

Correspondence for Lexington Club PUD

Received since 5/14/12

Lexington Homes

05/30/2012 11:49 AM

From: <billryan510@comcast.net>

To: <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>

May 30, 2012

Dear Russell,

I am writing to you today to voice my concerns and questions, regarding the former Applied Composites site and its proposed redevelopment, by Lexington Homes. I would appreciate your acknowledgement and response to the following.

1. What obligation do you feel the City of St Charles has to help a developer that has made a poor decision in (knowingly) purchasing a contaminated parcel of land that is zoned for something other than residential? If you feel that there is some obligation please list for me your reasons.

2. I have attended many of the meetings held in regard to this proposed development. Even before the TIF was considered I had not heard nor seen any value that would be added to the City of St Charles as a result of approving this development. The City of St Charles compromised its values, previously established ordinances and comprehensive plan to help Lexington Homes develop 130 residential homes and townhomes on approximately 25 acres of land previously zoned for business. There have been questions regarding consultants that were used, land ownership and amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan. This development does not fit the surrounding residential area. The costs to the residents, the density, the quality of materials, the traffic congestion and affordable housing are issues that have not been adequately addressed by the developer to the satisfaction of the people attending the meetings, signing the petitions and writing letters. Yet the developer seems to have the City back peddling. If you are not convinced that this group (mentioned above) represents the rest of the city then ask other residents that have not attended meeting, signed petitions and written letters. How do the majority of the people you represent (and own property in that area) feel about this development?

3. In regard to the proposed TIF. Although this TIF is to be financed by a bank(s) instead of the use of bonds the end result would be a financial set back for someone if the development fails. Please consider the track record of the City with its other TIF (commercial) districts. Before we establish another TIF the City should be required to explain to the residents what the benefits have been of the other TIF districts in terms of increased property value, additional jobs created, changes in sales tax revenues, improved economic stability in said districts, and success in achieving land use goals. We/you need a scorecard for the above mentioned goals (and others) along with timeframes to know if we/you are successful or are failing. The residents of this city have something at stake regardless of how this development is financed! In the current economic climate with less than positive housing forecasts (except possibly

rental units) a TIF district to develop residential housing is NOT a good idea. Others questions that come to mind regarding this TIF: What would be the consequences if the developer and City do not succeed? Who will pay and how? What will the situation be if the land is more contaminated than originally predicted? (This situation happened in the city of Aurora with at least one down town river front development. I believe it will now be a city/park district funded facility. Should we review past situations like these to have a plan B proposed)? I am interested to know if you feel these are real concerns.

4. The TIF will set a precedent. This decision will be the driver for several other such properties in St Charles. Examples of other properties are the Shodeen Mall property, the old Smurfit/ Diamond International property, the east side Charlestown Mall to name just a few. Another bothersome aspect of this TIF is the legal fees, surveys, administration costs and analysis being rolled into the agreement?

I am aware that the city is in the process of considering many questions and aspects of the plan, and documents need to be finalized, prior to approval of the Lexington Club PUD, Redevelopment Plan and TIF. I am also mindful that during the course of events surrounding this proposed redevelopment, there have been opportunities, over the years, for the public to be heard, and that is appreciated. However, at this point in time, I feel as though much of what has been discussed and voice by the people has long been forgotten and no longer acknowledged.

Please add my letter to the public commentary in the Lexington Club PUD document packet, that will be made available to the Planning & Development Committee and all other governing bodies in this process. Thank you.

