

December 5, 2019

City of McMinnville Planning Department

Attn: Charles Darnell

231 NE Fifth Street

McMinnville, Oregon 97128



Dear Mr. Darnell,

Ref: Stafford

The following comments are in regard to tonight's Planning Commission meeting on Stafford LLC North proposal, and based on a rather quick one day review of the 377 page pdf package.

In summary, I am not opposed to the development, but do have a few concerns. I can see a lot effort went into this package by Stafford and McMinnville city staff.

1.A. Item. Packaged not staffed for comment to ODOT and Oregon DEQ.

1.B. Discussion. I note this package was staffed to a number of McMinnville city departments, as well as other external key stakeholders. There are two agencies who were not, apparently, canvassed that I believe should be asked to review and comment: ODOT and Oregon DEQ. My rationale for including these two agencies is the addition of hundreds of vehicles coming in and out of this proposed development may exceed the capacity of key road intersections (e.g., Hwy 99 and Baker Creek; Hwy 99 and 2nd street by police station) to safely and efficiently process vehicles through the intersections. And this is just one of multiple new housing developments that will result in many more vehicles on local roads. There is also a possible worrisome vehicle emissions impact from these additional vehicles – in a city and county that currently do not require vehicle emissions testing.

2.A. Item: Assessment of Stafford LLC ability to complete the project in a timely manner.

2.B. Discussion. Someone within City of McMinnville needs to conduct a review (e.g., Counsel and Financial Departments) to determine whether Stafford has the financial resources to complete the full project. The more "due diligence" performed up front, the less chance of disappointment and possible litigation.

3.A. Item: Traffic throughput. Page 99, #5 states: "The streets are adequate to support the anticipated traffic, and the development will not overload the streets outside the planned area."

3.B. Discussion. I agree that street capacity in close proximity to the Stafford development should be adequate. However, I wholeheartedly disagree with their opinion (and city staff concurrence) that traffic "will not overload the streets outside the planned area." The downtown core roads were not designed to carry the traffic volumes we will soon be experiencing. There are two key downtown road intersections already suffering capacity shortfalls: 1) the intersection of Baker Creek Rd and Hwy 99 and 2, the recently renovated intersection of 2nd street and Hwy 99 by the police station.

The intersection of Baker and Hwy 99 is so backed up at some times of the day that I take side streets to get around this intersection. I'm sure many other drivers are doing the same out of frustration – which is probably frustrating the residents of homes on side streets. A dedicated left turn light is need now (!) to go from Baker onto northbound Hwy 99. With the upcoming addition of hundreds of vehicles belonging to residents of the new apartment complex off of Evans St., soon to be followed hundreds more from Baker Creek North development (corner of Baker and Hill), the bottleneck will become exponentially worse.

A similar situation exists at the intersection of 2nd St and Hwy 99. It often takes me takes me two traffic light cycles to get through the intersection headed up towards city hall. The addition of new homes on the west side of McMinnville will continue to add to the traffic load at this intersection. I can't recall the last time I noted traffic measuring devices (air hoses across the road) installed at these intersections to count vehicles. This needs to be done ASAP. I'm not sure whose jurisdiction this falls under, perhaps, ODOT.

4.A. Item. Home spacing and fire risk.

4.B. Discussion. I note the package was staffed to McMinnville Fire Dept but I did not note their response. Stafford's proposal calls for some high density homes to be separated by a mere six feet. I'm not a fire expert but common sense and past news reports seemingly indicates that when one home catches on fire, odds are that others in close proximity will as well. In that area of town, the winds blow pretty well, and the fire dept is at least 10-15 minutes away. With significant housing growth on the western side of town, it might make good business sense to construct a first responder site nearby for fire, ambulance, and police.

5.A. Item. Architectural standards for residential construction.

5.B. Discussion. I like the proposed city requirements levied upon Stafford regarding home design, materials, etc. It appears the City Planner is the decision authority. I would suggest creating a 3 person Architectual Review Board with at least one member being a certified architect, tasked to review and approve residential designs. I'm not sure what happened at Stafford North currently under development at the corner of Baker and Hill. The homes built and currently under construction there are not pleasing to the eye! We can and must do better in this regard.

6.A. Item. Pedestrian Safety.

6.B. Discussion. I note the proposed crosswalk markings across Baker St. With so many local drivers forgetting to turn on headlights, having burned out headlights, it's important these crosswalks be well lit. The best example I've seen is in downtown Wilsonville near the city park where pedestrians hit the crosswalk button and the lights come on in the roadbed warning drivers. Too many pedestrians being killed in Oregon. This safety feature should be funded.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Pfahler".

Markus Pfahler

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