



MARLANNE J. MYLAN



October 23, 2024

Re: Case Number: PD24-45735
Parcel: 24274-000-00

Dear City Council, Mr. Marciano and Mr. Mansfield,

This letter is in response to the proposed building plan to build fifty-five (55) single family units on the twelve (12) undeveloped acres on NE 25th Avenue which was approved by the Planning Commission. Before you make a decision to provide authorization to proceed with this project, I am respectfully requesting if you could provide the immediate neighborhood with your vision of how the integration of this many people on such a small space and all requiring a vehicle to move from point A to point B would work, especially because the Millwood project nearby on 35th Street and Emerson Pointe on 28th Street are both in the process of building and due to the size of these two projects it will already add in excess of seven-hundred and fifty (750) people and likely minimally two hundred (200) vehicles onto 25th Avenue which is a two-lane road. I am afraid that the Planning Commission overlooked the previous additions and probably did not realize what this will do to the traffic conditions this new addition will produce.

First some general observations. This is the third project with multiple homes in NE Ocala. Both the Millwood location on 35th Street and the Emerson Pointe location on 28th Street and 29th will contain one hundred plus (100+) homes. This project with single family homes with two-car garages, three to five bedrooms and two bathrooms would be an attractive opportunity for a four to five person family. However, the fact that these houses will be built on small lots, close together and, as noted the map, the entire area will be surrounded by walls tells me that most solidly middle class families will not be interested; it appears that this purpose of this project is to provide housing for lower middle class families where both parents will be working.

The plan notes that fifty-five (55) such homes will be built, hence, the neighborhood can expect the addition of minimally two-hundred (200) people of which most likely at least one hundred to one hundred and ten (100-110) will be adults who will also be driving and owning vehicles. There will be likely at least eighty to one-hundred (80-100) children on these same twelve (12) acres with no other entertainment in the immediate area but their rather tiny backyards. To boot, there will only be one main road in and out of this location onto 25th Avenue.



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As was noted at the Planning Meeting of October 21, the builders promised that they would adhere to their 40% free space. This space should NOT include people's front and back yards, as that is not "free space". They do intend to build four point two (4.2) homes on each acre so the individual lots are quite small. There was no mention of any space for a children's play area or for a basketball court or any free space for all these kids.

Currently, that area, my neighborhood, is quiet and peaceful. On 25th Avenue, across the street, there are single family homes facing the street. Traffic is light and the single lanes of 25th Avenue can handle the flow. This flow will drastically increase as the occupants of the new houses which are currently being built just off 28th Street, which ends at 25th Avenue, as well as the occupants of the homes being built on 35th Street will start driving so the traffic flow of traffic on 25th Avenue to Bonnie Heath/14th Street/492 will substantially increase the moment these houses are occupied. Now, the plan is to add even more houses and hence, more traffic.

The reason I note 'substantial' is because there will be one hundred (100) units built at Emerson Pointe just north of 28th street and 19th. These houses with two car garages and up to six bedrooms can add an easy four hundred (400) people of which at least half will be driving and likely up to a third of them will be taking 28th Street to 25th Avenue. Last but not least, we have the new Millwood community at 3545 NE 35th Street, which has even more homes and will produce additional traffic on 25th Avenue as well. Individually, these properties were not required to produce a traffic study, but now that there are definitely two and possibly three large new communities, it becomes essential that the City of Ocala produces a realistic traffic study to determine how the new occupants of these three new communities will affect the traffic and hence the people already living in this area.

A conservative estimate of the increase in traffic is likely two hundred (200) or so vehicles from these three locations onto 25th Avenue between 07:30 and 08:30am as all these Moms and Dads have to go to work and most likely most will move south on 25th Avenue to Bonnie Heath. Imagine how long it will take to get to there! Imagine the line of vehicles at the light on 24th Street and again at the light on Bonnie Heath. A one-lane road will not ever be able to sustain that kind of added traffic comfortably. Of course, that is not all... the children living in houses in this project will need transportation to and from school, which means that in addition to all these cars we will also have school busses to contend with which will likely stop on 25th Avenue to allow the kids to get on and off.

It gets worse! Now picture the railroad crossing being closed due to train traffic. This happens several times during the day and each stop takes in excess of four (4) minutes. Currently traffic moving north from Bonnie Heath on 25th Avenue can be



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backed up for quite a distance. Now add the additional traffic from the new houses on 28th Street and this backup will likely almost reach Bonnie Heath during the rush. Adding even more traffic from this project and people will not be able to make the turn from Bonnie Heath onto 25th Avenue and will be sitting in that short turning lane creating a traffic jam on Bonnie Heath! From the other direction, cars may be backed up to the traffic light on 24th Street and beyond.

At the meeting the builders noted that they would conduct a traffic study. This study will be based on current conditions and not include any of the vehicles from the housing currently being built in the area so the estimate will not be accurate and should not be used. Clearly their goal is to get this project going and excessive traffic estimates will not help their cause. Technically and perhaps even legally, this study must be completed by the City of Ocala BEFORE even considering this project and MUST include the added traffic from the other two already ongoing projects at Millwood and Emerson Pointe based on full occupation. It is pretty amazing that this was not done prior to approving either the Millwood or Emerson Pointe's projects. This study should be a very important part of your November 5th meeting and this study, once completed, should also be distributed to all current homeowners in the area, as well as to the new and potential buyers of the two properties which are being built. They have a right to see what the surrounding traffic conditions are.

