estates Homeowner's Association