Cordially,

Bill Ryan

510 S 14th Street

St Charles IL

Lexington Club

06/15/2012 05:40 PM

From: Larry Bollaert <lbollaert@sbcglobal.net>

To: <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>

Hello Mr. Russel Colby,

This letter is about our neighborhood disapproving of the Lexington Club development. My home is at 912 Dean Street, which is located near the intersection of N. 9th St. I have been a resident most of my life. Now that I am a senior citizen, I want to live here the rest of my life in peace and quiet. The traffic is getting worse every year around here without having an additional traffic from this monster development

Our city does not need this development at this time. The economy is down and housing is down. We have many vacant homes in town due to foreclosures. We have at least four or five empty homes just in our area on Dean St. Large housing projects like this one are not happening over the past few years. We have a development going on west of Randall behind the bowling alley and Aldis. That started out as townhomes priced at \$400K and up. They didn't sell many if any at those prices. Then I heard that the prices went down to around \$250K to \$300K. Now they are building single family homes next to these 4 or 5 townhouses and another one by itself further east. I don't know how many acres this development, but it does include some commercial and/or retail lots near Aldis. This project has all the roads and sewers in place but hardly any buildings. Plenty of weeds growing beneath the signs on the lots advertising good deals.

Rentals - lets talk about this. Our city has plenty of rentals whether it's apartments, townhomes, condos, or even houses. Yeah, Houses!! In the area around my house I counted at least five rental houses and seven homes where the owners lived in them. What does that tell you?

Well, it tells me that houses aren't selling that much and some owners decided to rent them out. Add the house rentals to all of the other rentals in our city and other surrounding cities and we have a higher percentage of rentals than we used to have. You can check it out for yourself.

Lexington Club does not coincide with our neighborhood either. We have mostly single family homes, no townhouses, a few apts.. This project lowered the number of homes to 28 and kept the number of townhouses at over 100. Oh yeah, they dropped the rowhouses too.

The entire project is too large and too dense. I don't think that our city has a subdivision with 100 townhomes. There is probably a mix with apts. and maybe homes too. Whatever, this development could end up with a lot of rentals down the road if they can't sell them.

We are not against renters whether it be houses, townhouses, or apts.

Most of the renters that I know are decent lawbiding citizens. However, there are a small number of bad eggs that give all renters a bad reputatuon, The same goes for homeowners. Not all of them are good neighbors either. We can't really put the entire blame on people who rent. It's just the density - too many people in one area can cause problems for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Larry Bollaert

lexington homes development at the complied composite sight

07/16/2012 09:46 PM

From: <ewalsh26@comcast.net>

To: <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>, <jmonken@stcharlesil.gov>, <dstellato@stcharlesil.gov>, <rpaleyitner@stcharlesil.gov>, <ccarrignan@stcharlesil.gov>, <aldmartin@stcharlesil.gov>, <wturner@stcharlesil.gov>, <ebessner@stcharlesil.gov>, <jkrieger@stcharlesil.gov>, <rrogina@stcharlesil.gov>, <mlewis@stcharlesil.gov>

Good evening:

My names is James Walsh; I live at 21 N 5th Street in Saint charles. I am contacting you with my concerns regarding the proposed Lexington Homes development. I cannot understand why St Charles would consider spending millions of dollars on a TIF district to assist the developer when the developer knew the property had environmental issues. It would appear the city could have just purchased the property for less than the proposed TIF amount. What is the rationale for this TIF proposal?

Thank you in advace for your response.

James Walsh

Lexington Proposal

08/01/2012 07:06 PM

From: Mario VanDerHeyden <mariovanderheyden@yahoo.com>

To: "rcolby@stcharlesil.gov" <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>, "dstellato@stcharlesil.gov" <dstellato@stcharlesil.gov>, "jmonken@stcharlesil.gov" <jmonken@stcharlesil.gov>, "rpayleitner@stcharlesil.gov" <rpayleitner@stcharlesil.gov>, "ccarrignan@stcharlesil.gov" <ccarrignan@stcharlesil.gov>, "jkrieger@stcharlesil.gov" <jkrieger@stcharlesil.gov>, "aldrmartin@stcharlesil.gov" <aldrmartin@stcharlesil.gov>, "rrogina@stcharlesil.gov" <rrogina@stcharlesil.gov>, "wturner@stcharlesil.gov" <wturner@stcharlesil.gov>, "mlewis@stcharlesil.gov" <mlewis@stcharlesil.gov>, "ebessner@stcharlesil.gov" <ebessner@stcharlesil.gov>

Please respond to Mario VanDerHeyden <mariovanderheyden@yahoo.com>

Greetings,

My name is Mario VanDerHeyden of 115 N. 7th st, and property owner of 700 W. Main St. Lifelong resident of 7th street and concerned husband/parent of two young girls.

