



## [EXTERNAL MAIL] Zoning application CCZPoo85-25, Parcel No. 15 Estate Susannaberg

From ted chouiniere <vwhead@gmail.com>

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To Leia LaPlace <leia.laplace@dprn.vi.gov>; Keshoi Samuel <keshoi.samuel@dprn.vi.gov>

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Good day Ms. LaPlace, Mr. Samuel,

I am writing to ask DPNR to **recommend \*against\* the rezoning of Parcel 15**, for any use not already granted by right.

In all actuality, **I would like to see a moratorium on \*all\* rezonings and variances on St. John.**

**Primarily**, we have seen very, very few of these rezonings follow through with their promises and intentions, which are all presented as positives for the community and the island, but are often sold off to developers with deeper pockets, or just used to pull the wool over DPNR's eyes while the community-destructive plans are actually developed.

The rezoning / variance list is long with these tricks. I am sure we will disagree on some of the specifics of what was discussed, agreed, allowed, and built on certain parcels, but the overall pattern remains the same - promise positives, receive a wide-open zoning designation that values the parcel 10 at times its previous worth, and build whatever you want without further oversight, destroying another previously-quiet residential area with incongruent uses. The original zoning maps were created with the care and understanding that there should not be significant spot rezonings, with continuity of uses and pockets of commercial and industrial needs. Breaking beyond this clean framework violates all the promises of the established master planning, leaving only the rich neighborhoods [with strong HOAs and attorneys on speed dial] to be able to fend for themselves.

I am a neighbor just a little bit further up Centerline road, in Adrian, where one of those rezonings has [very] negatively affected the residential neighborhoods. On 5C Adrian, Midway grocery [and then gas station, and then food truck, and then cobbled-together non-engineered [permitted at all?] outdoor bar, restaurant, and nightclub] has taken over the entire area. Very, [very] loud Spanish music is played outside nearly every night, into the late hours and it's louder than we can hear our own music playing in our own homes. Flood lights create a giant halo of blue light all night long, where stars and the milky way could previously be seen. The gate and wall is inherently dangerous, built right up against the road, making it impossible to see out of the property without getting halfway into the lane, and \*will\* result in fatal traffic accidents.

Other changes have been equally damaging to other areas of the island, and based on greed development, rather than for the good of the island's inhabitants. Other parcels in Susannaberg get rezonings for the promise of organic farms and community spaces, leased instead to - more loud bars, restaurants, and an outdoor concert venue. Parcels in Contant get rezonings with the promise of

middle-income market-rate condos, just to be sold to luxury timeshare developers. Gifft Hill gets variances for worker housing, and instead builds an absolute shantytown of stacked shipping containers, with complete disregard for commercial inhabitant safety codes or structural adequacy. Wharfside Village, in town, gets their shopping center rezoned "not for a hotel - just to make the jewelry stores legal" - to turn around and develop a hotel with no parking, no ADA access, and life and safety violations. Same for the new hotel at Dolphin Market - no ADA, no elevators, no fire separation between units, and construction within a building housing restaurant kitchens.

Multiple parcels on the island have started with the classic "placement of a mobile home" permit in R-1 or R-2 zones, just to completely obliterate the site, clearing and excavating from property line to property line [and sometimes well over into neighboring parcels], then store rocks and heavy equipment on the parcel, before asking for very-commercial rezonings. Sometimes the parcels are just held for investment [and continued storage of machinery, leaking hydraulic fluids, and junk] at this point, other times development continues, with projects like shipping depots and large warehousing buildings constructed in what used to be residential land, surrounded by the fractured neighborhoods.

**The second reason** I feel there should be no further rezonings is that DPNR does not have a grasp on the multitude of non-conforming, existing uses occurring all over the island. This aspect has little to do with the rezonings themselves - sometimes there's overlap where a rezoned property has built beyond what was specified as allowed, but often times, these completely-prohibited uses are occurring on the original zoning designations, without any request for permission to do so, and often zero permits or oversight by DPNR to build that illegal use properly and safely.

The [map the developers presented at the hearing](#) for this rezoning is an excellent exhibit for this problem. Two of the yellow restaurants on the map [Shambles and Windmill Bar] are built on multiple non-allowed [R-1 and P] parcels, and have never received permits for their ongoing, cobbled-together work. Half of the very-commercial enterprises on that map [landscaper yards, car repair shops, boat repair and storage, laundromat, offices, self-storage, heavy equipment yards] are on R-1 parcels. The requester of this very rezoning owns another parcel on that map with its own violations, with commercial car repair shops spilling over into neighboring undeveloped parcels.

Beyond that map, the nonconforming zoning uses continue throughout the island in R-1 and R-2 zones - again, aside from the strong-HOA rich neighborhoods who can organize and legally fight. Multi-apartment buildings with no permits and no code enforcement, which occasionally burn to the ground, thankfully killing none of the renter inhabitants but a few of their pets [Grunwald, in that case, but all over...] Dockyards and derelict, sinking boat storage in residential zones. Residences operated as hotels, with half a dozen keys where there should be a max of 2 dwellings. Parcels that receive specific variances for restaurants, but instead are used for more car repair shops. Bars and restaurants built in flood zones, without parking, on R-1, with no permits.

To be honest, it's very tiring and disappointing to see DPNR continue to play whack-a-mole with each of the newest developer's promises, while being tricked nearly every time into allowing further destruction of this island's resources and its happy inhabitation by its residents. I feel it would be a good time for St. John, and DPNR, to step back, identify and correct decades of uncontrolled and illegal development, before even attempting to consider another rezoning to create another wounded hole in the island's residential fabric.

Thank you for your time,  
ted chouiniere

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