

Tadeo and Crystal Balderrama

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Lived in Elm Grove for 4 years

My wife and I were lucky to stumble upon the opportunity to live in Elm Grove almost four years ago. Since moving here we have both acknowledged that it is a tremendous place to live that has managed to maintain its charm throughout the years regardless of the external pressures around it.

We have followed the evolution of the proposed development on the Reinders property for some time and were invited to give feedback early in the process. We were happy and hopeful at this invitation and condensed our concerns into 4 main points for our initial meeting in March: Density, height, contamination of adjacent wells, and access to Elm Grove Road. These concerns were not only personal, but we found them to be shared among many, many neighbors and residents we have met throughout the past several months. Time went on and now we are discussing a similar iteration of the project that does little to address these concerns. I do want to be clear, we are not anti-development. Many of us residents feel that developing the site, if done well and to the proper scale given the size of the village and location of the site, could be beneficial to our community. We are concerned that the current proposal could be a serious mistake that would forever alter our village for the benefit of only a few.

In an attempt to be succinct I will bullet point what I personally feel are big issues (by no means an exhaustive list):

- Volume of the development (height, density) –A development this size in the middle of our Village would be grossly out of place (I won't go into traffic since this will very likely be extensively discussed in many people's statements, but living adjacent to Elm Grove Road I do have major concerns.
- Contamination - Despite having a great DNR lecture during a prior meeting it seems people are STILL not at all familiar with what would be needed to be able to develop the property in adherence to DNR laws, regardless of whether the property changes ownership or not. This should be a major focus as it regards the health and safety of our community. Initially we talked about as little earth disruption as possible. Now we are digging out parking lots under each building? This is terrifying to those of us who live right next to the property and have little kids drinking this water.
- Use of Elm Grove Road-having spoken with village officials earlier in this process, we were told that Elm Grove Road could not handle more traffic and they did not want it to be used, but now we are proposing making it a thoroughfare by re-routing the road?
- Per the developer's notes from last meeting, the size of the main parcel for building is 6.37 acres. The effective density is therefore 27.3 units per acre. Only in making major concessions in terms of right away clearance and taking into account the Plank Road Plaza and Mill Shop property can they bring their total down to 21.9 units per acre. In making all these concessions for one land owner you take away from the rights of those of use who neighbor the property and could never have imagined a development of this size being even considered. It far exceeds anyone's practical expectations for people who live here or are at all familiar with the quality and character of our village.

I do agree that in Elm Grove, much like many other communities, we all invest in our "castle," but I have to disagree with the statement that this is the village's castle as proposed by a committee member at a previous meeting. This property has been under the ownership of a family for decades and I cannot imagine there haven't been opportunities to invest in the

appearance or improvement of the property. By that same token, if my basement floods or a tree falls on my roof, I would be unfounded in asking for financing from the Village to remediate these issues that are my own to address. I, as a private property owner, cannot blame structural errors or building mistakes on a prior owner and refuse to correct them.

To close, you could never undo a mistake of this magnitude and it is certainly not a process that should be rushed through as the current proposal layout stands. We are surrounded by upcoming developments of massive scope. Are we already too late to the rental market? Do we want to take that gamble? The property as it currently stands has not been maintained to a high standard. In 10 years when the developer has completed their obligation to stay involved in management, what can we expect? This will be the core of our downtown. Is a massive apartment complex that may or may not be well maintained or even needed given the saturation of apartments developing around us really what we want to be the face of our village? Are we willing to shortsightedly accept something with so many concessions to our current guiding rules that we lose track of the long term consequences, the impact to neighbors, and the change to the community would be?

Thank you.