I am against the Lexington project as presented in each version for the following reasons:

- Neighborhood impact
- Density
- Traffic congestion and flow
- Developer TIF
- D303 impact
- Utility impact
- Lack of remediation by current owner

This developer paid too much and does not want to bear the burden of their poor decision. The city should not either.

I drive 86 miles round trip day since graduating college to live in St. Charles. I have no problem with the old zoning, and would argue very few people realize what is at the bottom of the hill. The last proposal does not make St. Charles a better place for the rest of the community. It would be an injustice to allow this scale of a project in the working neighborhood.

Thank you,

Mario VanDerHeyden

630.377.0073

Lexington Homes PUD

08/06/2012 03:40 PM

From: Linda Schmidt <schlinda@gmail.com>

To: <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>, <dstellato@stcharlesil.gov>, <jmonken@stcharlesil.gov>, <ccarrignan@stcharlesil.gov>, <rpayleitner@stcharlesil.gov>, <wturner@stcharlesil.gov>, <rrogina@stcharlesil.gov>, <aldermartin@stcharlesil.gov>, <jkrieger@stcharlesil.gov>, <ebessner@stcharlesil.gov>, <mlewis@stcharlesil.gov>, <jmartin@stcharlesil.gov>

Cc: <ccforss@gmail.com>

To our city leaders:

I have been a resident of St. Charles for 12 years. When I first moved here, the city was at its best. There was a good mix of independent retail and restaurant, the East Gateway/North Avenue corridor was almost 100% populated, even though there were some obvious signs of decline.

My community (Kingswood) has fought proposals, for the land behind Charleston Mall and backing up to Foxfield Drive, since the day I moved in. All of the residential plans that have been proposed have been far too dense for that land parcel and all seemed to have one objective – to squeeze as many residences in as possible for the greatest profit with no concern for the surrounding communities. Our objective as homeowners has never been to prevent improvements on that site, but to build responsibly so that existing schools, roads, and basic infrastructure would not be compromised and cause undue burden to nearby residents or other St. Charles citizens. After defending our cause with builder after builder, we had our greatest challenge ever with the crazy idea of building a Super Walmart right in the heart of a residential community, behind Charlestown Mall, with visibility from North Avenue blocked by the Mall.

Now, it seems that the Lexington Homes PUD is proposing a similar housing plan which again, appears to be too dense for the parcel of land. And, as I hear the surrounding areas resident's concerns, I feel that they are the same concerns we've voiced over the years. I understand that any potential builder is going to try and get as many units on the parcel of land as possible: more units built, more units sold = more money in their pocket. They will build and move on without worrying about the impact to the surrounding community and the people who live there.

As you meet on Monday, August 13th, I hope you'll honestly consider what the city will gain from the current proposed development. What exactly is owed to Lexington? Is the amount of revenue generated for the city and its residents really worth compromising the lifestyle of those in the immediate area of this proposed development? At a time when money is tight and the housing market is in decline, does our city really feel confident that having more housing is the direction to go? What about all the properties that are currently for sale and all the foreclosures on the market in our area? Will this be an area that when built and finished, will look good but stand empty?

Lexington bought this property with full disclosure. They knew the site had previously held a manufacturing plant. I'm sure a company such as Lexington did their due diligence on the state of the land prior to purchasing it to determine if there was industrial waste or any other cleanup that would be needed prior to building residential structures. If so, is it St. Charles' responsibility to make their plan work? Should we let them over-populate an area, just so they can break even or make a big profit? Should the current residents have to put up with an inordinate amount of traffic and overburdening to the infrastructure to make their investment worthwhile?

