

July 2020 PC - Case #20-013 MA (Ridge Road)

Dear Planning Commission Members,

My name is Laura Hughes and I live at 555 Penn Rd. in Hopkins, SC. I appreciate this opportunity to express my thoughts about rezoning the acreage at 1133 Ridge Road. I am opposed to rezoning from Rural to RS-HD for the following reasons:

- 1) We have two well-constructed plans: the 2005 Southeast Richland Neighborhood Master Plan and the 2014 Richland County Strategic Community Master Plan, guiding our actions. Both plans have designated this area as Rural (RU). Much thought, research and resources went into these plans and they should be honored.
- 2) The RU District is intended to provide areas for low density agricultural uses and very-low density single-family, detached residential home construction. Preservation of open space, farmland and rural areas, and protection of existing rural communities are the stated objectives.
- 3) The Richland County Strategic Community Master Plan Roadway Statistics note that traffic volume is projected to increase by 85% for Leesburg Rd. and 77% for Garners Ferry Rd. in the 30 years spanning 2005-2035.
- 4) The infrastructure needed to support the growth that accompanies high density housing is not currently available.

Thank you for your time and service to our community.

Kind regards,

Laura W. Hughes
555 Penn Road
Hopkins, SC 29061

Hi everyone.

I say NO to the rezoning of the Ridge Road property #20-013 ma. This rezoning will only have a negative affect on the Lower Richland Community.

I have lived here for 35+ years. I moved here because it's rural. I stay here because it's rural. My neighbors and I enjoy the wildlife, fresh air and quietness of the rural setting and we want it to stay.

I suggest we stick with The Strategic Community Master Plan for Lower Richland.

"...envisions a future where communities continue to grow and prosper and lands valued for their natural, agricultural, or historical importance are conserved."

<http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-Development/Neighborhood-Planning>

Most of our water is supplied by wells. It's a major concern of ours that rezoning for crowded development will contaminate our water.

Also. Our roads are few and narrow. Our schools small. Wall-to-wall neighborhood/developments will cause major congestion on our roads and over-crowding in our schools.

This is a military fly zone. This area also needs to stay rural for safety reasons.

Last but not least. There is an abundance of wildlife here including threatened and endangered species such as the pileated woodpecker, Milkweed (essential food for the Monarch Butterfly) and our beloved Whippoorwills.

Please do NOT let this rezoning go through. It would be devastating to our small and quaint community.

Thank you.

Majken and David Blackwell
4600 Old Leesburg Road
Hopkins, SC 29061

My name is L.Z. Harrison, Jr. and I am a 20 year resident of Lower Richland County at 117 Clearview Dr, Hopkins, SC 29061.

I am writing to have my comments read on the record as part of the planning commission meeting schedule for July 9th, 2020 pm to discuss rezoning from RU to Medium Density of this property located on Ridge Road.

I am opposed to this request as I was approximately 10 years ago when another rezoning attempt was made for this property by a developer. To rezone this property to medium density and allow for the construction of medium density construction would be a disservice to the rural area that we all enjoy and raise our families.

First, the infrastructure that we have in this area is developed for a rural Designation and not for medium density. If approved we would find ourselves with continuing decay and overuse of the infrastructure we have in our area, which is mainly made up of 2 lane roads that are already crumbling as it is. Leesburg Road, Lower Richland, and Ridge Road are already heavily trafficked areas with the Fort and Camp McCrady traffic as well as residents. To continue to add to this with medium density construction would overtax the area.

Secondly, as a retired military resident, I am concerned what this rezoning and construction would do to the local military installations, Fort Jackson and McEntire JNGB. If it is not within the buffer in the master plan for this area it is very close. This buffer area was designed to limit construction in these areas so as to maintain the military bases the help prevent citizens complaints of noise, as well as flyovers, etc. To allow medium density construction would possibly result in the loss of our military bases as the line between them will become in contention in the future.

The residents adjoining and within the neighborhoods in this area chose this area for the rural nature to include the spaciousness of our lots and properties. We are a close knit community even though we are spread out. Richland county is rapidly developing its rural areas into urban areas and this action would be detrimental to this area.

I urge the commission to recommend denial of the rezoning and maintain the rural designation of said property.

Thank you for allowing me to be heard.

