

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lauren Karr, and I live on County Road 521 East, adjacent to and just south of the proposed Westlyn Subdivision (PUD-25-015, PP-25-015) project. I strongly object to the proposed use of the farm land, and I strongly oppose the plans to build the proposed subdivision at this location. I would like to take time to present a few of my concerns with you so that I can feel confident that you are making educated decisions for our community- not merely based on potential financial gains that the Town of Plainfield stands to benefit from if this proposed subdivision is passed; but instead, comprehensively, based also on: the desires and opinions of those in the affected neighborhoods and community; community-impact; short- and long-term effects of the destruction and depletion of farm land; construction of more homes leading to over development; and many types of environmental pollutions (including light pollution, noise pollution, and ground water pollution) that may impact the town, the developed land, and the surrounding farms and homes.

In December 2018, I submitted a letter to the Plan Commission regarding Lennar Homes' proposal for the Montgomery/Mongan project- a proposed subdivision of 261 homes on the same land as the current Westlyn Subdivision project. It is crucial to note that the current Westlyn Subdivision project is seeking to develop 237 acres, which is over 100 acres more than the previous Montgomery/Mongan project; as well as build 473 homes, which is over 200 more homes than previously proposed. In addition, the current Westlyn Subdivision proposal now includes the 20-acre plot south of Hadley Road, which is adjacent to my family's home and property and which was not a part of the previous Montgomery/Mongan proposal. My letter to the Plan Commission, dated December 3, 2018, is available at: <https://www.townofplainfield.com/DocumentCenter/View/2860/Letter-from-Lauren-Karr-to-the-Plan-Commission-PDF>.

In my 2018 letter, I expressed my grave concerns regarding the proposed development in this area and how it could negatively impact community residents, including my family specifically. I also shared detailed information about the personal concerns I had at that time for my child with autism. Presenting my letter to the Plan Commission at the December 3, 2018 meeting was one of the most encouraging experiences I have had as a member of this community. The Plan Commission not only listened intently to what I had to say, they valued my words and took them to heart. Lennar ended up requesting a

continuance, and ultimately withdrew their plan for the Montgomery/Mongan project, which was not the right fit for the town at that time. After the meeting, I had commission members speak to me individually, thanking me for sharing my family's story and letting me know that my family and I were valuable members of the community. One commission member spoke with me about their grandchild's diagnosis of autism and how they truly understood the concerns that I had at that time. Additionally, a commission member took my hands and said that while they could not and would not want to stop all development from coming to Plainfield, they promised that as a Plan Commission member, they would do everything within their power to make sure that the development that did happen was done safely, in the right ways, and for the right reasons. I left the December 3, 2018 Plan Commission meeting in tears. Not because I was frustrated or discouraged, but because I felt heard, validated, and valued. I felt true belonging in my community, and believed with all of my heart that the Plan Commission was making decisions based on the 12 core Community Values that Plainfield is built upon, including: kindness, respect, accountability, dignity, and integrity. To this day, I am filled with gratitude for the encouragement I received by the Plan Commission that evening.

Although there has been some change of commission members since that time in 2018, it is still my earnest and wholehearted belief that the commission truly cares about the community, and will uphold Plainfield's core Community Values in their decision making. In order to do this, I urge the commission to read my previous letter in its entirety, if time permits, and keep the safety of all community residents in mind when voting on the Westlyn Subdivision project, which I am strongly opposed to. As a brief excerpt, in 2018, I shared the following:

