

On Wed, Feb 22, 2023 at 7:43 PM Bernadette Holmes <bernadette.misami@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Jon Spoon,

Please consider our communities concerns regarding:

A legislative public hearing requested by The Leads Group, PA on behalf of Aaron Horton Toothbrush LLC to rezone Parcel 18493 from R-1 Residential to General Use Light Industrial being approximately 4.04 acres, located at 27 Mt View Church Rd., Oakland Township.

As a long time resident of the North Asbury community in Oakland Township, I am very apposed to rezoning this area for light industrial. From what I understand, we have a designated town and surrounding area plan for development that does not include this beautiful rural residential community. I also understand that the site that has been proposed for development will not have adequate septic available for the building. If this is case, how many employees will they be able to provide for? I believe it was sited as a benefit to the area to encourage job growth, and without adequate septic this seems to only possibly be a benefit to able body men. Even so, where will any human waste created by employees go on a four acre lot with surrounding residents?

Will this light industrial zone proposed be in conjunction with the flood plains around the near by Rocky River? Triangle Brick has bought over one hundred acres toward the rocky river, less than two miles away from the proposed construction of Aaron Horton's Toothbrush LLC site. How will other companies wanting to capitalize on this light industrial proposal affect the safety of the residents, along with the environmental impact of light industrial so close to the watershed of the rocky river?

Has the DOT done an actual site visit? The emails in the proposed plan look as though they haven't. The proposed construction runs down hill to a near by creek just on the other side of the road. Has the impact of traffic and environmental safety been assessed properly by the DOT?

The overall safety of residents in the area has been a concern. Having heavy equipment and big trucks moving in and out of a residential area where people walk with their dogs daily.

The site proposed is in a dead zone for many cell phone carriers, along with only 3g internet provided in the general community with internet outages of up to 3 weeks reported for much of the community in resent history. We have not seen any significant change to service with the new internet provider that has already been given great incentives to improve internet quality and they have not done so at this time. My concern is that we don't even have simple infrastructure in place, not to mention water and sewer to accommodate light industrial business. How much will need to be invested by the county to make a rural area such as ours into light industrial when this has not already been allocated?

I'm sure it has been addressed that the realtor representing Aaron Horton Toothbrush LLC is on the Chatham county planning board.

This still leaves our community feeling less faith in the planing boards over all motivation.

I am very concerned for the environmental impact of zoning this area for light industrial. The over all impact of light industrial in a neighborhood such as this could be detrimental to the safety of residents and have a deviating impact on an environment that supports a surprising amount of wild life, from wild turkeys, bobcats, mink, many common animals, with bears even being sighted in the area.

It has been my understanding that Chatham County has proposed wanting to have a solid plan of development so that all our communities can enjoy prosperity, while still maintaining the beauty of our towns and surrounding area. Aimlessly developing our beautiful rural areas will do a disservice to our community.

Sincerely, Bernadette Holmes

To: Chatham County Board of Commissioners
From: Clyde Miller
Subject: Toothbrush Rezoning

Gentlepeople,

As a board member of the Rocky Rive Heritage Foundation, I am expressing my concerns, along with others in our organization, and community residents in the Mt. View and Center Grove Church area. It is troubling that this crossroads area would be considered for a zoning classification change without a detailed site development plan or review of possible environmental impacts. Storm water run-off from this property feeds directly into a small creek that empties into the Rocky River.

In case you are not aware several sites along the Rocky River are on the North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage areas. In addition, there are several types of protected plants and animals that live in the river basin. One of these creatures is the Cape Fear Shiner, a small fish that is only found in this part of North Carolina, that is presently on the Endangered Species List.

Members of the RRHF view our organization as a guardian of the river and our mission is to protect the Rocky for future generations of Chatham County Residents. We would be remiss in our duties if we did not challenge any development that could put our river at risk. We respectfully ask that the BOC not approve this request to change the zoning for this site. If this request is not honored, then we ask the BOC to require any future developer to first prove that there will be no impact to our river. This could be accomplished via an environmental impact study or other scientific method. Possible impacts of an Industrial Site on the edge of a tributary of the Rocky River must be fully understood before any construction is allowed. It would seem reasonable to request that these possible impacts be identified prior to classification change.

We moved into this house in 2010. When looking at this property, our son, who is autistic, and loves wildlife, didn't even want to look at the house.

He went straight to the river and creek. He came back with a huge bull frog and a black snake!

We bought this property for him. So that he will always have wildlife around him. This is his haven, his slice of heaven. He loves it here!

I believe building commercially around here would disturb the wildlife not to mention bring noise and light to an area that is so peaceful and quiet.

We also chose this area for it's peacefulness, it's quiet. Had I wanted noise, chaos, and traffic, I would have bought in Cary or Raleigh.

This is also my haven! My peace! I ask that you please consider NOT building commercially around here. Consider the beauty of the area that would be destroyed.

I do not know where each of you live, what type of people you are but take into consideration, me coming into your neighborhood and doing as I see fit, regardless of your thoughts. I do not feel you would like that very well. I feel the same about commercial businesses in my neighborhood.

I would like to invite you to come and spend an afternoon sitting by the river and enjoying the peace and quiet that we enjoy everyday!

Thank you for your consideration of NOT building commercially in my neighborhood.

Sincerely, Kelly Wallace

From: Cody Thompson <cody.thomps@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 1:45 PM
To: Lindsay Ray <lindsay.ray@chathamcountync.gov>
Subject: Toothbrush rezoning...

WARNING: This message originated from outside the Chatham County email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Ray:

We are submitting this email as support for retaining the rural character of our neighborhood and opposition to the toothbrush rezoning request. We do not approve of spectators moving in to change our rural surroundings for their own personal gain with no offsetting benefit to local residents. The precedent set by approving light industrial zoning is of significant concern to us and many neighborhood residents! This property is now R-1 zoning and it should not be that easy for outside investors to change it. We believe that this R-1 zoning was put in place to protect the current rural areas of our county!

Very sincerely -
Gary and Cora-Lee Thompson
476 Gynnis Creek Drive

To: The Chatham County Board of Commissioners
Land Parcel – 0018493
27 Mt. View Church Road, Moncure, NC 27559
Township: Oakland

I am writing today to let my opposition to the Toothbrush rezoning request of the above mentioned property be known and request that each of you to please deny the request to rezone this partial of land from its current residential status.

I have deep concern that if the request to rezone the above mentioned property is approved that this action would degrade the rural neighborhood character and environment which I and others sought and still seek when we purchased our property in the surrounding area of 27 Mt. View Church Road. It is not only the protection of the human population that I'm concerned about, but also the abundant wildlife in and around our rural neighborhood. The wildlife population consist of turkeys, ducks, many variety of birds, hawks, rabbits, squirrels, many deer, foxes, racoons, possums, coyotes and other wildlife not named here. With the Rocky River in close proximity and its many feeder streams, we currently have a healthy ecosystem in and around our zoned

residential neighborhood. Your vote to approve the rezoning request by Toothbrush could change the life for not only humans, but for those that have no voice in this matter.

The request by Toothbrush to rezone this four(4) acre piece of land is for personal monetary gain that in turn would change the character of our rural neighborhood forever. When the seller of the property and the buyer of this property entered into their business transaction of purchasing and selling of land parcel #0018493, all parties were aware that this land was zoned as residential. They proceeded with this transaction with no regard or concerns of how their neighbors would receive their presence in the rural residential area nor to the destruction that they would be causing to the lives of the surrounding residents. Therefore, I request that you take seriously my concerns and the concerns of others and deny the request to rezone land parcel #0018493 from its residential status. Your vote to deny this request is vital to keeping our land the rural status/neighborhood in which it is intended. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debbie Lyerly
919-548-0497
debbielyerly@gmail.com

From: Frank Fitzgerald <frankfitz@embarqmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 11:32 AM
To: Lindsay Ray <lindsay.ray@chathamcountync.gov>; Lacey George <[lacee.george@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:lacey.george@chathamcountync.gov)>
Cc: kertyfitz@embarqmail.com; frankfitz@embarqmail.com
Subject: 1/17 - Public Hearing 3 - The Leads Group, PA on behalf of Aaron Horton Toothbrush LLC to rezone Parcel 18493 from R-1 Residential to General Use Light Industrial being approximately 4.04 acres, located at 27 Mt View Church Rd, Oakland Township

WARNING: This message originated from outside the Chatham County email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Board of Commissioners,

Please find our submittal for the public record regarding the rezoning request submitted by The Leads Group, PA on behalf of Aaron Horton Toothbrush LLC.

We are opposed to the development request because of the impact it will have on our neighborhood and the precedent it sets for future rezoning. I am a native North Carolinian that has grown up in both large and small towns across the eastern part of the state. My wife grew up in a rural area of upstate New York. In 1995, we lived in Cary close to her employment and made the decision to commute rather than continue to live in the chaos and construction of an unplanned community. We purchased our property in Chatham County and built our house. We moved in 1997 and a month later had our first child. Both our children grew up here and enjoyed the nature and freedom the property offers. They learned to ride bikes and skateboard around the neighborhood. We know and enjoy all of our neighbors. We often see them out walking their dogs along the road. We would gather at Unwined, a small wine bar on Center Grove Church Rd, to chat when that was open.

The nature on our property is abundant with deer, turkey, fox, rabbits, songbirds, birds of prey, even the occasional beaver has been seen wandering in along our creek. Changes can have an adverse impact on the beauty of the natural environment.

