

Petition Opposing Spot Rezoning

Gifft Hill Land, LLC

Parcel 9-3 Estate Glucksberg, St. John

Application ZAJ-23-1

We, the undersigned neighbors, residents, and concerned citizens of St. John, express our formal and ardent opposition to DPNR Application No. ZAJ-23-1 submitted by Gift Hill Land, LLC (GHL) requesting that Parcel 9-3 Estate Glucksberg, St. John be rezoned from R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) to R-4 (Residential-Medium Density). We believe that such rezoning in contrary to the existing neighborhood and shall disrupt the social fabric as well as adversely impact the surrounding properties and environment. We therefore ask the Senate to deny this request so as to protect the public from inconsistent and irresponsible development that shall both damage the community and endanger people’s health and safety.

Specifically, we are concerned that the proposed rezoning of R-2 to R-4 that permanently changes all development rights including:

- increasing allowable height from two (2) stories to three (3) stories
- increasing density from two (2) dwellings per parcel to 120 persons per acre
- locating the highest-density zoning available on St. John in the middle of an established light residential area
- allowing 73 units as two story buildings of permitted design, 25 times the density of Bellevue
- allowing three stories so 109 units of the same plan, 37 times the density of Bellevue
- allowing this applicant, or others, to build Grande Bay like project that is also on one acre

We also urge the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) to 1) revoke the existing permits that granted in error and violate the governing laws, 2) issue a cease and desist order due to the violations of permit conditions and trespass, and 3) deny the request to rezone because the proposed conceptual design similarly violates additional laws. We believe that any development in the area should be in keeping with the existing residential development and prioritize the welfare of the many neighboring residents and the preservation of the environment.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

 Julie Fortunato

06/09/23

Signature

Julie Fortunato

Name

Furthermore the proposed design submitted to support the zoning application does not comply with the VI Code and other governing laws:

- The developer characterizes the project as “affordable housing” but it is neither affordable nor legitimate housing. As a comparison, neighboring Bellevue provides two-bedroom apartments at under around \$900/month while GHL is offering a 150sqft bedroom and a bath for \$1,600/month base rent. Bellevue provides parking, gardens, and a community center while GHL provides little parking, a shared kitchen, and a food truck. Bellevue has stood up against storms while GHL cannot demonstrate it meets life safety and building code requirements.
- The conceptual design shows four (4) buildings of a similar footprint as the approved “single-family dwellings” (Phase 1 & 3), two (2) buildings of a different footprint (Phase 2), a separate container and deck (Ari’s Hideout), and a food truck (Rolling Smoke BBQ).
- Even if approved, R-4 zoning does not allow restaurants so the proposed food truck does not comply with the VI Code.
- Assuming that the proposed six (6) buildings are all the same design as previously approved, the rezoned design would propose 72 units. If the design changes to three-stories as allowed in R-4, the design would propose 108 units. Plus Ari’s Hideout for a total of between 73 to 109 units on one acre. This is far greater than any other housing project on St John including Sirenusa, Grande Bay, Calabash, or Bellevue.
- As a comparison, Bellevue provides 36 duplexes or 72 units as compared to the 73 units of GHL (if two-story) but Bellevue is located on 25.5 acres so a two-story GHL project shall be more than twenty-five (25x) times greater density or a three-story GHL project would be thirty-seven (37x) times greater density.
- The conceptual design shows a single lane driveway with parallel parking for twenty (20) cars and six (6) spaces along the road at the BBQ food truck. However parking requirements for a mixed use development, such as proposed, require one (1) space per dwelling or guest room, one (1) space per five staff, and one (1) space per five patrons. As a result the project should provide at least 80 parking spaces and perhaps over 120 spaces; 4 to 6 times the amount currently proposed. At a minimum of 300sqft per space by code, this project does not provide the minimum parking of between 24,000sqft to 36,000sqft which would occupy between half and three quarters of the entire parcel.

Examples of container housing that would be allowed in R-4 zoned property:



