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**From:** Karin Bolte <kbolte6008@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022 12:00 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** 2/24/2022 WMCA Item 5 Hearing Testimony

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman Anderson:

Please see the attached testimony of the Wildwood Manor Citizens Association for tomorrow's hearing.

Sincerely,

Karin Bolte  
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

February 24, 2022

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

**RE: Item 5 -- Alvin Aubinoe/Wildwood Medical Center – Part of Parcel C,  
Preliminary Plan 11989271D and Site Plan 82008024C**

Dear Chairman Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

On behalf of the Wildwood Manor Citizens Association (WMCA), I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony on the Alvin Aubinoe/Wildwood Medical Center LLC amendments relating to the 5-story mixed-use building approved with conditions by the Planning Board in early 2019. The subject property is immediately adjacent to the Wildwood Shopping Center property owned by Federal Realty Investment Trust and directly across the street from Wildwood Manor single-family homes along Berkshire Drive.

First, WMCA is concerned by the amendments' request to increase the property's gross tract area (GTA) from 152,367 SF (or 3.497 acres) to 186,815 SF (or 4.288 acres)<sup>1</sup> by including land that was dedicated as public right-of-way decades ago. This would be a 22.6% increase above the current GTA figure!

Given that this appears to be a significant change in the way the property's GTA is calculated, and the applicant's acknowledgment in its Statement of Justification that "[t]here is no change to the amount of existing and proposed development on the subject property being requested in this amendment..."<sup>2</sup>, WMCA urges the Planning Board to postpone approving the requested GTA increase at this time in order to allow for further consideration of this issue. Not only would including this public right-of-way in GTA calculations increase the GTA figure and the allowed density for this property, but it could also serve as precedent with implications for other properties in Montgomery County. Assuming that current development/density standards/requirements are based on GTA as currently calculated, it appears that increasing these GTA figures without also adjusting development standards and requirements could allow for more development/density than intended or appropriate.

Second, as stated in the March 22, 2019 Planning Board Resolution MCPB No. 19-006 but not included in the current Staff Report: "In response to community concerns about compatibility, the Planning Board required the Applicant to maintain the existing six-foot board-on-board privacy-fence adjacent to the Berkshire Drive right-of-way. . . and add

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<sup>1</sup> Aubinoe/Wildwood Medical Center LLC "Statement of Justification," August 12, 2021, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Id.

additional native landscaping along the Property frontage of Berkshire Drive within the right-of-way”<sup>3</sup> in order to shield the property from the immediately adjacent single-family homes. WMCA requests that this requirement be retained and included in the Planning Board resolution resulting from this hearing.

In addition, WMCA again requests that the applicant install a solid gate -- rather than bollards -- across the emergency vehicle access point to the property along Berkshire Drive. MCPB No. 19-006 notes that the “bollards may be replaced by a gate/fence, subject to Planning Staff and DPS Fire and Emergency Services Staff review and approval. The gate must be designed to restrict vehicular movement and open for emergencies and select events only. When open for select events, vehicular access must be prohibited, except for emergency service vehicles.”<sup>4</sup> It is our understanding from conversation with Planning staff that a gate has been approved,<sup>5</sup> but it is important to our community that this be confirmed in the Planning Board resolution resulting from this hearing.

WMCA has legitimate concerns about increased parking and traffic on our neighborhood streets as the result of this new building. The proposed increase in dwelling units from 60 to 72 only exacerbates this concern. The approved number of surface parking spaces next to the building appears to be only 13; most parking spaces for this building will be in an underground parking garage reached by an awkwardly located garage entrance at the northeast corner of the building.

Age-restricted (55+) dwelling units were approved for this building, per Montgomery County requirement. We understand that the county has removed, or soon will remove, this requirement, and the applicant therefore is likely to request its removal for this property, which could also result in an increased number of residents’ vehicles. Federal Realty Investment Trust is likely to aggressively enforce parking restrictions on its adjacent Wildwood Shopping Center property.

All of these circumstances would likely increase the number of Aubinoe property-related vehicles whose drivers want handy, easily accessible surface parking on adjacent Wildwood Manor streets, especially Berkshire Drive. WMCA again emphasizes the importance of the fence, solid emergency gate, and plantings to shield our community from the building and discourage building residents, staff, visitors, and customers from using Wildwood Manor’s neighborhood streets as a surface parking lot. (Residents-only parking restrictions would not exclude Aubinoe property residents, and limited parking periods for non-residents’ parking would adversely affect Wildwood Manor residents’ visitors.)

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<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Planning Board Resolution, MCPB No. 19-006, Site Plan No. 82008024B, Wildwood Manor Shopping Center [Aubinoe property], March 22, 2019, p. 15, Date of Hearing: January 10, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Id. at p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> WMCA virtual meeting with Amy Lindsey, Planner III, Mid-County Planning, re: Aubinoe Proposal – November 30, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration of WMCA's concerns.

Sincerely,

Karin Bolte, Co-Chair, Development Committee  
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association