We were concerned with the opening of the Luck Stone quarry and 3M plant in 1999 and the impact it has brought to our quiet community. Rock crushing, conveyor belts and dynamiting take away from the peaceful nature of the countryside. The large trucks on 15-501 and Mt View Church Road are dangerous. Just last week, a dump truck full of gravel overturned on Mt View Church Road while traveling too fast along the winding road.

The Asbury Collection Center located across the street from this parcel provides a service to the neighborhood. This project would not benefit the residents of this community.

We understand the future of the county with Chatham Park and the recent sale of the Reeves property on Hwy 64 west of Pittsboro is for development. There is a need that these neighborhoods will meet. We want it to be done properly to prevent harm to the environment.

The proposed rezoning request raises a number of concerns. Our property is directly adjacent to the parcel in question. We do not feel the property can handle this type of business in an environmentally safe fashion. As the public documents show, there is no acceptable septic sites on the parcel. There is no public sewer lines available. We are concerned about soil and water contamination from hazardous materials used in light industrial production. We have concerns about the setbacks in the plan not leaving a buffer with our property as they clear cut to put up their building and pave over the parcel. We are concerned about the noise and traffic this type of zoning will bring to our neighborhood. We are concerned about the safety of our community being able to ride bikes or walk our dogs with heavy traffic.

There are many other locations in the county already zoned appropriately that could house a business to service these new housing developments. Probably closer and more convenient. We request that you reject this application and put efforts into developing a comprehensive plan to maintain rural neighborhoods in the future of Chatham County.

Frank & Kersten Fitzgerald
70 Center Grove Church Rd

Lisa and Clay Padgett
Center Grove Church Road

To the Board of Commissioners,

We are opposed to the rezoning submitted by The Leads Group, PA on behalf of Aaron Horton Toothbrush LLC due to the negative impact it will have on our neighborhood and the potential precedent it could set for future rezoning in rural areas. We have experienced firsthand living among the growing pains of Charlotte and then Raleigh.

Our move to a quiet area in Chatham County was quite premeditated and intentional, and befitting our desire to retire and escape the traffic and nuisances we have dealt with in other areas.

We have found that although it is not in our neighborhood per say, we experience the effects of the Luck Stone quarry and 3M plant. There are days it can be heard and felt at all hours. The same goes for the traffic in and out of the Stump Dump that was located in the neighborhood (prior to our time, but it is our understanding it was zoned as such with little regard to community input). Although it has some downsides, at least the recycle center provides a service and convenience that benefits residents in the neighborhood. We feel that our residential area has been stretched in other directions as far as is reasonable.

The addition of yet another non-residential project would in no way benefit the residents of this community. We are a residential community of individuals who all moved here for the quiet, the river, the privacy. Large warehouses and parking lots do not fit into the area.

Plans submitted for a 15,000 – 30,000 sqft warehouse with no attached drawings are pretty vague. Especially for a property of this size. It's hard to imagine a proper buffer could be incorporated. As a resident, could I say I'd like to build a 4 – 8 bedroom house and get it approved?

The request also states that this warehouse is needed because there is nothing like that in this area. Well, there is nothing like that on this road because it is a neighborhood. There are plenty of warehouses just south of here in Lee County sitting empty. There are other areas of Pittsboro where rezoning for industrial pockets has already been established, creating a certain amount of convenience for vendors. In particular, if this proposed warehouse storage is to support building activities in Chatham Park, this location is not where storage is needed, and therefore would be compounding traffic in a residential area as well as through town to get to where the work will be done.

We request that you reject this application and put efforts into developing a comprehensive plan that strives to maintain established rural neighborhoods in Chatham County, protecting the very thing that brought many people to this area in the first place.

Summary of Concerns

I sent a document to Karen Howard (BOC chair), David Delaney (District 3 commissioner), and Jon Spoon (Planning Board chair) several weeks ago regarding the Toothbrush rezoning request. There were a number of concerns shared, both with process and individual behavior that in my opinion require review by those responsible for oversight. I'll set those concerns aside for the moment.

I also raised a number of issues with the Toothbrush proposal in particular and the broader issue of precedent that an IL rezoning approval would introduce for our rural residential neighborhood. I will repeat some of that information here, as well as introduce an additional argument.

I ask commissioners to read my prior document for details and supporting materials. What's offered here is intended for the community at large that will be reading the meeting minutes.

I oppose the Toothbrush rezoning request, both on its merits and for the precedent risk that it raises. I ask that the Board of Commissioners deny the rezoning request as inappropriate for a residential neighborhood setting, and in doing so, establish a precedent opposing IL development within our neighborhood, or for that matter, any commercial development that is not small-scale and local-serving.