I hope when you meet to discuss this matter, you carefully consider what's right for the people who live in this neighborhood and question if the final decision is in the best interest of St. Charles. I'm sure the residents in this area recognize that something will be built on this parcel and their preference would be to see it developed instead of remaining in its current state. But, as tax paying citizens, our concerns for our homes and neighborhoods should be recognized and a reasonable solution agreed to for all parties involved.

While I am not directly involved and don't live near the area in question, I do realize that just because it's not happening in my backyard, decisions made will affect everyone's quality of life as well as impact all infrastructures all resident's in St. Charles support with their tax dollars. We are depending on our elected officials to represent our best interest.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this email.

Linda Schmidt

3731 King George Lane

St. Charles, IL 60174

RE: Lexington Club PUD

08/16/2012 05:15 PM

From: Deborah Jahn <dlj.sof@gmail.com>

To: <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>, <dstellato@stcharlesil.gov>, <jmonken@stcharlesil.gov>, <rpaleyitner@stcharlesil.gov>, <ccarrignan@stcharlesil.gov>, <jkrieger@stcharlesil.gov>, <jmartin@stcharlesil.gov>, <rrogina@stcharlesil.gov>, <wturner@stcharlesil.gov>, <mlewis@stcharlesil.gov>, <ebessner@stcharlesil.gov>

Hello,

We oppose Lexington Club PUD as currently proposed to planning and development and City Council.

Helmut & Deborah JAHN

Opposed to both the Lexington Club PUD and TIF

12/13/2012 02:53 PM

From: jthomasiokas <jthomasiokas@earthlink.net>

To: <wturner@stcharlesil.gov>

Cc: <rcolby@stcharlesil.gov>

Dear Alderman Turner,

I have written to you before to express my opposition to both the Lexington Club Pud and Lexington Club TIF. I want to reiterate some points: 1. 400 stakeholders signed petitions against the Lexington Club PUD.

2. Approximately 700 stakeholders (the final number is not known because some petitions have yet to be turned in) signed petitions against the Lexington Club TIF

3. The City's Priority Survey, which has a 95% accuracy rate shows that a minority of St. Charles residents agree or strongly agree that the City needs more housing of any type and that the farther one gets from single-family detached housing the smaller the minority is that is favorable.

4. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Amendment is the end result of a process which was rife with conflict of interest, misrepresentation, and failure to consider public input (the Transparency v. Opacity five part letter to the editor of the Patch, which you have been sent previously, will be included immediately following my remarks).

5. The members of 2R2R: River to Randall, Railway to Route 64, of which I am the Chairperson, are not opposed to responsible development on the former Applied Composites site. We have sent you a previous letter regarding our desire to see the new Comprehensive Plan reflect the fact that we would like to see either 74 to 80 single-family detached houses on the site (which would reflect both the density of the surrounding area and the type of structure predominant in the area) or to see a complex for independent and assisted living for seniors and handicapped service veterans). We might even be open to other type of development there. We merely want to see responsible development that will not unduly burden existing older neighborhoods with a flood of traffic.

6. Our issues with the TIF are even more numerous and complex. Suffice it to say, that we do not feel it is right to pay a developer twice for the same costs, in that the developer has not shown that the prices charged for his structures will not include a component for the precise work that he wants to be reimbursed for under the TIF. The developer willingly purchased the property, knowing full well what the issues were but he did not come before either the Planning and Development Committee or the City Council to discuss City participation in the costs before completing his purchase.

7. An election year for City offices is upcoming and citizens from throughout St. Charles will be watching to see if the City Council is making a stand in favor of responsible development or if it is favoring the profits of developers over what is best for the City and its citizens.

I urge you and the other Aldermen to vote against both the Lexington Club PUD and Lexington Club TIF when they come up for a vote.

