
Trent and Rejoyce Milam

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4th April 2017

Planning Commission

Mr. Henry Way, Chair
409 S Main St
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

As a member of the Purcell Park neighborhood, I write to share my opposition to the proposed rezoning of 1340, 1348, 1356 South Main St and 1342 Edgelawn Dr. from R-3 and R-1 to R-5. The rezoning meeting is being held smack in the middle of Harrisonburg City School System's scheduled Spring break, and like many of the other families in Purcell Park we scheduled vacations long before with rezoning hearing was requested. This is particularly upsetting, because as a family with young children, we care deeply about the long term direction of our neighborhood and this proposal will impact us greatly.

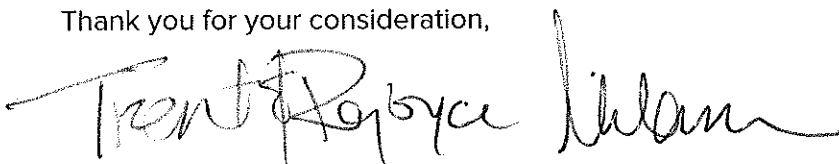
We are new to Edgelawn Dr, drawn to the Purcell Park neighborhood two and a half years ago when a job promotion transferred us to the area. We chose to buy in Purcell Park because we wanted a friendly, established neighborhood within the city, one walkable to the downtown area and convenient to the interstate for a commute to Edinburg. Although we could have chosen to live in Rockingham County or even further north, we prefer a community with a mosaic of cultures and experiences for ourselves and especially for our children. We value interacting with a diverse population and sharing in the wealth of culture and opportunities the university provides. The residential nature of our neighborhood is threatened by this proposal, it will drive families like mine out of the west side of the neighborhood, transforming owner occupied homes and family rentals into homes occupied by groups of students and spreading the weekend party atmosphere that already regularly leads to game days spent clearing drunken students out of our fenced back yard or explaining that public urination is not normal behavior to my 8 year old as well as Monday clean ups of beer cans. This will weaken the entire neighborhood.

Because of our vicinity to the university, the proposed restaurant and high density housing will not draw young professionals but draw students out of the older housing they currently rent. This creates a disincentive for landlords of older traditionally student housing, such as those on the other side of Main Street, to maintain those properties. More students in this proposed building will mean more foot traffic on weekends, especially on Edgelawn and Weaver, as students travel to and from campus on weekends to party with friends.

Finally, the most important reason to reject this rezoning is because the proposed three story building does not fit with the single and two story family homes and historic office buildings by which the property is surrounded.. Families like ours will find our homes overshadowed and dominated by a much larger, louder complex. No six foot or even a taller fence can mitigate its effects on us. Our property values will plummet, diminishing the neighborhood's tax revenue for the city and our schools. Families such as mine will have no choice but to leave the city and allow our beloved homes to become more barely maintained student housing. Instead of nurturing the families who believe in and invest in Harrisonburg, encroaching on established neighborhoods in this way sends the message we are not a valued part of our city.

Instead of the drastic rezoning of very large residential plot on Weaver and Edgelawn and the historic office buildings on South Main into a single high density mixed use area, Our community will be better served by building and improving high quality low density homeowner housing in the Purcell neighborhood at 1341 Edgelawn Drive and its adjoining lot. Even two and a half years ago, when we bought our home, finding a home in Purcell was difficult, we bought and have invested deeply in a home because we plan to raise our children in this neighborhood. Given the opportunity, so will others. The South Main properties should be zoned Residential Professional spaces as they are currently, and reflect the aesthetics of our neighborhood and respect our residential neighborhood, encouraging small independent businesses and offices to stay with the walkable part of our city. This block of Main Street is also ideal for a local business incubator.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trent & Rejoyce Milam". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Trent and Rejoyce Milam

Thanh Dang

From: Hegg, Kevin J - heggkj [heggkj@jmu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 3:44 PM
To: Thanh Dang
Cc: Lynn E Eaton
Subject: Opposition to proposed rezoning of 1340, 1348, 1356 South Main St and 1342 Edgelawn Dr. from R-3 and R-1 to R-5.

Dear Dr. Way,

I am writing to you on behalf of myself and my wife (copied here) in your capacity as Chair of the Harrisonburg Planning Commission.

We have lived at 40 E Weaver Av (a block from the proposed 22-unit apartment) and are absolutely opposed to the proposed rezoning of 1340, 1348, 1356 South Main St and 1342 Edgelawn Dr. from R-3 and R-1 to R-5.

This group of properties should not be rezoned into a multi-use commercial and high density residential area because it penetrates the Purcell Park neighborhood, which is one of the last vibrant residential neighborhoods within walking distance of the James Madison University campus -- where I have been employed since 1996.

Public demand for single family homes in this neighborhood is high, especially from college faculty who relocate to Harrisonburg.

Ours is a peaceful neighborhood with a diverse population, including families with young children. It is a very quiet and walkable neighborhood. We have plenty of high-density student apartments in other parts of Harrisonburg.

Please preserve our good neighborhood.

Respectfully,

Kevin J. Hegg

Kevin Hegg
Director, Digital Projects
Innovation Services
heggkj@jmu.edu
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Daniel Robinson
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Harrisonburg, VA 22801
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robinsdl@jmu.edu

Ms. Thanh H. Dang, City Planner
Department of Planning and Community Development
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg VA 22801

Dear Ms. Dang,

I am writing in regard to the proposed rezoning of 1340, 1348, 1356 South Main St and 1342 Edgelawn Dr. from R-3 and R-1 to R-5. As a resident of the Purcell Park Neighborhood, I strongly oppose the rezoning of that property and the proposed development that would follow.

I have lived on Crawford Avenue with my family since November 2015. As a relatively recent resident, I have found my neighborhood to be warm, open, and welcoming, just what we hoped it would be. My wife and I carefully chose our neighborhood as the place our young daughter would grow up because of this wonderful character present in the neighborhood. The proposed development threatens that character.

Something I have found to be true in my time on Crawford Avenue is that our neighborhood is in many ways vulnerable. Some of our greatest assets (proximity to JMU and Purcell Park) lead to some of our greatest liabilities, namely traffic and adjacent student housing. Many of the homes on the perimeter of the neighborhood struggle deeply with issues related to student housing. On Crawford Avenue, we not only deal with a high volume of traffic to the park, but at high speed as well. This is of great concern to my neighbors and me because there are many young children, including my own, that live and play on the street. The proposed development of the property listed above to a restaurant with 22 apartment units above it would do nothing to solve the challenges facing our neighborhood; it would only make them worse.

The proposal to rezone and develop the corner of Edgelawn and South Main Street is not the will of, or in the best interest of, the residents of the Purcell Park Neighborhood. This development is not only unnecessary for the city, but poses a threat to the interests of all of the residents in the Purcell Park Neighborhood. We have made the conscious choice to invest our time, financial resources, and efforts into making our neighborhood a wonderful place to live, not a profit center for a developer. Again, I strongly oppose this proposition, and encourage you to do the same.

On behalf of Kim and Annabel Robinson.

Sincerely,
Daniel Robinson



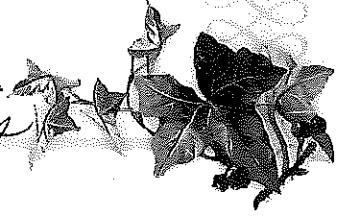
May 3, 2017

Dear Ms. Dang,

We have lived in the Purcell Park neighborhood for 37 years, renting a house on Crawford Ave. for 10 years where our four children were born. When we were able to afford to buy a house, we knew we wanted to remain in this unique neighborhood. We bought our house on Weaver Ave. 27 years ago and plan to "age in place." We would like to preserve and protect all the R-1 properties in our neighborhood for other families to continue to enjoy as we have.

I strongly oppose the rezoning request of the R-1 properties on Weaver Ave. / Edgelawn Dr. by Mr. Gills Stone. Yes, they were R-1 when purchased and should remain as such!

Respectfully,
Patricia Landis



May 3, 2017

Ms. Thanh H. Dang, City Planner
Department of Planning and Community Development
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg VA 22801

Dear Ms. Dang:

My wife, Kimberly Hoffman, and I have lived at 25 Edgelawn Drive since 2004. We have enjoyed this neighborhood immensely and hope that the sense of community is not disrupted by the large number of apartments proposed in Giles Stone's rezoning request.

I am disappointed that the planning commission meeting to consider this request was rescheduled. I had made a point of taking time off from work to assure that I could attend last month as I do have frequent meetings during the evening. That will be case with the rescheduled date of May 10th, so I want to share my thoughts by letter.

We have numerous concerns about the proposed rezoning which include:

- Degradation of the residential character of the neighborhood.
- Increased traffic on narrow residential streets.
- Increased noise and trash.
- Decreased property value.
- Inconsistency with Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER:

When we purchased our home, we were anxious about the proximity of businesses. Interestingly, Donna Stone (Giles' spouse) was the listing agent. She pointed out that while the properties on Main Street would undoubtedly remain Professional Offices, the lots south of our home (adjacent to Edgelawn Drive) were zoned R-1 and could therefore only be single family homes. The Professional Offices have not resulted in huge volumes of traffic and we've come to consider them additional "day-time" neighbors. We spend a lot of time outside in our vestibule on the east side of our home and enjoy seeing residents of the Purcell neighborhood walking by and stopping to chat. Since Edgelawn Drive is not a "thru street," we have a quiet, quaint neighborhood reminiscent of bygone eras, where neighbors know and help each other. Introducing the first of what will undoubtedly be many future requests for higher density housing will destroy the character of the neighborhood along with that charming ambience!

TRAFFIC:

This proposed re-zoning, involves side streets which will not accommodate heavy traffic. I understand that the site plans currently submitted do not include direct access to Edgelawn, but only to northbound traffic on Main Street and on Weaver Street. While there are not currently large volumes of vehicles on Weaver Street, those attempting to turn Left onto Main Street (to head south) often have lengthy delays because of the proximity of the South Street

property value! While we have no plans to relocate, our home is one of our largest assets. We purchased our home with the understanding that we abutted Professional buildings along Main Street, but also with the understanding that the property on Edgelawn would be restricted to single family homes! While I have not invested in a formal appraisal that might speculate on the impact of our home (and don't feel that I should have to incur that expense), it is likely we could expect a minimum of \$50,000 less if we were to become the sole single family property in the entire "block" bounded by Edgelawn, South Main, and Weaver Street.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN;

If this re-zoning request is approved it will fly in the face of the Comprehensive Plan. There are NUMEROUS references in the plan spelling out the intent to maintain existing neighborhoods and to specifically limit re-zonings for conversion of single family homes to apartments! The Executive Summary indicates that infill development and redevelopment must be designed so as to be compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood. Goal 3 of the Vision Statement is: To strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote the development of new neighborhoods that are quiet, safe, beautiful, walkable, enhance social interaction and offer a balanced range of housing choices.

The Neighborhood chapter sites numerous objectives to maintaining single family houses:

Objective 3.2 To limit the conversion of single family houses into duplexes and apartments in residential neighborhoods.

Strategy 3.2.2 To develop a set of policies to limit re-zonings and special use permits for conversions of single family homes into duplexes and apartments.

Such policies should contain criteria regarding the locations and neighborhood and building conditions that warrant permission of conversion as well as neighborhood plan recommendations regarding conversions to rental housing.

Objective 3.4 To develop approaches to increase the percentage of single family detached

housing units to a minimum of 45 percent of the total number of housing units in the City.

Objective 3.5 To consider and seek to mitigate the potential impacts of rezoning and public investment decisions on neighborhoods.

Objective 4.3 To promote home ownership so as to increase the proportion of Owner occupied units in the City.

Chapter 8 sites the importance to protect the aesthetic character and the Transportation chapter has numerous references to promoting pedestrian traffic. The Revitalization chapter references the importance of protecting existing neighborhoods.

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan the tone and specific citations would seem to suggest just the opposite of what approval of this re-zoning request would accomplish.

Thanh Dang

From: Jessica Pyle [teachpyle@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 03, 2017 10:04 PM
To: Thanh Dang
Subject: proposed apartment building on Edgelawn and Main Street

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Ms. Dang,

I am a homeowner, taxpayer, and employee in Harrisonburg City and I oppose the proposed apartment building requested for the area between Edgelawn and Main Street. An R-1 neighborhood is no place for an apartment building such as this.

The Purcell Park neighborhood is a perfect place to own a home, raise a family, or even retire. When my family moved back to Harrisonburg 9 years ago, our first house was on Crawford Ave. I am now a homeowner on Crawford Avenue.

