

124 North Third Street
Delano, MN 55328
September 8, 2009

Delano Planning Commission
City of Delano
234 2nd Street North
Delano, MN 55328

To Planning Commission Members:

I am unable to attend the September 14 Public Hearing of the Delano Planning Commission. I submit this letter in response to the proposed zoning change in lots 11-18, Block 1, Litchfield Addition.

For 25 years I have been a resident of Block 1, Litchfield Addition. This neighborhood is one of Delano's oldest and represents the rich heritage of the city. The residence I occupy at 124 North Third Street, (ID 107022001970) is one of the most historic and elegant houses in town. As government leaders plan the future of community, I believe they should draft ordinances that allow citizens to secure, enhance, and enjoy their homes as well as encourage responsible property maintenance and preserve the cultural heritage that is a hallmark of progressive communities.

I fully support the commercial, business, and corporate growth of Delano. The economic and social well being of the city is dependent on a thriving business climate. The two industrial venues currently available for business and industrial enterprise offer the opportunity for the growth of commercial interests. While such growth is necessary to civic progress, it should not inappropriately mix and harmfully detract from existing residential neighborhoods. The logical avenue for expansion of West Edge Properties is to take advantage of designated commercial/industrial venues.

The property at 116 North Third Street North (ID 107022001060), which abuts my residence, while not owned directly by West Edge Properties, is coincidentally affiliated with the interested parties. If the care and maintenance of this property is evidence of the owner's sense of civic responsibility, their motivations must be questioned. On two occasions this season I have mowed the front lawn at this location. This pattern of deferred maintenance poses blight on the city that impairs both commercial growth and residential viability.

The expansion of commercial and industrial interests in this neighborhood is ill advised. West Edge Properties, LLC is not currently providing adequate maintenance and infrastructure to support their operation in a residential district. The former parking lot (ID 107022001190) has become a staging area for over-the-road vehicles and miscellaneous contrivances that are inconsistent with pleasant residential life. This property has held a deteriorated motor home and currently houses a large, unsightly, dilapidated boat. How do these factors fit West Edge Properties' business plan? How do these factors benefit the city of Delano? Trucking and vehicular activity occur late at night and early in the morning to the annoyance of nearby residents. Regarding traffic in the neighborhood, since the arrival of West Edge Properties, semi-trailer traffic has increased significantly. As a result, families and day care operations must be additionally concerned that young children are subject to unnecessary harm.

A related matter is the retail outlet housed at 300 Railroad Avenue. I will never buy a wedding dress, but if I were so inclined I would avoid a shop around which 10 inch weeds flourish. On one occasion this summer I personally mowed the boulevard adjacent to Jewel Bridal Shop in an effort to improve the appearance of the neighborhood and eradicate noxious weeds. Owners of this property are commercially affiliated with West Edge Properties.

West Edge Properties is currently conducting manufacturing operations in violation of the zoning ordinance. They should be required to cease this operation rather than allowed to manipulate the ordinance. The zoning ordinance was designed to accommodate the dual nature of the neighborhood and should be carried out as written. Rather than detract from a positive community attribute, this area of the city should be promoted as an appealing and vital residential district. Revitalizing the residential core of the city is an investment in future prosperity. Preservation-based community development not only honors our heritage, but also creates affordable housing, generates jobs, increases civic participation, and bolsters a community's sense of place.

The Delano Dream Team, comprised of committed, conscientious citizens, is dedicated to enhance the city's assets. The proposed rezoning detracts from the goals of this broad-based, civic-minded effort.

This is not just a question of commercial expansion. It is quality of life issue that city leaders must address. The injudicious integration of commercial and residential elements lessens the property value of homes owned by responsible, long-term residents. This reduction in property values ultimately reduces the city's net worth.

In conclusion, I urge the planning commission to reject the request for rezoning on four standpoints: 1) The mixing of residential and commercial interests is unhealthy for the growth and prosperity of the city and its residents. 2) West Edge Properties and its affiliates do not provide adequate maintenance of currently-owned property. 3) West Edge Properties has ample opportunity to relocate in areas designated commercial/industrial. 4) Increased commercial and manufacturing activity poses a threat to the safety and well being of the neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration of this position and for your dedication to responsible community planning.

In a sprit of community,

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