Sincerely,

Joseph Masiokas, Chairperson of 2R2R

23 North 7th Street

TRANSPARENCY v. OPACITY

At a time when ‘transparency’ is one of the buzzwords in political discourse, we have a situation with Lexington Homes, the former Applied Composites property, and the Comprehensive Plan Amendment of 2007 that is murky, to say the least. It is practically a textbook case for how the system should not work.

Applied Composites went out of business in 2005. St. Charles—333 North Sixth Street, LLC purchased twenty-five plus acres of land, zoned for manufacturing, and several buildings from Applied Composites in August 2006 for \$3,825,000. The purchaser immediately took out a mortgage with J.P. Morgan Chase Bank for \$6,940,653. That means they got a \$3,115,653 tax-free windfall right out of the gate.

Who is St. Charles—333North Sixth Street, LLC? The listed representative is Ms. Marilyn Magafas, whose contact email address is at FAPLLC.com. Go to www.fapllc.com and you find yourself on the web page of First American Properties, LLC. The Chairman of the Board of FAPLLC is Ronald J. Benach, who throughout his four decade career in construction has owned 3-H Building Corporation, Lexington Homes, Concord Homes, and Lexington Homes, once again. By the way, Ms. Magafas is the long-time secretary of Mr. Benach. So, from the very beginning, Lexington Homes, LLC, which is one of several entities related to FAPLLC, has been and is the owner of the property.

In August 2006, there is communication between Mr. Robert Hupp, then Director of Community Development for the City of St. Charles, and Mr. Charles Hanlon of Land Vision, Inc. about doing a land use recommendation plan for Applied Composites and surrounding properties. At the September 11, 2006 Planning and Development Committee meeting Mr. Hupp told the Committee, “It was determined that with the potential for redevelopment of the former Applied Composites site it would be a good time to do a land use study for the property.” In recommending Land Vision to do the study, Mr Hupp said, “The consultant being recommended is also being employed by the developer of the site for their

Site Plan design...and the developer has agreed to reimburse the City for the cost of the study (\$29,457)." The study was approved by the City Council at its September 18, 2006 meeting. So, Land Vision was working for both the City and Lexington Homes and yet it was really only being paid by the developer. Now, that may not be illegal, but it certainly seems like there would have been a conflict of interest. It would be almost impossible for any person or agency in that position to do a fair and objective job.

In the proposal between Land Vision and the City of St. Charles, among the objectives listed was one that stated, "Provide strategies that provide for quality residential growth, positive environmental impacts, and general protection of the quality of life in the neighborhood." What I read there is that it was predetermined that the best use of the former Applied Composites property would be residential development rather than manufacturing or any other option. The validity of the 'study' was compromised from the very beginning because Land Vision was working for Lexington Homes; and Lexington Homes wanted to build houses and townhouses on the site.

Another stated objective was to, "Involve St. Charles stakeholders—residents, property owners, business people, open space advocates, and municipal officials—in the planning process in a meaningful way." Yes, there would be a couple of meetings where they would solicit opinions from the area residents, but those opinions were not reflected well in the final document that became the Comprehensive Plan Amendment of 2007. None of the residents who were present and involved wanted to see the density of housing that Lexington Homes eventually proposed for the site and none of them wanted to see townhomes or rowhomes there either. And as I will show later, even the input of the St. Charles Plan Commission members was ignored by the consultant. Ironically, the proposal contains this statement, "The objective of our project approach is to encourage stakeholders to articulate their vision, aspirations, expectations and desires for the future of the neighborhood; to generate enthusiasm for the vision; and to generate support for the planning process after the recommendations are adopted." Given the outcry from the neighborhood and the petition signed by 400 stakeholders against the Lexington Homes proposed PUD for the Applied Composites property, it would appear that objective was not met. In fact, one could easily say that involving the neighborhood stakeholders was nothing more than window dressing; nothing more than a failed attempt to give the actual process an air of legitimacy.