L. Z. Harrison Jr.
117 Clearview Dr, Hopkins, SC 29061
803-776-6771

Dear Planning Committee Members:

As retired residents living {within 1 mile of proposed area rezoning} since 1983, my husband and I would like to express our concerns and DISAPPROVAL of the request for Zoning Changes for the property located on Ridge Road .

All of the homes in this area are planned rural lots with mostly 1 home per 2 acres. We located to this area for that reason and most of the residents have been residents for many years and are retired. We love and value the wildlife and peace and quiet in this area.

The idea of MEDIUM DENSITY is quite disturbing to us and many of our neighbors. There are issues of increased traffic and possible accident increases. The law enforcement department is already spread thin. The roads in and out of this area are all two lanes. There is no public transportation. Fire and ambulance service would be overburdened. Property values will decline. Our home is located off the "ridge" with a pond that would be subject to runoff. Several neighbors also have wells for water. We have no desire to be incorporated into the CITY of Columbia which may be a result of sewer lines, etc.

The developers who want to have our zoning changed do not live in our area and have no interest in the impact this would have on our community.

Thank you for your understanding of our community and our distress at the idea of rezoning the Ridge Road acreage. We are most definitely against this zone change in our rural county community.

Sincerely,

Marvin and Paula Rhodes, 548 Penn Road, Hopkins SC

To Richland County Counsel/Richland County Planning Commission :

As a long time resident of Penn Rd I am making a request that the Planning Commission not change the zoning of the property on Ridge Road. It will be a major detriment to the residents in this section of Richland County. This is a quiet community with a low crime rate and peaceful living conditions. That is why the property is zoned the way it is so that only one home can be constructed on one or more acres. With what is proposed, many things will have a negative affect on this area, crime will increase, schools will be over crowded if able to handle the influx at all, taxes will continue to rise and property values will decrease, septic tank contamination will destroy wells. Law enforcement is already thin, roads can't handle the added traffic, no public transportation available, fire and ambulance services would be over burdened There's no objection to new homes being constructed, but the building of these homes should follow the already established guidelines.

I would once again like to express my concerns about the request to rezone the above property from Rural to Medium Density.

- This request does not fit within the scope of the Southeast Neighborhood Master Plan that was agreed to with the Richland County Council in 2014.
- The Ridge Road area is a rural community. That is the reason most of us chose this area for our homes. We enjoy a peaceful lifestyle with little crime. Developing 191 acres into Medium Density housing will increase traffic, destroy our peaceful lifestyle and increase crime.
- The Southeast section of Richland County is already accommodating increases in low-income housing and the problems that come with them. I think we have accepted as much as we should be required to accept. Lower income and Medium Density housing will have a negative impact on our housing values. We take great pride in our area, and we want our home values to increase and not deteriorate.
- Our road infrastructure will not be able to handle the increase of traffic that Medium Density homes will create. Ridge Road, Harmon Road and Lower Richland Boulevard are all two-lane roads with no sidewalks.

- Our schools are already at full capacity. Lower Richland High School in particular cannot accommodate the addition of students that Medium Density housing will bring.

We have lived off Ridge Road for 35 years. We love this area. We understand progress, but we deserve good progress. We want progress that continues our rural lifestyle and does not diminish our property values. The Southeast should not become the dumping ground for transplanted low-income housing from the City of Columbia nor dense housing. Thank you for considering my opinion.

Debra Tyson
Johnny Tyson
528 Penn Rd
Hopkins, SC

I am voicing opposition to rezoning the above listed property for medium or high density as has been petitioned by the land owners. The following reasons are my concerns as a 46 year resident of the Clearview Drive (a cross street with Ridge Rd) area and 23 year veteran state law enforcement officer.

