

May 3, 2021

Robert A. Phillips, AICP  
Director of Planning and Community Development  
Town of Southington  
Municipal Building  
196 North Main Street  
Southington, CT 06489

**RE: Petition 295 Laning Street**

Dear Mr. Phillips:

I am going to begin this communication by stating that I am slightly irritated upon learning that once again there is discussion to change the zoning at 295 Laning Street. In reviewing the material that was distributed at the April 20, 2021 Planning and Zoning Meeting, I learned that all but four Doral Lane households received information on the rezoning. The four houses bordering the Doral Lane cul-de-sac did not receive information. In that there is only one means of egress from Doral Lane, any change to Laning Street impacts all residents of Doral Lane.

Despite my feeling of this oversight, I need to speak out against this petition. Adding 30 units to Laning street, will add 30-60 vehicles that will be using an already congested situation on the street. This will create a public safety hazard for the residents in the area. This concern was brought up at the original meeting this developer had with the residents several years ago. I do not believe that this concern as well as many other road concerns were addressed adequately in the Traffic Study Report by Fuss & O'Neill, who was hired by the developer. I am unable to find any weekend data in the study. I challenge anyone from Fuss & O'Neill to attempt to go from Laning to Queen or vice versa at midday Saturday and then say there will be no impact on the traffic situation. The report also indicated that the development on Loper Street would have no impact on the traffic situation on Laning Street. That is patently false! Many residents in the area use Loper Street to get onto Queen Street safely because of the traffic light. With the building on Loper, traffic is backed up the hill during weekends, and rush hours. Additionally, the traffic study indicated that the speed limit was 25 miles per hour. Though that may be true, I can say that not many vehicles travel at that speed.

Residing on Doral Lane for 21 years, I can speak from experience about the issues of safety on Laning Street. I will begin with the geographic issues. The curves on Laning Street, would make any speedway proud. These curves and roadway undulations create several blind spots. As a result, cars edge out into the travel lane on Laning Street to get a clear view of oncoming traffic. These blind spots are specifically seen at the Holiday Inn's north entrance/exit, coming out of

the church parking lot, and at Doral Lane. I also believe, in reviewing the complex site map, the entrance to this proposed area is also placed in a blind spot. It is unlikely that potential resident will have a clear view of traffic going east bound.

Though there is little that can be done about the existing road; the problem would be exasperated with the addition of 30 plus cars to an already problematic area.

There are no sidewalks on Laning Street or Doral Lane. During a normal school year, the school bus will stop at 5 residences from Doral Lane to the Day's Inn, two times a day. Children are crossing Laning to get to or from the bus and often stray into the roadway. They are enjoying their friends and not often paying attention to the traffic. Two of these bus stops are near the entrance to this proposed complex and specifically, the bus stops right at the entrance to Doral Lane. This project creates a major safety concern for school children.

As for the need for such a community in Southington, I am suspect. Yes, the population is aging in Connecticut but from what I have heard from the 2020 census, Connecticut has shown minimal growth. So, I must ask, is such a community what the elderly are looking for or need? The reason I ask is that the greatest amount of elderly building in Connecticut is for assisted living facilities. Within the last five years, two new facilities have been built in Farmington.

From what I have learned in managing the affairs of my aging parents, in-laws, and an aunt and uncle, they all wanted to live in their own home for as long as possible. They also want to be as active as possible. People are working up to and beyond their normal retirement age.

When my in-laws moved to an independent living complexes it was successful because it was in Florida. Their home was at a complex that offered a coffee shop, a variety of sporting activities, social events, and educational programs. A proposed golf community in Connecticut provides a limited activity that at best is available only 6-7 months a year. I saw no plans or location for any additional social activities at this proposed complex.

Finally, this developer knew the zoning restrictions when he purchased this parcel of land and I am sure he did a cost-profit analysis based on the current zoning restrictions. If he and the Commission, genuinely care about developing a complex that meets the elderly needs, then why cannot we creatively develop a complex based on research and data. A complex should not be approved just for the convenience of the developer. This would be a disservice to the elderly and done at the detriment of the neighborhood.

So, I ask this Commission to have the developer answer my safety concerns. I also would ask that their data regarding the needs of the elderly be updated with more contemporaneous data in this post-pandemic society, with a sate showing no population growth.

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Thank you for your time and consideration to my concerns.

Sincerely,

*Karen W. Poole*

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