Steve Jenisch

The neighborhood that I speak of includes residents on Center Grove Church Road, Johnny Shaw Road, Gynnys Creek Drive, and portions of Chatham Church Road and Mt. View Church Road. Many residents in this area have expressed concern over the potential for the proliferation of industrial development projects on large, undeveloped parcels in the immediate area owned by non-resident (absentee) individuals and corporations. Also, the LCID site (Stump Dump) operating on Center Grover Church Road has recently been listed for sale, and as well, parcel 18477 - a portion of which resides within the designated "crossroads node" area - was acquired in the past year by a non-resident.

I am not a conspiracy theorist, but rather, a defensive pessimist. What that means is that I evaluate a situation for worst possible outcomes and seek to identify courses of action to mitigate downside risks. The Moncure Small Area Plan study that is to be performed by White & Smith has defined assessment area boundaries - intended to capture the "15-501 corridor" - that extend to include those large, undeveloped parcels within our rural neighborhood, as well as additional large parcels that extend north towards the southern Pittsboro jurisdiction limits.

As the Planning Department points out in their hearing presentation, we do have the Collection Center located here. I'm not sure exactly what point the Planning Department is attempting to make by referring to the refuse site, but I do want to thank them for citing "precedent" as a key evaluation rationale, validating the neighborhood's concern. Further validation is provided by the Toothbrush submission materials which readily promote the fact that an IL approval "will have a destination effect on properties seeking similar use changes".

The Toothbrush submission also implies that this "destination effect" will increase area land values. The attraction of additional IL operations would turn the area into an industrial park. While whether or not such a transition would raise land values is open to speculation, the current residents of the area have homes here - and I believe it's fairly clear that a transition of the area to an industrial park would destroy the value of these homes - a value that is in large part derived from the area's rural character. Rural character to me means clean water and air, natural light/darkness, natural sounds, abundant wildlife, predominantly local traffic, and very low-density development. Said another way, value is not always construed in monetary terms.

But I digress.

The Collection Center provides a necessary service to neighborhood residents, and it can also be argued that there's additional utility derived from the convenience of the nearby location. Point being that the Collection Center offers compensating benefits that balance negative impacts that the Toothbrush project does not. In fact, by not providing any service to residents, Toothbrush has no financial incentive whatsoever to address any negative impact that their business operations might impose (and no, I do not trust that zoning ordinance enforcement will address those impacts either).

Further, given the open-ended nature of Toothbrush operations (processes and activities; number of employees; etc.) the noise level, traffic congestion, and hours of operation cannot be compared. And the number of parking spaces indicated in a site plan suggests that as many as a dozen or more workers could be on premises on a daily basis, while the Collection Center generally has only one attendant present.

There's also the matter of accident risk. This could derive from traffic type, for example; the Collection Center has very limited CDL traffic (periodic bin pickups) while Toothbrush large truck traffic could be considerable. Employee and materials traffic volume generated by Toothbrush operations would likely congest the area (a concentration design flaw of the "crossroads node" concept, in my opinion). If congestion becomes a problem, Toothbrush site traffic would likely

redirect, at speed, on Center Grove Church Road to the southern 15-501 access point.

Additionally, the Collection Center is a relatively low-risk operating environment, whereas - again, given the open-ended nature of operations - material spills or fire ignition that would threaten waterways and surrounding wooded areas (especially during periods of severe drought) are legitimate considerations.

To the point of waterways, while I don't know the basis for FEMA flood ratings - and similarly, do not know what the Planning Department means by "near" - I do know that likely 50% of the land contained within the designated boundaries of the Crossroads node to the west of 15-501 are drainage basin or steep draws that feed that basin. Take a look at the county GIS topo/hydro layers for the area and you'll also see that the creek running through it (as well as the southeastern node area on the other side of 15-501) flows directly to the Rocky River.

The area is prone to flooding during extreme weather events: in July 2013 for example, waters quickly rose more than 2 feet over Center Grove Church Road between Mt. View and Johnny Shaw, requiring a rescue emergency to aid trapped patrons (shop keeper and grandparents with an infant grandchild) to escape the building at the wine shop that was operating at the time. Beyond the natural drainage from higher woodland elevations, another major source of storm runoff through the drainage basin flows from 15-501; looking forward to the widening of this roadway, it can only be assumed that volume will increase. Similarly if hard-surface development occurs on large parcels to our north.

Any runoff from Toothbrush that overwhelms containment will flow directly to this creek. As well as for any other development that might be approved within the crossroads node in the future. Furthermore, any approved buildout on lands in the drainage basin area will require tree clearing, backfill, concrete culverts, etc., which will decimate the basin ecosystem. That is not rural preservation.

