

March 10, 2011

Arthur Goddard, Chairman
South Euclid Planning Commission
1349 South Green Road
South Euclid, Ohio 44121

Dear Members of the South Euclid Planning Commission:

This letter is a request for the Planning Commission to consider additional ways to lessen adverse impacts of the proposed zoning change from an R-75 One-Family Residential zoning district to a C-2 Commercial zoning district. **A basic purpose of zoning is separation of incompatible uses such as big box commercial and single-family residential.** Historically, single-family properties directly west of the proposed retail development were protected from big box uses on Oakwood's property because Oakwood was single-family zoning, too.

TRAFFIC: If the project proceeds, our cities will need to work cooperatively to protect residential side streets from excessive volumes of commercial traffic. Many people will use Cleveland Heights side streets as part of their route to the development. Encouraging hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial development in the geographic center of a matrix of interconnected and gridded residential side streets requires a detailed plan of action to protect those side streets. The Kent, Ohio methodology and other suggestions of the consultant are a good starting point for traffic calming. Discussion about this project's pedestrian and bicycle friendly design needs to happen in a public forum to obtain others' points of view.

EFFECT ON HOMES: The South Euclid C-2 district regulations do not provide sufficient protection in terms of yards or buffers for separation of uses as incompatible as big box retail and single-family homes. The 25' minimum rear yard for a commercial building from the west lot line is insufficient and the 50'-deep landscaped area (as shown on the developer's site plan found from a link on South Euclid's website) is not enough of a transition from the small-scaled Cleveland Heights homes to a 63-acre big box development. Truck docks, dumpsters and windowless, plain facades are typically in the back of retail strip centers. From research and experience in noise control, an 8'-high masonry wall and thin strip of landscaping would not stop noise from 13'-high trucks, their sounds reflecting off of pavement and a 35'-tall building. At Severance Town Center, a 150'-deep woods is an effective buffer from Severance Circle's commercial development. Severn Road homes were beneficiaries of the planning that occurred before a large-scaled development was permitted. Similarly, before the City of South Euclid changes Oakwood's zoning from one-family to commercial, single-family homeowners need strong, binding assurances that they will not be adversely affected by this development or by subsequent developments.

To increase the project's environmental benefits, the stormwater runoff from abutting homes should also be run to Oakwood. Roof-mounted photovoltaics could provide enough electrical power to take the development and maybe these homes off the grid. Reductions to utility costs, combined with a concentrated renovation program, would bring the abutting homes into the 21st century. Other sustainable measures, such as community gardens and cisterns, would also increase the neighborhood's viability. I would welcome the opportunity to work with South Euclid on these and other initiatives to improve our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Wong
Director of Planning and Development