The greatest concern is the precedent this will set for our R-1 neighborhood. Our neighborhood will forever be altered if this building is approved. What will happen to the surrounding homes? The neighborhood will deteriorate as homes lose value, more will be taken over as student rentals, and families such as mine will lose their greatest investment. This will set a precedent for other R-1 neighborhoods. It is a long slippery slope that can be prevented by standing firm and defending our R-1 neighborhoods. There are already areas for high-density housing - I am not against that - I am against high-density housing encroaching directly into long-established R-1 neighborhoods. It is unnecessary. The city doesn't need this building, our neighborhood doesn't need this building.

Harrisonburg is currently seeing an almost critical shortage of single-family homes. This is an area where R-1 homes should be preserved. Instead of a large apartment building and parking lot, a more desirable solution would be more modest housing such as affordable duplexes.

Thank you,
Sincerely,

Jessica Pyle

15 April 2017

Ms. Thanh H. Dang, City Planner
Department of Planning and Community Development
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg VA 22801

Dear Ms. Dang:

My wife, Suzanne Fiederlein, and I have lived for twenty-one years at 28 Edgelawn Drive at the northwest edge of the Purcell Park neighborhood. It's a modest but vibrant neighborhood described here eloquently by neighborhood resident Mark Facknitz:

. . . the neighborhood between Port and Purcell is unpretentious and pleasant, multi-ethnic and multi-generational, inhabited by young families, recent immigrants, and the elderly. In brief, it's Norman Rockwell country.

We love our neighborhood. We love our neighbors. We love walking in Purcell Park. We love our proximity to our places of work and to downtown events.

But our neighborhood is extraordinarily vulnerable; it's under constant threat from commercial creep, being swallowed piecemeal or whole by JMU, or being converted by design or neglect into slums for student habitation.

Because of this vulnerability, we are deeply concerned by developer Giles Stone's request to rezone parcels 1340, 1348, 1356 on South Main Street and 1341 on Edgelawn Drive. In particular Mr. Stone's requests rezoning Lots 22, 23, and 24 from R3 to R5 and Lots 22A and 24A from R1 to R5 in order to erect a high-density apartment dwelling with 22 one-bedroom units.

Harrisonburg is full of high-density apartment complexes. There's no shortage of such real estate; indeed, there is such a surplus of new up-scale apartments that many older apartment complexes have high vacancy rates. More to the point, there is certainly no need for such apartments within a residential neighborhood. There is, however, a severe shortage of modest, single-family homes such as those currently comprising the Purcell Park neighborhood. In short, the neighborhood should be preserved as it is.

Mr. Stone's proposal would, if allowed to become a reality, undoubtedly compromise the integrity of our neighborhood. It would do so in many ways. First, as the first incursion of high-density residential space, it would open the floodgates to more such requests. Second, property values would plummet, especially for those in close proximity to the apartments. Third, it would increase traffic in a neighborhood that is already highly trafficked by those legally visiting the park and those illegally cutting the corner between Port Republic Road and South Main Street. (At peak times even now, it is almost impossible to turn south onto Main Street from Edgelawn, Weaver, or Monument.) Fourth, there being almost no sidewalks, increased traffic would put at further risk

the children of the neighborhood. Fifth, there are environmental concerns regarding runoff from a large asphalt parking lot associated with an apartment building. Sixth, the proposed restaurant would additionally increase both traffic and noise. Finally, high-density dwelling would irrevocably change the "Norman Rockwell" character of which Mr. Facknitz speaks so eloquently, an intangible quality which cannot be "priced."

Job One of city planning is to preserve the integrity and viability of established neighborhoods. Indeed, this is front and center in Harrisonburg's Comprehensive Plan, as excerpted below:

Chapter 6: Neighborhoods

Goal 3. To strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote the development of new neighborhoods that are quiet, safe, beautiful, walkable, enhance social interaction, and offer a balanced range of housing choices.

Objective 3.2 To limit the conversion of single family houses into duplexes and apartments in residential neighborhoods.

Strategy 3.2.2 To develop a set of policies to limit re-zonings and special use permits for conversions of single family homes into duplexes and apartments. Such policies should contain criteria regarding the locations and neighborhood and building conditions that warrant permission of conversion as well as neighborhood plan recommendations regarding conversions to rental housing.