As to the site screening to be availed by existing mature wooded areas, it is true that the west border of the parcel adjoins narrow wooded parcels owned by residents to the west of Center Grove Church Road. Those parcels are remnants from the old Sanford Highway right-of-way; if you take the time to look, you'll notice what is likely a century-old cart path that served as the pre-ROW boundary. From the site plan I've seen, it appears that Toothbrush will implement a minimum setback, perhaps presuming some leverage of the adjacent parcels for screening purposes. Nevertheless, the mature trees are hardwoods and pine that have high foliage (the hardwoods no foliage at all during winter) that provide no screening benefit. Further, again from site plan inspection, it appears as though the majority of trees on the southern end of the parcel (ingress/

egress point) will be removed.

As to the Crossroads designation and Plan Chatham approvals, I'd say there's at best ambiguity. Plan Chatham is a motivational document, not statute. Being motivational, it's generally unbalanced, emphasizing positive goals and benefits while ignoring indirect costs and negative impacts associated with implementation. The document also contains conflicting statements and subjective terminology ("minimal impact", "rural character", ...).

Relevant sections of Plan Chatham for the purpose here include the 'Chatham Future Land Use Descriptions' and 'Land Use Recommendations and Strategies for Villages, Crossroads, and Employment Centers'.

Extracts follow.

Employment Center

- These centers are targeted for future job-generating uses in settings that meet today's workplace expectations.
- Mix of uses include industrial, office, and supporting retail, restaurant, service, recreation, and other uses.
- Streets: Arterial, collector and local streets and private drives for local and regional accessibility
- Public/open space: Parks, trails, natural areas, enhanced storm-water management.
- Locations:
 - CAM Megasite
 - Moncure Megasite Area
 - 751 Employment Center
 - 3M Property near 15-501 South
 - US 421 Interchange area near Goldston

Villages

- These historic centers and newer pedestrian scale villages accommodate small-scale, local-serving retail, office, institutional, and service uses, restaurants, and some residential.
- Mix of uses include retail, restaurants, services, and office uses clustered near a village center (typically consisting of smaller commercial footprints than other centers (>30K SF), although can be more if appropriately designed). The total non-residential footprint in a Village Center is typically < 60K SF.

- Light Industrial uses, with minimal impact on surrounding residential developments are appropriate if appropriately designed.

Crossroads Community

- Smaller than villages, these communities are within rural areas and typically have a minimal amount of retail and institutional uses.
- Mix of uses include single-family residential, some agriculture support services, limited supporting retail, and institutional uses.

Note that there is no mention of 'light industrial' within the land use mix for Crossroads communities. Note also that within Villages, and by extension, Crossroads communities ("smaller than villages"), non-residential applications are to be "local-serving". I'll go on to note that by my interpretation of prior narrative, light industrial uses within Villages are envisioned as an infill option within the context of an existing small-scale, local-serving nonresidential base, and as such, are subsumed by this base (less noticeable to residents, less impactful to the ambience of the area).

The Toothbrush project does not fit in the context of these descriptions, and as follows, within the intent of Plan Chatham. The Toothbrush project would dominate the non-residential footprint of the area, and runs the risk of tarnishing the neighborhood with an industrial park ambience that may attract (as the submission highlights) additional IL projects to the neighborhood as well as the surrounding Rural area (or what should rationally be characterized as Rural, in my opinion). The Toothbrush project should be developed within an Employment Center.

Am I a NIMBY? I don't believe so. I am not strictly opposed to commercial development in this area. For instance, I did I not oppose the B1 rezoning for the small wine shop that operated in the vicinity for a period of time. That business was low impact (only operated on weekends) and provided a beneficial social gathering place for local and adjoining neighborhood residents.

I'll readily admit that I find the presentation of a metal building such as the one that Pittsboro Metal Building Company erected for B&T HVAC at East and Davie to be architecturally and aesthetically challenged - not a building form that I particularly want to sit at the gateway to my neighborhood (according to Secretary of State records, Pittsboro Metal Building Company, LLC is a partnership of Aaron Horton and Bennet and Kenneth Branch; Bennet is Aaron's neighbor on Horton Pond Road).

However, I do believe that a resident land owner should be able to utilize their property in whatever manner they choose, as long as they do not infringe on their neighbors (noise, light, air/water quality, visual appearance, etc.).

Now, why did I mention PMBC and Horton Pond Road? Well, it appears that in addition to Aaron Horton, there exist significant land holdings (in total, 90+ acres) by Horton surnamed individuals and Horton Family Holdings, LLC. It's not inconceivable that with a Mt. View rezoning denial, the Toothbrush business plan can be implemented in Mr. Horton's own neighborhood, with easy access to US 64. As reported by Google Maps, the travel time from that location to the Chatham Park locations that contractors/shop operators would presumably target is estimated to be 4 minutes longer than from the Mt. View site location.

That's a valid alternative if the stated business plan is the sole motive of Toothbrush, LLC (unlike PMBC, the partners of Toothbrush are not reported through the Secretary of State website - the partnership members are hidden behind a "registered agent" attorney). If the motive extends to establishing an IL zoning precedent for the crossroads node area and beyond, or just a basic speculative intent with respect to the 15-501 corridor, then the Horton Pond Road area doesn't work for them.

