

June 23, 2021

Dear Durham Planning Board Member:

This letter indicates my strenuous objection to the proposed zoning changes from Residence Coastal (**RC**) to Rural (**R**) for several Durham land parcels near the Johnson Creek Neighborhood, as proposed by the Durham Agricultural Commission. I am a resident of the Johnson Creek neighborhood, which could be acutely negatively impacted by this proposed zoning change, both in terms of quality of life and property value. Consider this description by a residential neighborhood homeowner impacted by a commercial chicken farm in North Carolina:

"Your throat starts to hurt...It smells like a lot of ammonia, and sometimes, just dead rotting meat."

This change would impact neighboring residential property owners who purchased their homes in an established residential neighborhood, not a rural neighborhood. My overall takeaway from the agricultural commission's May meeting is that the Agricultural Commission's general position is that the proposed new R zoning would not result in substantially different impacts compared to the current RC zoning. Whether my interpretation of the Commission's perspective is accurate or not, the potential for acutely negative impacts on my neighborhood's property and quality of life are substantial.

I understand that the major difference between RC and R zoning is with the keeping livestock/poultry/goats/etc. for **COMMERCIAL USE**. I also understand that under the *current* RC zoning designation, the keeping of livestock is permitted *with approval* on a case-by-case basis, which gives neighboring property owners the opportunity to share their concerns and request that conditions be imposed on specified uses for each case submitted for approval. Under the proposed R zoning, the keeping of livestock would be permitted unconditionally with no approvals needed. This includes fur-bearing animal livestock, which is *not* permitted under the current RC zoning but is unconditionally permitted with R zoning.

As discussed in the Agricultural Commission's June meeting, there are no planned **setback** requirements being placed on the lots under consideration for rezoning which allows **livestock fencing** to go **right up to the property line**. A point made at the Commission's May meeting was that the land behind many of our homes along Shearwater Street is currently owned by the NH Fish and Game Commission who has the ability to sell it, thus opening up this lot for commercial farming right up to our shared property line.

I do not see any advantage to this proposed zoning change but envision many disadvantages, including, but not limited to:

- ***Disruption of local ecosystem (ground water run off with the river/bay so close) and Soil Erosion***
- ***Negative Impact on community well(s) including water quality and supply***
- ***Negative Impacts to local air quality***
- ***Negative Impact on value of neighboring properties due to nuisance issues created by noise, odor, rodents, and visual intrusions***
- ***Negative Impact on peace, privacy & enjoyment of neighboring properties due to nuisance issues created by noise, odor, rodents, and visual intrusions***

While there may not be any specific commercial farming operations currently being considered near our neighborhood, this proposed zoning change paves the way for drastically negative impacts on our neighborhood's quality of life and property value. Please consider the rights and interests of the existing residential property owners potentially impacted by this proposed change by denying this rezoning request.

Sincerely,



Thomas Higginbotham  
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