

From: Robert Wahl [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 9:52 PM

To: Amber Clark [REDACTED]; Township Board [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: FW: Opposed to Millions of Dollars in Township Resources Going to the Private Developer for Village of Okemos

Hello,

I have lived in the same house in the Riverwood subdivision since 1999. I love my Township and my neighborhood; however, the last couple years have been a bit rough, with construction, utility maintenance (and upgrades?), tree removal (but not tree stump removal!), and clearing of businesses that were a part of my community for over 20 years.

I am very happy that we are developing the intersection of Hamilton and Okemos Roads but am now, after reading a recent Lansing State Journal article, dismayed by the different direction it seems to be taking. This was supposed to be a revitalization and remaking of our 'Old Town' into a new Town Center. Why did we kick out Mr. White and his three establishments if we were just going to replace them with a couple of stores and a bunch of apartments? To top it off, the developer is requesting a huge additional subsidy for their private development both in redevelopment and brownfield dollars from the township?! It is very interesting that the LSJ article called the intersection "blighted" when, in fact, it appears blighted due to the extended time taken to develop the property. It's very Republican to allow a developer to make an area blighted from stalled progress only to turn around and say that the developer needs additional money; and aren't they dandy for fixing a blighted area!

The intersection was not designed to accommodate 400-600 additional residents (assuming 200 units will house 2-3 people each at least) and all the traffic and cars and congestion that will accompany them. Seems like their 600 new residents are the ones with the infrastructure needs- we are just being asked to pay for it, endure more construction headaches and hassles for another few years and then deal with significantly increased congestion at the intersection once the apartment complex is complete.

I'm OK with all of this, as long as we are developing a new Town Center and not just developing a way for the developer to use our tax money to make themselves more money.

Thanks for your consideration,

Bob

--

Bob Wahl

2206 Butternut Drive

Okemos, MI 48864-3205

[REDACTED]

From: Colleen O'Neill [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 3:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: 4/26/22 Public Hearing Comment

Good Afternoon,

I would like to submit the following comment for the Township Board of the Charter Township of Meridian public hearing on Tuesday April 26th, 2022.

We purchased a home in Okemos this past year. We chose Meridian Township to raise our family and run our small business in part because of the reasonable taxes for the public services provided.

We are happy to see attention directed at improving the intersection of Okemos Rd. and Hamilton Rd. and surrounding areas. Knowing those blocks would likely be redeveloped was a draw for us to this area.

However, the current information about the project seems to be somewhat vague. For example, the entity of Village of Okemos, LLC is named, but from what we have seen, the developer is not. It seems reasonable to want to know identity, track record, and a financial model for someone asking for millions. Perhaps this information has already been made available, but we have not been able to find it easily.

We would like to request that the following information be readily accessible to the public via the township website:

- The project team including developer, architect and general contractor.
- The complete physical and financial plan.

We would also request that these companies present to the community so the community is able to make an informed decision on whether to publicly subsidize the project, and provide meaningful feedback.

Thank you.

Colleen and Sean O'Neill

From: Daniel Peabody [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 6:02 PM

To: Amber Clark [REDACTED]

Cc: Emily Caskey [REDACTED]

Subject: Okemos Resident No Longer In Support of Proposed Downtown Redevelopment and Therefore Use of Redevelopment Funds For The Proposed Project

I'm am writing to voice concern and lack of support for the Village Of Okemos LLC proposed redevelopment project for the downtown corridor, which includes more than 200 residential apartments. Consequently, I cannot and do not support the use of Township funds to support the proposed redevelopment project. However, I would support the use of Township funds to improve the existing infrastructure in the area for current residents and/or business owners but not solely to support the Village of Okemos LLC project.

For the last several years, this project was touted as something that would ultimately provide a benefit to the residents by creating a community space and providing an uplift to the downtown. In preparation, current business operators were asked to vacate their businesses. Residents have patiently sat and watched the area sit idle for a few years. Now, the proposal is to reduce the amount of commercial space and significantly increase the number of apartments.

Building apartments does not add value for local property owners. Okemos needs more single family homes, not more apartment complexes. A complex of this size will also put additional pressure on local schools many of which already have crowded classrooms. For reference and comparison, the proposed development would be comparable in size to Meridian Meadows.