Then again, perhaps, the implementation of the open-ended Toothbrush operating plan for the Horton Pond Road neighborhood is deemed as inappropriate "in my backyard". You know, that's a nice area with extensive federal lands bordering Lake Jordan. And, well, our neighborhood has the Collection Center and Stump Dump.

I moved to Chatham County and my current property in 1992. Despite lengthened commutes for both myself and my wife, we chose Chatham precisely for its rural character. I moved to North Carolina in 1983, and saw how growth destroyed the Cary/Apex area. Prior to moving to Chatham we lived in Chapel Hill and experienced its equally disruptive growth appetite.

Chatham County and the area around Center Grove Church Road was an ideally quiet, friendly, slow-paced place. Then in 1999 the Luckstone/3M quarry was approved. Once that site became operational, the impact was troubling, to say the least. A night sky that was clear became clouded by artificial light. The singing of birds at daybreak and the quiet of nights were disturbed by the constant rumble of rock crushing and conveyor belt operations. Dump truck traffic became a nuisance and safety hazard; I'm amazed that no one has been killed by an oversized, ill-maintained truck barreling down Mt. View Church Road.

If this is an example of the protection provided by county ordinances, I'm not favorably impressed; similarly, if it's an example of the low impact, rural character-preserving development that Plan Chatham purports to prioritize.

Equity is a concept that applies to a spectrum of concerns, not least of which is the experience of place, of home. What better example of this power of place than Ben Harward's letter describing his fondness for our neighborhood, rooted in the memory of his grandparents and he and his sister's experiences on their farm. In a sense, the lands that surround our homes have a spirituality tied to them through their power to evoke memories.

Are there bounds to the county's expansion of industrial development into the rural countryside? Who has the authority and will to balance, if not bias against, the interests of those involved in development targeting so that the least disruptive negative impact on long-time county residents' lives is struck?

There remains abundant wildlife in our neighborhood and throughout the surrounding rural acres. I periodically have a turkey flock, about a dozen birds, traverse my property. There are hawks and owls and pileated woodpeckers and all variety of songbirds. As well as fox and coyote and rabbit. Of course, plentiful deer with fawn and doe frequently seeking security around our home in the spring and summer. There are crawdads and snails and mussels, and an abundance of lizards and snakes and various rodents and spiders. And frogs; lots of frogs. A relatively healthy ecosystem.

Don't pay lip service to rural preservation and the comfort of a sense of place. Demonstrate your commitment through your actions.

January 17, 2023

Dear Board of Commissioners,

My name is Dr. Aaron Bell and I am a Biologist working at North Carolina State University. My wife and I moved here a few years ago to escape the hustle and bustle of NYC and a two hour one way commute. We initially moved to the Centralized Area for Relocated Yankees (Cary) and while it was a very convenient 15 minute commute for both of us, we (I) found it too congested. After a few months of searching we (I) stumbled across our current property and made an offer immediately. Our property is a lifelong dream come true for me. As a Zoologist/Biologist I highly value the wildlife abundance and diversity and the fact that our (terrific) neighbors are spread out. We can choose to be social or just escape into our backyard wilderness. We have resident Sharp Shinned Hawks and Red Bellied Woodpeckers nesting on or near our property. Foxes, raccoons and opossums den in a woodpile behind our house. We've counted no less than a dozen different bird species at our feeders. Our property has about 75 feet of Rocky River frontage and the neighbors to our west mow a strip along the river that traverses 4 properties so that we can enjoy a walk along the river and observe the many species associated with that habitat. The hooting of the owls at night, the planets and stars on a clear night (despite light pollution from the 3M plant) and the yipping of coyotes. My wife initially thought that I was crazy for wanting to purchase the property but now has come to love it almost as much as I do (minus the bugs but they're a small price to pay). Even the 45 minute commute is not that big of an inconvenience compared to the reward of our rural property.

I am writing to express concern over the proposed rezoning of parcel ID 0018493 to light industrial. The proposed building of two large warehouses for building material storage for the Chatham Park development is puzzling at best given the distance from the development. How will the buildings be utilized in the future once the Chatham Park development project is completed? Will the site require further modification in the future? Will they be repurposed for an alternative use?

