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October 23, 2022

Hon. Margarita Alban, Chair  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
Town of Greenwich

STORM WATER & SEWAGE ISSUES REGARDING POTENTIAL GLEN COURT  
FLOODING IF THE SMILOW CENTER IS APPROVED

Dear Ms. Alban:

My wife and I live opposite Glen Court Pond in one of several houses that may flood if construction and subsequent operation of the Smilow Center is approved.

Last year, the Commission bravely affirmed the durability of residential zoning of Central Greenwich; identified the conflicting goals between the proposed zoning change and POCD guidance; acknowledged that overflow parking cannot be accommodated by already filled Hospital garages and spoke out against increased traffic congestion on Lake, Perryridge, Lafayette and William streets if Smilow were to be built. Of greatest importance, the Commission ruled that our compact residential neighborhood is not a suitable location for another medical center.

This letter is sent to express our belief that the safety and value of our home will be significantly compromised if Glen Court Pond floods more frequently than it already does. This assertion is based on the Hospital engineers' estimate of an additional flow of 150 gallons per minute into overtaxed neighborhood storm drain lines. This new intake, as well as the flow of mud and contaminants that will cause the pond to overflow its banks and storm drains during construction, is likely to flood our basement and those of our neighbors. In fact, no plan to address pond flooding during construction and beyond has been presented to the Commission or to residents.

Our opposition to this project is not the product of a reflexive "Not In My Backyard" campaign. Rather, it is based on the engineers' baseless **hope** that issues of overtaxed water lines and pond flooding during three years of construction will quietly go away. In fact, when effluent is sheeting down Lake Avenue from blasting and excavating it will have no place to go except into the pond. Similarly, when storm water flows through an undersized and ancient storm water system the resulting flooding is likely to create devastating environmental damage. But the Hospital has never chosen to offer an Environmental Impact Study. Instead, Greenwich Hospital has mounted a months long charm campaign in the guise of a "Neighborhood Advisory Council". The Council has been derided by its own members, most recently during a P&Z hearing, as an institutional smoke screen designed to avoid dealing with uncomfortable facts. Here are two:

**1) THE SMILOW PLAN CREATES NEW DEFICIENCIES IN STORM WATER CAPACITY.**

Engineers from Redniss & Mead, together with their consultant GZA, have long expressed doubt as to sending drainage downstream from Lafayette Place to Dearfield Drive through a single junction in front of 38 Lake Avenue, the Bethel AME Church and our contiguous neighbor. The existing system is unable to handle the engineers' own prediction of an ADDITIONAL 150 gallons per minute of Smilow-related flow during and after construction.

**Redniss states:** “As noted during the discussion with the Engineering Division, there is a capacity concern with the 18” pipe when combining all proposed development flow with existing offsite flow.” A new approach addresses this issue but engineers have privately told us that the fix “might” work.

**DPW and our Town Planner have posed the following questions for the Hospital in recent days. They speak to our home’s vulnerability but appear to remain unanswered by the Hospital:**

1. DPW has asked the Hospital team to reply to key questions. Among them:  
“How does the ground water flow now into the pond and is there any discharge from the existing buildings either through pipes and from over-ground flow to the Glen Court Pond?”
2. During construction, what are the assumptions for stored water flow and what the assumptions are for additional water and sediment during a storm, and where this water is expected to go?
3. From neighbor accounts, Glen Court Pond runs continuously and floods in typical thunderstorms. The construction is going well below the water table. Where is the water going to go while the project is under construction if Glen Court pond is at capacity? Please provide all the calculations used in your responses



Home of the Lewis Family across from the pond’s major storm drain.

**2) THE SMILOW PLAN CREATES NEW DEFICIENCIES IN AREA SEWAGE CAPACITY.**

DPW has indicated, “Offsite sewer improvements will be required to offset the impacts of sanitary sewer flows from the proposed Smilow Center facility. Based on the currently estimated increase in flow it is anticipated that the Sewer Division will require the Hospital to perform up to a maximum length of 1,500 linear feet of sewer replacement and sewer rehabilitation work. This work will be within the sewer shed as the proposed Smilow Center and will likely include replacement of some 8-inch sewers on Lake Avenue between Dearfield Drive and Lafayette Place.”

Should there be any doubt as to the precarious storm water and sewage systems in this area and the attendant pond flooding that is certain to endanger Glen Court homes during construction and beyond? The following disturbing revelation answers this question:


In the following text DPW actually instructs the hospital to discharge construction runoff from the collection junction’s manhole onto Lake Avenue and into the pond as follows:

“DPW is requiring that the proposed storm drain within Lake Avenue” [in front of the Bethel AME Church] “be constructed before the site work begins. This is being requested so that the on-site manhole can be installed and can be used as the discharge point for the storm water sediment basin/trap and the dewatering/groundwater pumping system during construction.”

We urge the Commission to again reject the Hospital’s application to change our neighborhood’s zoning. If approved, the stage will be set for future challenges to residential zoning within the Hospital’s neighborhood. Further, the proposed Smilow Center’s garage, to be built under the water table with its attendant release of massive amounts of construction effluent down Lake Avenue and into Glen Court Pond, will threaten the wellbeing and value of our home and of others on Glen Court.

Very truly yours,

  
Dale Lewis

  
Debra Lewis

cc: Katie DeLuca, Director, Planning & Zoning