1. The rezoning does not fit inside the scope of the Southeast Neighborhood Master Plan. The Richland County Council spent one year and \$300,000 dollars to create the current Southeast Neighborhood Master Plan and the rezone is inconsistent with the plan.
2. It proposes a threat to base closure of McEntire Air Force Base. McEntire National Guard Base generates 1.7 billion dollars to Richland County in jobs and in revenue to area businesses each year. McEntire needs to maintain a crash zone of a 5-mile radius for the F16 jets which land there daily. McEntire is on the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) list for possible Base closures and any negative growth in the area would increase the chances of base closure. The current neighborhood master plan is to keep the area rural. We need to stay rural and keep the 1.7 Billion dollars in Richland County.
3. There will be an increase in crime and a lack of law enforcement, Fire and EMS Responders.
4. The schools are at full capacity. The Southeast neighborhood plan addresses the need for new schools, but no work has been done yet.
5. Road infrastructure cannot handle the increase of traffic that comes along with Low, Medium or High Density.
6. There is no public transportation.
7. The sewer and water need for the development will impact current residents' wells which we use for our drinking water.
8. Federal money being used for environmental impacts and potential low - income housing
9. The parcel of land has historical artifacts such as Native American pottery, arrow heads, etc. In the past these items have been found by residents of Ridge Road and residents of its connecting roads.
10. The rezone will have a significant impact on our property values.

Kindly,
Brian Bennett
236 Clearview Drive, Hopkins

The issue at stake is the proposed rezoning of the RURAL 189 acre Parcel # R24900-07-03 owned by Winding Path LLC.

Rural development such as these completely ignore several pillars of the previous agreed upon RICHLAND COUNTY STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN.

The current developer purchased the property knowing it is Rural.

The Developers clear cut the tract.

It's my understanding that the developers now propose a High/Medium Density neighborhood, which would be next door to an existing High Density neighborhood.

The development in question threatens the unique bio-diverse of the Cedar Creek watershed in Richland County. We border the subject property. Our home is on Cedar Creek, a major feeder for The Congaree National Park. This area's watershed directly effects the National Park. Congaree National Park preserves the largest tract of old growth bottomland hardwood forest left in the United States.

It's crucial, actually it's our responsibility, to protect this area from reckless development that would permanently destroy what Richland Co. and South Carolina proudly preserved and is now designated as a National Park.

Please understand, we have NO PROBLEM with smart, well planned development, in areas that are ALREADY zoned accordingly for projects with those specifications. This is not one of those.

We should be careful of allowing ill conceived developments too close to Fort Jackson and McEntire Airbase. Disregarding the spirit of the Military Compatibility Zone, outlined in the Richland County Strategic Community Plan could jeopardize the military's longterm objectives for our area.

We wish to see Hopkins and the Lower Richland communities improve with well planned, sensible zoning, as opposed to becoming the neglected "out of sight, out of mind" dumping ground for developers who do not share our vision, do not call this Rural area home and arrogantly ignore the plan that Richland County has already developed.

Please help us.

M. Whitner Slagsvol
Itchy Grass Farm
Hopkins, South Carolina

To Whom It May Concern:

This communication is to voice our opinion regarding the requested zoning change of a section of property located at 1113 Ridge Rd. in Hopkins, SC

The zoning change request is to re-zone from Rural to Rural - High or Medium Density - We are opposed to both for the following reasons.

1. We purchased our property and built our home here in 2004. The area was zoned rural at that time and it's the primary reason we purchased and decided to remain in Richland Co. We felt at that time that the investment of equity and time was solid. The addition of a subdivision as proposed would nullify that thinking and drastically impact property values.
2. Basically all residents along the Ridge Rd. corridor that runs from the top of Horrell Hill at Garners Ferry Rd. to Lower Richland Blvd. near Leesburg Rd., live on acreage that exceeds 2 acres per home. We love the

rural lifestyle and the quiet and separation this area allows. To place a high or medium density subdivision in this area with what could potentially accommodate more than 1,000 homes would ruin this area and quiet rural area forever.

3. To place a subdivision of the size and dimensions in this rural area would most certainly cause a major decline in property values that would impact every property owner and resident in this area.

4. Ridge Rd. is currently a major thoroughfare for persons traveling back and forth between Leesburg Rd. and Garners Ferry Rd. Many of the routes provide access to both the back entrance to Ft. Jackson and the main entrance to McEntire ANG Base. Adding the traffic that would come from a subdivision would create a major traffic and safety problem for all residents of the area that Richland County will be forced to address before the first house is sold.

Bottom line, we can only ask of the Planning Commission that the members seriously consider what problems changing this zoning would create for the residents of the area and for the Lower Richland Community. Placing a subdivision of medium or high density homes in a rural area without the infrastructure required to support it is in our opinion, ridiculous. We respectfully ask that this re-zoning request be denied.

Please contact us directly if you require further input or would like to discuss.