Discussions with several of my neighbors have revealed other projects requiring rezoning are in the planning stages in close proximity to parcel 0018493. The nature of the projects, such as the Southern Bypass proposal for Mt. View Church Rd. as well as the ongoing power utility infrastructure upgrade on Moncure/Pittsboro Rd., would suggest a much larger development is being considered in the immediate area. Given last year's announcement of the VinFast factory development in Moncure with the addition of 7500 new jobs, we have concluded that a large housing development on the scale of Chatham Park is highly likely. Further investigation revealed that the GIS maps commissioned for our area (see Figure 1), appear to "support" large scale development on the 151 acre parcel located on Johnny Shaw Rd. (ID 0018545). While the resolution of the maps is very poor, they suggest that the residential use for that particular parcel is high with additional commercial and industrial potential. Unsurprisingly, the proposed conservation map for the Rocky River habitat stops exactly on the southern border of that parcel (see figure 2, red arrow).

A development of that magnitude would be devastating to critical riparian habitat along the Rocky River given the very close proximity and water drainage of these large parcels into the Rocky River. As you are no doubt aware from the Plan Chatham report, at **least** two federally listed species (the Cape Fear Shiner and the aquatic plant Harperella) are endemic to the Cape Fear water basin as well as several other state listed species.

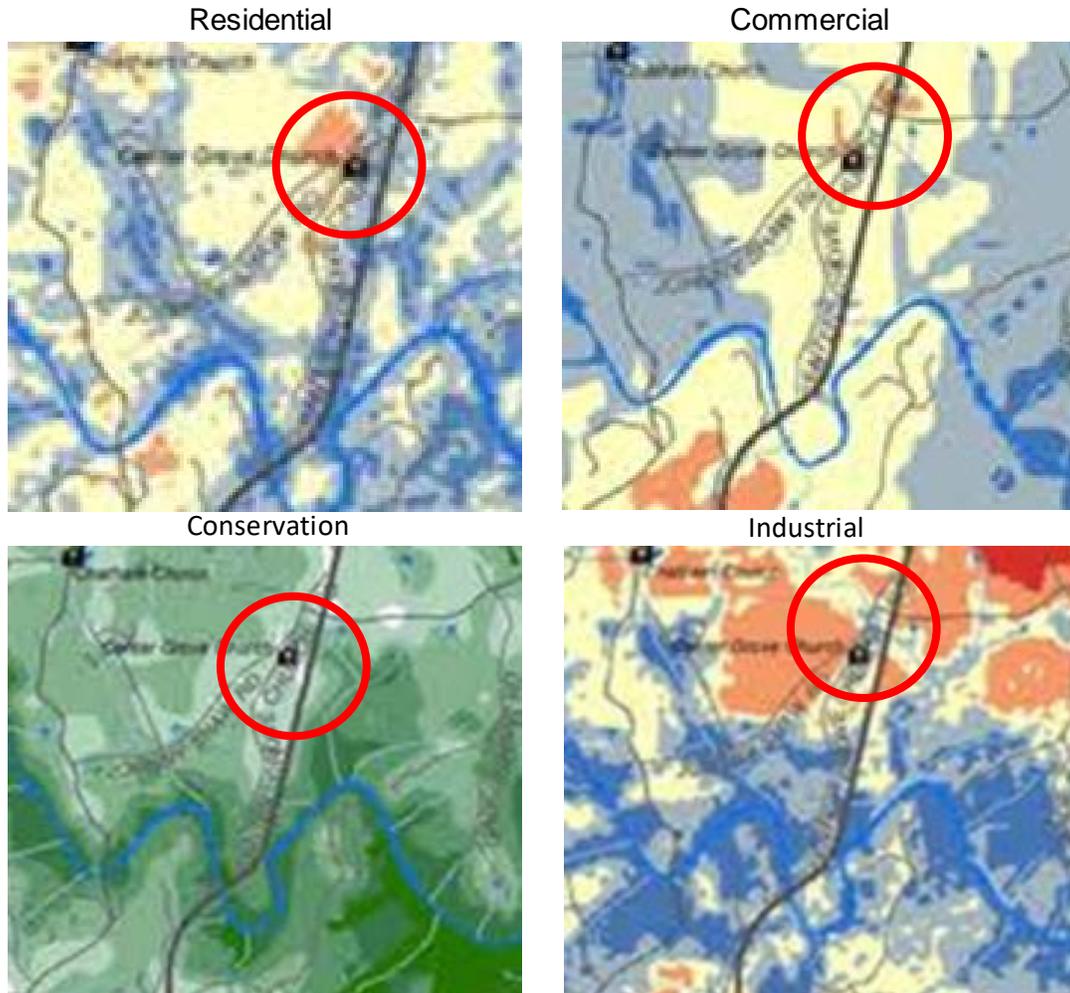


Figure 1 – Draft Land Use Suitability Analysis from Plan Chatham

Only a handful of stable populations of the Cape Fear Shiner exist in the world and all of them are confined to the Cape Fear water basin. The largest population is found at the confluence of the Rocky and Deep Rivers, with a couple of other population located around the site of the former Hoosier dam as well as the Harland's and Landrum creek confluences of the Rocky River. The stretch of river in between the two sites is considered critical habitat for the minnow. The stretch of river just north of 15/501 contains particular vulnerable riffles habitat (Figure 3, green rectangle), which is the minnows preferred habitat. The Cape Fear Shiner is thought to move into smaller tributaries during the winter months, which makes them particularly vulnerable to contaminated runoff. The Gynnis creek and a small seasonal stream on the south side of Johnny Shaw conjoin on our property (Figure 3, red circle). The source of the seasonal stream is runoff from a drainage pipe running under Johnny Shaw Rd, which serves as drainage for the large 151 acre parcel (Figure 3- red arrow). During the spring and throughout the summer we have observed small minnows in a small pool at the confluence of these two bodies of water. The identity of these fish hasn't been ascertained but I intend to invite a local wildlife biologist tasked with monitoring the Cape Fear Shiner population to our property in order to identify the species.