On February 15, 2007, an open house was held at Thompson Middle School for the stated purpose of gathering feedback regarding land use recommendations for the area including and around the Applied Composites site. The open house was attended by about 70 residents. In talking with those who attended, Lexington Homes displayed drawings and plans for possible units but kept stating that they had no firm development proposal. This reinforces the idea that the process was a sham because while the consultant and the City were stating that they wanted the public's input, the stakeholders were basically being told that residential was what they were going to get.

Attendees had concerns about the planning process, the clean-up of the property, the traffic that would be generated by a residential proposal, whether anything other than residential was being studied/recommended, and the number of children that would be added to District 303 schools by a

residential project. Some attendees wanted to see the property remain as a manufacturing site, some wanted to see it become park land, some wanted to see part of the property used for offices and businesses, some wanted there to be housing for seniors and the disabled, if it was going to be residential. Most felt it was important to keep the street grid in place. Some wanted to see a road connection to the north into the Timbers subdivision. Basically, none of the public input mattered because it was predetermined what would be there and the public's voice was not going to be heard.

The City of St. Charles hosted a meeting on April 4, 2007 at the Municipal Center to provide residents "an additional meeting to ask questions, voice concerns, and offer ideas on the future of this area (Applied Composites)." The City went on to state in its letter to property owners, "If it is to be redeveloped for residential use, how much density is appropriate? Should it match the surrounding neighborhoods to the south?" The public was told its feedback would be used in deciding how to amend the Comprehensive Plan. At the end of the day, the public's feedback meant nothing because the Comprehensive Plan Amendment reflected relatively little of what the public wanted to see.

At the April 9, 2007 meeting of the Planning and Development Committee, Mr. Hupp told the Committee about the two meetings. He commented, "there was a good turn out of the neighbors and...that their comments and concerns were noted and the consultants are reviewing those comments to see how they can be addressed." Evidently, the consultants didn't feel that the public's input was worth much because most of it was ignored in putting the Comprehensive Plan Amendment together. And Mr. Hupp gave the Aldermen, who made up the Planning and Development Committee at that time, the impression that the final result would reflect what the public wanted.

Perhaps even more revealing than the City's and the consultant's actions is an article dated April 5, 2007 that appeared on Chicago Real Estate Daily.com, a Crain's Chicago Business affiliate. The article entitled, "Homebuilding Veteran Launches New Venture" is about Mr. Ronald Benach. He talks about how he is the Chairman of the Board of the relaunched Lexington Homes, LLC, which was created in 2006. He speaks about developments that they have under way and future ones planned in St. Charles and Des Plaines. So, before the public input could even be digested, before the consultants could finish their study, before the Comprehensive Plan Amendment could even be drafted, and before the Amendment could even be approved by the City, Mr. Benach is not only confident that Lexington Homes will be building a residential complex in St. Charles but he is bragging about it. Why the confidence? Because he is paying the consultant, he knows what the Comprehensive Plan Amendment is going to allow before it is ever put on paper.

On October 2, 2007, a draft of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment was brought before the St. Charles Plan Commission "to obtain public comment at an informal setting." The Chairman of the Commission said, "This amendment needs to focus on future land use for this area and be creative in the transportation connection to address traffic needs...incorporating into the Comprehensive Plan a future roadway connection across the railroad line to the north." Mr Hupp, "agreed this is the time to address as a text statement whether more future street connections should be considered." Mr. Spear, Secretary of the Plan Commission stated that the lot sizes in any new residential project should be comparable to surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Anderson, a Commission member, reiterated what the

Chairman had suggested that there be a connection at Sixth Street and Sedgewick Circle. Mr. Lencioni Vice Chairman of the Commission, agreed .