Regards,

Terry & Debbie Wells
519 Penn Rd.
Hopkins, SC 29061

Dear Planning Commission members: I am urging you deny the proposed zoning change for this property on Ridge Road for the following reasons:

- The infrastructure of the area will not support such a drastic increase in population density; specifically:
- The roads are two-lane and Ridge Road is a winding road with short visibility ranges.
- There is no water or sewer system; installing many septic tanks will jeopardize the quality of the well water we use.
- The public schools in the area are not designed to absorb the increased population.
- There is no public transportation to the area.
- Allowing this change will greatly jeopardize the viability of McEntire Joint National Guard Base, which currently employs 2,350+/- people and brings \$180,000,000 into Richland County annually; Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure committees consider housing developments near military installations to be a critical factor in selecting installations to close. Also, please review the Joint Land Use Study, Nov 2009, that covers this part of Richland County

<http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Portals/0/Departments/Planning/JLUS.pdf>

This study was conducted jointly by the Central Midlands Council of Governments, City of Columbia, City of Forest Acres, Kershaw County, Richland County, Fort Jackson, McCrady Training Center (TC), and McEntire Joint National Guard Base (JNGB) and contains pertinent recommendations for land use in this area.

Please take these important factors into consideration when making your decision and keep this property zoned Rural.

Respectfully,
Col (Ret) Richard W. Noble
1391 Ridge Road

I am writing to express my concern for the Rezoning of the land on Ridge Road that could bring up to another 1000 homes to our area if approved by the County Council. I have lived in the area for over 16 years and enjoy the rural landscape, peace, and open spaces. We purposely chose this area because it afforded us the larger lot size of at least one acre between housing. And as someone who has lived in the northeast area of Clemson Road, it was critical when house hunting that we selected an area that was a direct opposite of the congested areas of the northeast that we were leaving. We found that here and now our way of life is being challenged by developers who would like to transform this area into a high to mid-density development.

Please be clear, I am not opposed to development. I believe everyone should have the right to own land or property and to raise their families in a safe area with access to good schools, shopping, recreation, and entertainment. With that being said, I do not believe that overwhelming our current 2 lane road access (Ridge Road) would be in the best interest of our current community. We currently have antiquated schools which are either at or over capacity as well as roads that lack sidewalks and bus access. To insert residents into an area that cannot support the amenities would be a disaster. My questions to you as well as the developer are: Will you provide green space? Will you install sidewalks? Will this be a community that you personally would want to butt up to your rural property?

In closing, I will add that I am extremely disappointed that the previous land use proposal (2006)l has not been implemented or followed as this is not the first nor last objection to the development of the aforementioned property. I am also disappointed that our local representation on this matter has not factored in what the community wants but rather seems to focus on developer interest.

Sincerely,
Wylene Gaither
101 San Carlos Court
Hopkins, SC 29061

Case number 20-013 MA District 11 TMS# R24900-07-03 1113 Ridge Rd

As an adjacent land owner and resident of this area, I need to express my concerns about the rezoning in this case. Following is a list of facts I think should be considered.

Disruption of large wooded area

Incomplete use of existing housing development areas

Adverse effect on area wildlife

Lack of existing essential services

Proposed density of housing not similar to area properties

Increased Risk of flooding and erosion due to natural flow disruption

Stephen Krolewicz
4624 Old Leesburg Rd
Hopkins SC, 29061

Dear Chairman Gilchrist & Board Members,
“Don’t be emotional.”

That is the rule for a Business Letter and I am painfully aware that this is a Business situation.

I would be dishonest pretending this is not a heartfelt letter. This is my home, the land we moved to 30 years ago to raise our Family, where we see Deer almost daily, fish in the pond and just saw our first pair of Painted Buntings. These are the woods where my son found an incredible piece of ancient pottery and last weekend we found an extraordinary Arrow Head. This area still has history lessons to teach us, if we allow it.

Cedar Creek and the surrounding watershed area, feeds the Congaree National Park with it’s Champion Trees, oxbow lakes and incredible bio-diversity. The Park exists due to the campaign to stop exploitation of the area. A Champion Tree is the largest individual tree of its species. They don’t grow overnight.

If we were not emotional about preserving what is unique and beautiful about our community what kind of people would we be? I can’t imagine not caring about how my actions impact other people, especially something as fundamental as their homes.