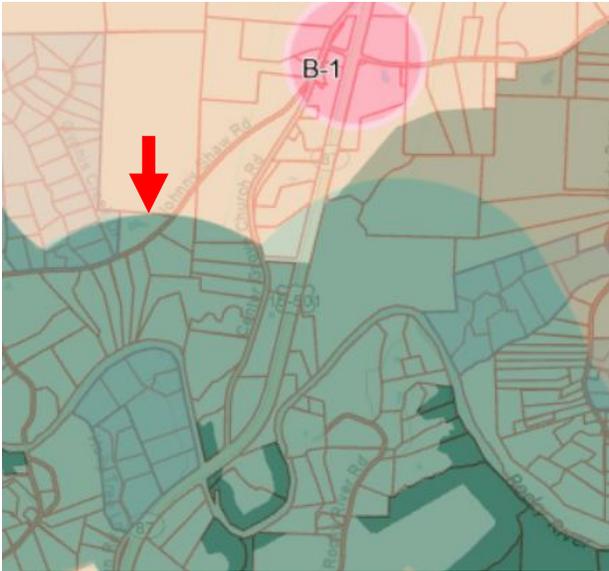


Figure 2 – Proposed conservation map for the Rocky River

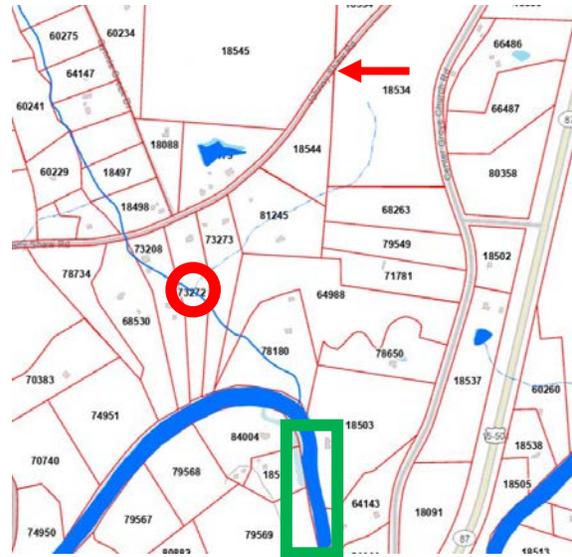


Figure 3 – Rocky River hydrology map

The issue at hand goes far beyond a “not in my backyard” mentality. Without a doubt, the addition of a large manufacturing company in our area adds a significant boost to the local economy, which is a good thing. However, a far better location for a potential housing development would be an area such as one of the large parcels across from the 3M plant where the residential population is smaller and the environmental impact would be significantly minimized. The accelerated pace at which these building projects proceed can outpace the research required to protect critical habitat needed to ensure the survival of these extremely rare species. One argument is “who cares, it’s only a fish, plant, insect etc. Plenty of others around.” The key to our survival as a species is biodiversity. So many of our medical and scientific advancements are derived from compounds isolated from plant, animal and microbial species. I am reminded of the movie *Medicine Man* starring Sean Connery. In short, a researcher in the Amazon rain forest discovers a cure for cancer in the form of a rare ant species found near a small native community. The community, of course, gets wiped out (along with the cure for cancer) by a logging company building a road through the village and surrounding habitat. Yes, it’s just a movie but the reality is that 70% of cancer drugs are natural or synthetic compounds inspired by nature. The human population has more than doubled since 1970. The current global extinction rate is tens to hundreds of times the extent that it has been since any point in the past 10 million years and is accelerating. All of these data (and much, much more) were published in a recent UN report (*The IPBES’ 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*). If you’re feeling too good about yourself one day, just read this report and you too can be properly depressed.

In conclusion, we have a responsibility as the dominant species on the planet to protect all other species, not just for their benefit but for our own. A large scale development of any kind in such close proximity to this fragile ecosystem supporting these extremely rare species will be met with stiff resistance from the local residents as well as various environmental groups charged with protecting these habitats.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aaron Bell