

March 21, 2023

Dear Mayor Ford, Chairman Breitkopf, Village Trustees, and Plan Commission Members,

At the March 16 Plan Commission meeting, I was told that community members could submit questions and comments regarding Lexington Homes' new proposal to build 53 townhomes on the Federal Life site. Below are questions for your consideration. Because our committee has not met since March 16, these are my own questions, but I believe they represent the concerns of many of my neighbors in Meadowlake.

I want to note that although LH changed their zoning request from an RPUD designation (the guidelines of which their plan had, frankly, no possibility of meeting) to a bulk development, it seems to me that the spirit of the RPUD guidelines must guide all new development in Riverwoods. All new development in our village should conform to our woodlands preservation community values and be executed with consideration for the impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

1. If the proposed access road routing traffic through the development from Deerfield Road to Colonial Court and the Shoppes of Riverwoods is built, how do you intend to screen Meadowlake residences from the noise and light pollution of the traffic this will generate? Several years ago, Meadowlake had to install a gate after commuters discovered that Chicory Lane could be used as a shortcut to avoid waiting at the signal at the corner of Deerfield Road and Milwaukee Avenue; how do you propose to prevent the proposed access road from being used in the same way, as a through road? The new proposal includes on-street parking spaces along this road for overflow parking from both the shopping center and the townhomes; again, how will Meadowlake be protected from this intrusion on its serenity?
2. How will the village address the existing maintenance issues at both shopping centers even as it intends to increase their usage? The Colonial Court buildings are dilapidated, with rotting woodwork and peeling paint. The drainage ditch and retainment pond associated with the Shoppes are filled with trash; no other retainment pond in the area is as filthy as the one located by the eastern entrance to Meadowlake. The landscaping at both developments has not been maintained. Of special concern is the fact that the banks of the drainage ditch have eroded to the point that most of the trees along the fence have died, and these trees have not been replaced; this means that there is no effective screening of the back of the Shoppes for properties on Foxtail Lane. Finally, Meadowlake home owners are rightfully concerned that the garbage polluted water from the Shoppes flows into West and East Lakes, raising health concerns.
3. Does the village have plans for further developing Colonial Court and the Shoppes of Riverwoods? Can residents of Meadowlake have an opportunity to share concerns about the impact on our neighborhood, as well as ideas for the kinds of businesses we would like to have there?
4. How will the proposed development of the Federal Life site ensure that access to Meadowlake, particularly West Lake, is restricted? Residents of our neighborhood have noted that, despite our frequently voiced fears about safety and liability should residents of the proposed development trespass on lake properties in particular, the latest proposal has

no fence and features a walking trail through the woodlands close to the water. It is hard to imagine that adults and children would not be drawn to walk through the woods to the water's edge, and perhaps attempt to fish, boat, or swim there. Meadowlake has also asked for fencing and landscaping that would screen our neighborhood from noise, building and landscaping lights, and car headlights from the proposed development. The latest proposal completely ignores our requests for such barriers.

5. May we know where utility lines will be placed so that we can be assured that their installation will not require the removal of woodlands?
6. We have asked repeatedly that the "barracks" design and grid layout be rethought. Yet the latest proposal shows a half dozen three-story barracks (with more buildings behind them), arranged in long rows, with multiple windows on the end of each facing into our neighborhood. These barracks will loom over the woodland barrier in a most unnatural way - spoiling the rustic beauty of the scenery, invading our privacy and creating light pollution, at a great detriment to our enjoyment of our properties. Building one or two story residences with attached garages would eliminate this problem. Can Lexington submit a plan that arranges buildings in a way that conforms to the natural setting, rather than on a grid pattern, and limits building height to two stories, that is, below the treetops?
7. Reducing height to two stories and arranging buildings in clusters would necessitate a reduction in density, resolving another concern that Meadowlake homeowners have repeatedly voiced. We proposed a maximum density of four homes per acre, which is four times the village norm and double the only present exception, within portions of Thorngate. My neighbors feel that this is a very generous position and that we should not have greater density than this imposed upon us. We understand that developing the site will involve a costly demolition, but we don't think we should have to bear the cost of this through our quality of life and property values. Perhaps Federal Life will have to accept a reduced sale price and Lexington will have to accept a smaller profit, along with the tax advantages it will enjoy. We didn't offer four times the village norm as a preliminary bargaining position; we were stating our strongly held position for the sake of clarity. Can the village leadership help broker a deal between Federal Life and Lexington that will protect the unique low density, woodland setting we all came here to enjoy?
8. Can we know the basis of the assurances given us at the March 16 Plan Commission meeting that there will be very few children (Lexington claimed there would be no tax burden for public schools) in these two and three bedroom homes? And that there will be too little traffic generated by the development and access/through road to necessitate a traffic signal?

I know that many of my neighbors in Meadowlake are concerned about significantly increased foot and bike traffic through Meadowlake as residents of the proposed development look for the closest place to exercise, wary of the risks of increased flooding, and afraid that the serene, naturally lovely, and safe environment we enjoy in Meadowlake will be irretrievably compromised. Many are concerned about the value of their properties. I'm sure that you will hear from them. Continuing guidance from the Board and Plan Commission about density, height, engineering, aesthetics, and screening of the proposed development could resolve these issues.

I truly appreciate your consideration of my concerns and questions.

Sincerely,

Mary Oler