As the City of Ocala already knows, 25th Avenue is a major thoroughfare for the much smaller current population but it is only a two-lane road. The width of 25th Avenue cannot be increased all the way to Bonnie Heath to four (4) lanes or two (2) lanes each direction to accommodate the traffic that will accumulate after building all these houses in this neighborhood. I can reassure you that the addition of this many vehicles will cause traffic issues. The population will be looking at the City of Ocala to do something about this well after-the-fact with no easy or cheap solution other to put up traffic lights both at 28th Street and at the entrance road of this project. Think about this.... That will create a railroad crossing followed by three traffic lights only blocks apart which is not great solution either. The additional traffic created by this project is the major point of refusing to approve this plan as is currently stated as all vehicles will enter/exit 25th Avenue with no other options.

The identity of the neighborhoods is also important. The streets opposite this new project, including 25th Avenue, 25th Court and beyond, all have lots of almost half-an-acre. The houses on 25th Avenue face the road. Property owners now see woods across the street, but in the future they will see a long drab wall to hide the incredible small plots these houses will be built on. The comment of the builders that their four point two (4.2) houses per acre meets the neighborhood standard is clearly not true. I realize that it is legal to build houses that close together, but a long continuous wall to provide privacy to the new owners of these houses is not



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exactly aesthetically pleasant to look at. Nowhere in this neighborhood are long continuous walls such as the one proposed. There should be a row of houses that face the street, just like the other side of the street! There should not be a wall at all!

It is understood that the property was sold with the intention to build houses on it and no, neither I nor many others are against building houses on that property, but fifty-five (55) homes is just too many to be accommodated by the infrastructure. I do believe that five (5) homes per TWO (2) acres, such as we have across 25th Avenue is quite appropriate so that lot will roughly accommodate twenty-two (22) homes. One row should be built facing 25th Avenue, like the ones across the street and a second row can be built behind this row with the backyards touching each other as is the case between 25th Avenue and 25th Court. This would match the neighborhood and would also attract a solid middle class future home owner. No one is trying to deny the property owners the opportunity to make a few dollars, so my suggestion is to really build nice expensive homes, and they will make the same amount of money. Twenty-five (25) cars coming and going during the rush sure beats one-hundred (100) cars. 25th Avenue may accommodate that without too many issues!

Let's go back to the kids who will absolutely be living there if it remains fifty-five (55) homes. Can the school district accommodate this many kids? Remember, there will already be a significant increase from the new houses on 28th Street and 35th Street! We are not talking about four or five kids more each grade! The school district will absolutely need new classrooms and additional teachers on short order or face large classroom sizes which will not improve the graduation rates or exam/test results which are already under the national average. I realize that the additional property taxes will pay for this, but there is more. Next thing to keep in mind is what these kids will do after school and on the weekends? There are no sports fields nearby, no place where they can gather or hang out, and to boot, there is no bus service on 25th Avenue to allow them to go anywhere; truly, for everything they will need to be driven by their parents, as bicycling on a small road such as 25th Avenue with this much increased traffic and where cars quite often go well over the speed limit of 40mph is just not safe. What is concerning is that these kids out of boredom will walk through the neighborhood streets loitering and wondering what havoc they can create "just for fun and something to do".

Another issue may be the actual construction of these homes as they are close together. It is my impression that they will be built from wood, perhaps even with complete paneling as in modular homes, barely meeting all the requirements and hoping for an inspector who will approve it. They most certainly will NOT be made



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from brick, like the surrounding houses. That means that during a hurricane such as Milton the owners will likely have to comply with mandatory evacuation orders from the City. These evacuation orders will also include the Millwood estates and the Emerson Pointe project. Is there enough space for these people to go to? We are talking combined a 1000 people! What about in case of a fire or a medical emergency? Can the Fire Department handle this? What if they are needed during the rush with traffic backed up on both lanes of 25th Avenue? How will they provide an adequate response time? Did anyone consider this?

I am certain that I have not mentioned all the issues that the addition of so many houses and people on such a small area in a stable, quiet neighborhood will create, but I am confident that the City Council is capable of looking at this project through a realistic lens and make a decision considering all these scenarios. Please, I am requesting that you take the time to drive through the neighborhood and remember, that traffic both on 28th Street and on 25th Avenue will increase by quite a bit once all these houses are build and occupied. Then add the traffic this project will create and it does not take a whole lot of imagination to see that 25th Avenue cannot accommodate this with fifty-five (55) additional residencies.

My apologies for the length of this letter. I understand that you are under pressure from the property owners as well, but please look at this carefully and focus on the amount of all the additional traffic this will create. The Planning Commission unfortunately did not look at the totality of the all three projects and hence misread the ability of the infrastructure to sustain this much additional traffic. Everything is now in the hands of the City Council; it will become clear if indeed there is sufficient common sense to see the issues and to at least hold off on a final decision until a comprehensive traffic study is properly conducted. It has become clear that the only purpose of this project is to make money with absolutely no concern of what it will do to the neighborhood, the traffic and the living conditions of everyone involved. Please have them consider a plan B with twenty-two (22) houses, as fifty-five (55) is just too many to be reasonably accommodated by the infrastructure. Please, do NOT approve this as it is proposed. I truly do appreciate your time and effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Mylan".

Marianne J. Mylan