The St. Charles Plan Commission met again on November 6, 2007. The draft Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan was again on the agenda. Once again several members of the Commission commented on the importance of including a street connection to the north of the Applied Composites property. Mr. Spear suggested looking at the right-of-way for old Route 31, as a possibility. In their motion recommending approval of the draft Amendment, the Plan Commission stated, "In addition, potential roadways and bikeway connections to the north of the site should be explored." There were two rationale for bringing up this roadway connection to the north: first, to alleviate the burden of traffic on the neighborhoods to the south and second, and more importantly, to conform to the City's Comprehensive Plan, which states that no subdivision should have only one point of ingress and egress. The Timbers subdivision has only one.

When the amendment was presented to the Planning and Development Committee on December 10, 2007, Mr. Hanlon of Land Vision made no mention of the items that the Plan Commission wanted to see changed or amended, and those items were not included in the Amendment. He talked about different types of zoning along Dean Street and State Street, including R2-4 (which is the type that allows the developer to seek such high density on the site). Now had Land Vision really done an objective study they would have noted that the only R2-4 zoning are the parcels on which the two apartment buildings on Dean Street sit. Talk to any residents out there and they will tell you that those buildings are the bane of their existence. If Applied Composites residential development were to meet the median density of the surrounding neighborhoods, there would be no more than approximately 80 residential units there. In fact, the presentation was more like pitch for the future development than it was for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. In the end the Committee voted to recommend the Amendment and set a public hearing for January 7, 2008.

At the January 7, 2008 City Council meeting, the truth finally came out that the property "was purchased by a developer. Representatives of this developer advised the City that they were considering residential development of the site." So, the very genesis of the study, which became the Amendment was not as Mr. Hupp previously stated because the City thought the time was ripe to do one, it was because the developer/purchaser of the Applied Composites site wanted it done. The amendment was approved by the City Council.

On October 7, 2008 at a meeting of the St. Charles Plan Commission, Lexington Homes presented the first of its concept plans for consideration. That plan, the subsequent concept plan, and the actual plan presented in 2011 have all involved a much higher density for the site than anyone from the neighborhoods surrounding the site, than those who participated in the public forums, and than the Plan Commission when it was reviewing the study ever envisioned. No roadway connection to the north, not much open space, failure to maintain the grid pattern of the existing streets, no concern with how the traffic generated by the development would impact the existing neighborhoods.

One question that needs to be answered is: couldn't or shouldn't the City have found a consultant to perform the study, which became the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, who was impartial and who would have been objective in the performance of the study, instead of being biased in favor of its ultimate employer, Lexington Homes.

Another question is why was public advice and input sought to begin with, other than to serve as nothing more than window dressing for an opaque process, if it was going to be completely ignored. One item that was brought up at the public forums and by the members of the St. Charles Plan Commission, and which has come up since then, is a roadway connection to the Timbers subdivision. Yet in the final document there is no mention of this. That is significant because the City's Comprehensive Plan calls for every subdivision to have at least two entrances/exits, which the Timbers subdivision does not have. This would have been the perfect opportunity to correct that situation. So, why did neither the City's staff nor the consultant see fit to include mention of this in the Amendment? Why did they fail to bring it to the Planning and Development Committee? Could it be because the Mayor of St. Charles resides in the Timbers? If this is the reason, it is impossible to avoid the perception that the Mayor feels free to ignore public policy goals when they conflict with his own self-interest. Interesting that he doesn't want his neighborhood impacted while not being remotely concerned with the impact on other neighborhoods, as long as St. Charles gets more rooftops.

The entire process that brought us to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment is why citizens do not bother to get more actively involved --they have the feeling that their voice will not be heard, that the planning process is cut and dried, and that the City will do what it wants regardless of public involvement and participation . In this case, they would be completely correct.

We, the citizens, have been told that this is our Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Actually, nothing could be farther from the truth. This Comprehensive Plan Amendment was bought and paid for by Lexington Homes. Citizen participation mattered not one iota in the formulation of the Amendment. What is even more galling is that Lexington Homes then feels free to ignore what few stipulations and criteria do exist in the Amendment, and bring forth a proposal that violates the letter and the spirit of the Amendment. It is the ultimate irony and the ultimate insult to the community.