When I heard about the development a few years ago i was excited and looked forward to utilizing the space with my family. Now, I am sad to read that the proposal has significantly shifted and the Township is considering using their funds to support a lack luster project.

Daniel Peabody

From: Debbie Miller [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:57 PM

To: Amber Clark [REDACTED]

Subject: Comment for Tuesday, April 26, 2022 Public Hearing on Village of Okemos request for funding

To: Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark

Comment for Tuesday, April 26, 2022 Public Hearing on Village of Okemos request for funding

The Okemos/Hamilton Road area is currently a mess. Infrastructure upgrades are logical but environmental goals and needs must be considered along with economic ones when granting use of township funds.

The overriding concern with the Village of Okemos proposed development is the increased vehicle presence that will result due to 200 rental units being built in a 2-block area along Okemos Road. Traffic flow problems due to the Red Cedar River bottleneck remain to be seen. As for parking, ~200 surface spots are indicated on the project map but unless the rentals are restricted to single occupants, more vehicle parking will in all probability be required. Then there's the parking need of employees and patrons of any ground level commercial establishments. There is no guarantee daytime parking spaces will be made available by renters leaving for work. Issues with parking in adjacent neighborhoods appear probable and the township will be left to resolve them hopefully without incurring much cost.

The first concern connected with the infrastructure improvement fund request is the actual parking space surface. I expect the material under consideration is non-permeable asphalt as a containment pond to catch runoff is shown on the project map. I'd like to suggest that consideration be given to a permeable parking surface material and perhaps even required as a condition for granting use of township infrastructure funds. Use of a permeable surface should eliminate the need for any catch basin drainage infrastructure and that would eliminate the need for mosquito control, weed control and other basin maintenance issues. A permeable parking surface should also have less impact on property owners adjacent to the proposed containment pond.

The second concern is about utilization of the parking space surface for more than just parking cars. Meridian Township has a goal of obtaining 100% of the electricity for Township operations from renewable energy by 2035. At the same time, solar use in new development should be encouraged if not required. At the least, any funding given for infrastructure purposes should require the installation of the infrastructure needed to support future solar panel installation.

Thank you for considering these suggestions.

I would appreciate receiving an email in reply so I know you received this message in time for Tuesday's public meeting. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Deborah Miller
2757 Del Mar Dr
Okemos, MI

From: Tina Wahl [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 9:24 PM

To: Amber Clark [REDACTED]; Township Board [REDACTED]

Subject: Opposed to Millions of Dollars in Township Resources Going to the Private Developer for Village of Okemos

I live in the Riverwood subdivision and have been facing the brunt of the tree cutting, road work, gas and utility lines bridge and other improvements being made in a large part to support a massive new apartment complex called the "Village of Okemos."

I am dismayed to see the developer request such a huge subsidy for their private development both in redevelopment and brownfield dollars from the township. The footprint of the apartment complex dwarfs the paltry retail space that will be offered to the benefit of the community. Part of that retail space will be the leasing office of the developer- does that really count? Do we need another hair salon to compete against Dougl's J and the Barber shop already located at the corner?

The developer knew the site was a brownfield before they demolished everything and left us looking at a vacant wasteland for over a year. Now they say it is an underutilized space and need our brownfield and redevelopment dollars to proceed? What was their plan before demolition?

The developer knew that the intersection was not designed to accommodate 400-600 additional residents (assuming 200 units will house 2-3 people each at least) and all the traffic and cars and congestion that will accompany them. Now they come to the township with their hand out for infrastructure money because "our problems are their problems?" Really? Seems like their 600 new residents are the ones with the infrastructure needs- we are just being asked to pay for it, endure more construction hassles for another year or two and then deal with increased congestion at the intersection from here on out after the apartment complex is complete.

None of the subsidies the developer is looking for are unforeseen needs. This should have been part of their business plan going in and if the developer could not make their plan work, just don't build it. I am not in support of using township resources to support another towering apartment complex. This proposal was pitched as a town center concept and has veered way off course with little benefit to anyone but the developer.

If the township decides we need more housing- then contract with Habitat for Humanity or another low income housing developer and help support that kind of inclusive housing project with rent controlled and healthy affordable units. I would support something like that which would truly benefit the township. Not the Village of Okemos apartment complex developer.

Thanks for considering,

Tina Wahl