Profits are not emotional. Bank accounts, mortgages and taxes are just numbers. We are more than “just numbers,” we are families and nature lovers, we are distressed and fearful community members and neighbors. We are average people who made a decision to purchase land and make our homes in rural South Carolina. We are just like you and we count.

We are scared that crime will increase. The recent burglary at my home was part of a frequently occurring crime situation that our community is experiencing. We are fearful that it will escalate with heightened density.

Not knowing if our quality of life will be honored in the future and not knowing if Winding Path LLC will be allowed to forever alter the destinies of the residents in this area, I will enjoy today and hope that I have the good fortune and thrill of seeing the Lightning bugs, hearing the Whippoorwills, watching the Heron fly, looking for a glimpse of the nesting pair of Bald Eagles, wondering which tree the Fox Squirrels have moved to and a multitude of other remarkable events that makes this place home.

Please hear us and let us count for something.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Slagsvol
Harmon Rd.
Hopkins, SC

My name is John F. Logue and I live at 108 San Carlos Ct., Hopkins, SC. I am writing to express concern regarding the request to rezone 1113 Ridge Road (191 acres) from Rural to medium density. Surely you have access to records from 2005 concerning rezoning of the same parcel. The primary reasons for my resistance are articulated in the current petition that I, and other community members, have signed and forwarded to your attention.

I would like to mention four issues not specifically delineated in the petition.

1. The most recent joint planning document by Fort Jackson and McEntire Air National Guard Base cites increasing population density as a major threat to continuing operations and development of these installations. Within that document, the potential population projected for this area by 2035 would be exceeded by this single proposed development.

2. Traffic congestion on Leesburg Road will not be solved by the promised road widening from Lower Richland to I-77. Garner's Ferry traffic will decant along Ridge Road to the improved route. Closure of Wildcat Road eased some of the traffic which used Ridge Road. Currently, traffic backs up the length of the exit ramp leading from I-77 south to Leesburg Rd which is dangerous and attests the current volume.
3. This rural area is rich in biological diversity and would be negatively impacted through loss of habitat and compression. I have studied and taught in the biological and environmental field for more than fifty years and would be more than willing to provide details should you wish.
4. Many of my neighbors moved to this community to escape negatives issues associated with crowded suburban development.

Sincerely,

John F. Logue

We understand there is a request to change a section of the area from rural designation to medium density. Everyone in this area lives on 2+ acres and we do not want to see this change. I do not know the people seeking this new zoning but they most likely will not move into the area themselves.

Please do not approve this change.

Terry and Sharon Edwards
531 Penn Road
Hopkins SC 29061

To say I am disappointed in your approval for the property to be rezoned as a rural-medium density is an understatement. This area simply cannot support the additional 900+ homes as well as the traffic on a two lane road. I do not understand your acceptance for this growth with all the issues currently facing Richland County including the improper infrastructure to handle that many additional homes. This is a quiet, rural area. I would hate to see another cookie cutter crap subdivision with substandard materials while asking ridiculous asking prices pop up without preserving the integrity of the area. I forgot to throw in the equally crappy businesses and apartments I'm sure you will approve on this acreage. I'm well aware that once you stamp your approval-you shake your hands and move on to destroying the next area of Richland County.

Margaret Osburn
1231 Ridge Road
Hopkins, SC 29061

Good afternoon,

I am sending this letter in response to the attempt to have property on Ridge Road in Hopkins rezoned from "Rural" to "Medium Density Housing." I have lived on Ridge Road with my wife for 28 years and she has lived here 41 of her 49 years. Her Grandmother built and ran the nursing home that still stands with her children for over 40 years before she passed.

I tell you this to impress upon you how much it means to all of the families that reside here in this community to preserve this peaceful and beautiful neighborhood. The introduction of this type of housing will have a tremendously negative effect in so many ways. Our schools are already over crowded so how would they handle 900 more families? Along with that, I couldn't imagine how Ridge Road, Lower Richland Blvd, and Leesburg

Road could sustain an added 2000 to 3000 cars per day. This would mean huge spikes in traffic accidents and unbearable wear and tear on our already compromised road conditions.

The people along the Ridge Road area moved and stayed here so they could get away from the crowded streets and neighborhoods further in the city. We greatly value our way of life we have all worked so hard for. I am pleading for you all to please, honor the humble request of your constituents and keep this zoning change from happening.