Personally, my family and I see this as even more of a direct threat to our safety because we have a child with autism. A 2012 study published in the medical journal Pediatrics shows that 49% of children with autism have a tendency to wander away from or bolt from safe environments and into dangerous ones (Anderson, Kiely Law, Daniels, Rice, Mandell, Hagopian, & Law, 2012). 65% of these incidents include a close call with traffic; 56% of families reported that elopement was the most stressful behavior that their child exhibited; and 43% of parents reported that this behavior interfered with their ability to sleep at night (Anderson et al., 2012). A 2017 study completed by the National Autism Association found that nearly 1/3 of all autism-related missing person cases related to wandering and elopement ended in death or required medical attention (McIlwain & Fournier, 2017). 18% of those

deaths were caused directly by the child being struck by a vehicle, and children ages 5-9 years old showed the highest number of deaths in this study (McIlwain & Fournier, 2017). My child with autism is 5 years old. Fear of my child eloping or wandering has kept me up at night. It's something that his medical team addresses. I have a very safe neighborhood. I chose that for my family and for my child. This is one of the primary reasons I purchased my home. This proposed R4 subdivision brings over development to our rural neighborhood. This proposed project and the increased infrastructure that would be needed to support this development makes me fear for the safety of my child should, God forbid, something terrible ever happen. These proposed changes bring a direct threat to the safety of my family. This over development makes my neighborhood less safe for my family.

Although nearly 7 years have passed since my last letter to the commission, and my child with autism is now 7 years older, safety and privacy are still of my utmost concern. Since the time of my previous letter, in 2022, a child with autism tragically died in an accidental drowning in a subdivision nearby the proposed Westlyn project. The Plainfield community is still mourning this loss. Rapid growth and over development are not always the right choice, nor the safest choice for the community. I am incredibly grateful for a Plan Commission that takes the safety of its residents seriously. The Westlyn Subdivision plan not only impacts my safe and quiet rural neighborhood on a dead-end street like the previously proposed and withdrawn Montgomery/Mongan plan did, but it also takes it a step further- bringing the plan directly to the small 20-acre plot adjacent to my home and property. The Westlyn Subdivision plan is not in my family's best interest, and I must speak out against it.

As this commission has proven to me before, the mark of true leadership is not found in how many businesses or houses the town builds, but instead is found in how leaders listen to and care for our community's most valued resource- its people. I have long held on to the feeling of value and encouragement that the Plan Commission gave me 7 years ago, and I have long held on to the promise that was given to me- that development will come to Plainfield, but that when it is done, it will be done the right way. This proposed subdivision- at over 100 acres more and 200 homes more than the 2018 proposal- is not the right way.

I urge the council to hold true to their word and not put value in prolific development, but instead to put value in what is best for the community, the people, and doing development

the right way. The scale of this project- including building 24 homes and 2 retention ponds on the small 20-acre plot adjacent to my home is not the right way. If the 2018 Lennar Homes' Montgomery/Mongan project was not the right way, then this much larger Pulte Westlyn Subdivision project is not the right way.

Not only do I strongly oppose and object to this current proposal due to the issues I've already discussed, but I also feel that the destruction and depletion of farm land to build this proposed subdivision, the destruction of wildlife habitat, the environmental pollution and hazards that could occur with the construction of the proposed subdivision and the subsequent road infrastructure needed to support it, and the dangers that come to our town and neighborhoods due to over-development conflict with many of the 12 key Community Values that the Town of Plainfield leadership has chosen to morally and ethically guide the town's decision making. In fact, in some cases, I believe this proposed plan directly breaks these values. Commission members, as I have previously mentioned, I can attest firsthand to how you have been faithful to these 12 Community Values in your decision making, and how the community- including my family- has benefitted from your integrity. I urge you to stand strong in these values, and allow them to guide your decision. I urge you to listen to community members, value safety, save farm land, save wildlife habitat, demand that development include larger lots and more green space, and protect the safe, quiet, rural neighborhoods that are truly the heartbeat of Plainfield.

Sincerely,

Lauren Karr

References:

Anderson, C., Kiely Law, J., Daniels, A., Rice, C., Mandell, D. S., Hagopian, L., Law, P. A. (2012). Occurrence and Family Impact of Elopement in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Pediatrics*, 130 (5), 870-877. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2012-0762

McIlwain, L. and Fournier, W. (2017). Mortality & Risk In ASD Wandering/Elopement 2011-2016. Retrieved from <http://nationalautismassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/NAAMortalityRiskASDElopement.pdf>