Objective 3.4 To develop approaches to increase the percentage of single family detached housing units to a minimum of 45 percent of the total number of housing units in the City.

Objective 3.5 To consider and seek to mitigate the potential impacts of re-zoning and public investment decisions on neighborhoods.

Objective 4.3 To promote home ownership so as to increase the proportion of owner-occupied units in the City.

We wholeheartedly endorse the spirit and letter of the Comprehensive Plan regarding neighborhoods. Please adhere to its admirable goals, and please preserve the integrity of the Purcell Park neighborhood by turning down Mr. Stone's unnecessary, ill-conceived, and detrimental request for re-zoning.

Thank you for time and your efforts to keep our city beautiful, welcoming, and prosperous.

Sincerely yours,



Dave Pruett
28 Edgelawn Drive
Harrisonburg VA 22801
540-246-3087

4 April 2017

Ms. Thanh H. Dang, City Planner
Department of Planning and Community Development
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg VA 22801

Dear Ms. Dang;

First of all, thank you for speaking with me on the spur of the moment this morning, and thank you also for listening to my concerns about the proposed development at the corner of East Weaver and South Main. As I was walking home, I sorted through my thoughts and concluded that I have three principal concerns.

The first is strictly environmental. Judging from the sketches of the proposed development, at least ninety percent of the ground will be hard-surfaced. While site engineering might mitigate the rate of run-off flow into the storm sewers, that is water that will not percolate where it falls. As with any urban pavement, water that runs into storm drains increases both the volume and the pollutants in the watershed. Basically, we've paved enough of the world.

The second has to do with traffic. As you know, Port Road does not have sidewalks. Consequently, Weaver is a popular street for pedestrians and bike riders, a safe way to avoid Port Road. Additionally, there are many families with children and pets who live on the street, and indeed there's even some wildlife such as ducks, skunks, rabbits and groundhogs. Not surprisingly, drivers using Weaver as a shortcut between 81 and South Main already tend to speed. (Even without the development, a "children at play" sign might be in order.)

The proposed development would exacerbate the current traffic situation. While the project wisely does not include left turns out of the lot onto Main, it does provide for left and right egress onto Weaver, and ingress from Weaver. Inevitably patrons and residents of the proposed property will drive west on Weaver to reach the site. Such new traffic will also increase the number of westbound left turns off of Port Road onto Crawford, already a tricky turn to make even in light traffic.

Or, more drivers will turn left off of Port Road onto Hillcrest, which between Port Road and Weaver is little more than an alley. Also, the sight line from Port and Hillcrest looking west to Main is poor. Because of the hill, there is about hundred and fifty feet in which fast moving eastbound traffic is out of sight to drivers attempting to turn onto Hillcrest. They turn into a very narrow street with a school bus stop at the Weaver end and often children at play along its edges.

Finally, Weaver is not very wide. If cars are parked on both sides of the street there is not room for cars to pass in opposite directions.

My third concern is the least tangible and the most sensitive. The project situates itself in the midst of half a dozen party houses, and today when the breeze is stiff red plastic cups are clattering their way up Weaver. Apart from the litter and the soggy sofas in the front yards, the events require frequent police intervention, there have been instances of sexual violence, and the noise can be considerable. By contrast, the neighborhood between Port and Purcell is unpretentious and pleasant, multi-ethnic and multi-generational, inhabited by young families, recent immigrants, and the elderly. In brief, it's Norman Rockwell country. For many of us the frustration is with the shabbiness and incivility of the revelers—for example, those drunken clusters of them who stagger about swearing in loud voices, sometimes pausing to urinate in my neighbor's shrubs. The party houses are a problem that has been getting steadily worse in recent years. I don't see how placing an apartment building and a restaurant (bar?) in their midst will improve the situation. In fact, I would guess that many of us, tending to become impatient with the behavior of the residents of those houses, assume that this new construction will make a bad situation worse.

Perhaps the solution is a larger plan for Main south of Port, one that begins by razing the party houses. From there we could consider how one protects the integrity of the neighborhood while enhancing Main and its profitability for land owners.

Again, thank you for the information you shared this morning, and for your openness and the time you took to listen to my concerns. Here's to Harrisonburg!

Sincerely yours,

Mark A. R. Facknitz
48 E Weaver Ave
Harrisonburg VA 22801