I thank you for your time and hopefully your vote to suppress this request that would inevitably cause considerable harm to a wonderful community.

Chris Fletcher
1646 Ridge Road
Hopkins, SC, 29061

Richland County Planning Commission
2020 Hampton Street / PO Box 192
Columbia, SC 29202

RE: Zoning Change #20-013MA from RU Rural to RS MD / Ridge Road, Hopkins Public Meeting via YouTube – July 9, 2020 (*This letter rescinds my previous letter to you dated May 27, 2020 RE: Zoning Change #20-013MA from RU Rural to RS HD / Ridge Road, Hopkins for the June 1, 2020 meeting.*)

I am requesting that you deny the request to rezone this property from Rural to any other zoning specification.

This area is NOT suitable for the type of development that would be allowed under any type of zoning other than rural. The infrastructure as a whole cannot support it.

This area has already seen tremendous growth recently; farmland and wooded areas have been wiped clean. With the new neighborhoods built off LR Blvd and Hwy 378 recently, the LR ecosystem and wildlife have already suffered enough.

The Ridge Road property is within the Upper Cedar Creek Watershed (the watershed cuts across it). This is one of a few creeks supplying The Congaree National Park. Putting a sizeable neighborhood on top or through this watershed will significantly impact this valuable resource. It also feeds a number of private ponds and provides well water to area residents. We DO NOT want city water as an alternative as we DO NOT want to be annexed into the City of Columbia.

This land also has two Forested Wetland areas that do not need to be disturbed. The more human disturbance within the watershed and wetlands, the greater the negative impact.

The property is directly in the middle of the Military's Joint Land Use Agreement between McEntire and Ft. Jackson. Developing this land will be detrimental to military operations resulting in potential base closure of McEntire with an annual revenue loss of \$180 million per year. Continued development would affect flight plans, crash zones, and transportation issues for these two bases.

Since the county is currently in the middle of a development code assessment to change the zoning districts, any current zoning requests that have a moderate to severe affect on the surrounding area need to be postponed until the new zoning designations are in place.

Likewise, due to COVID19, any moderate to severe rezoning requests need to be postponed until the communities impacted are permitted to attend meetings and hearings IN PERSON instead of us voicing our concerns by letter and watching via YouTube. We have a large number of elderly in our area that do not have the means of sending emails & letters and using YouTube so our community is losing a very valuable voice!

Thank you for your time in reviewing my concerns,

Cynthia Harrelson
1317 Lower Richland Blvd
Hopkins, SC 29061

I object to the rezoning of the property on Ridge road. I did not move to Clearview Drive and pay the price I paid for our home to end up being in the middle of a subdivision. Matter of fact that's why we moved to Clearview all homes were on 2 to 4 acres.

Kay Brown

Richland County Planning Commission,

We are Willie and Jennifer Sanders. We live at 1133 Ridge Road with our 13 year old daughter Rachel Sanders. The property is next door to us.

1. My husband along with many others on Ridge Road use our surroundings as a therapeutic remedy to symptoms of PTSD. The quiet, picturesque beauty of this rural area is medicinal. He and others have served their country and deserve a community that will serve them by providing a quiet place to heal from a career of military service.
2. The Southeast Neighborhood Master Plan is specific to District 11 and took more than one year to develop at a cost of over \$300,000. The plan is set to develop the 1 mile radius located at the intersection of Garners Ferry road and Lower Richland Boulevard. It is a contract that Richland County developed with its Citizens. Please honor our agreement.
3. It proposes a threat to base closure of McEntire Joint National Guard Base. McEntire generates \$180 million dollars each year. It needs to maintain a crash zone of a 5-mile radius for the F16 jets which land there daily. McEntire is on the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) list for possible base closures and any growth changing the rural character in the area would increase the chances of base closure.
4. We have invested a lot into our home and land. ~~The developer, Anna Fonseca's has a track record of foreclosures and leaving lawyers on a lurch with unpaid fees(Town of Blythewood). Imagine the types of home she will build and how the development will lower our property values.~~

Please reject the zoning request.

Thank You,

Willie and Jennifer Sanders

July 17/2020

Dear Richland County Planning Commission
my name is Rachel Sanders and I live next door to the property I don't understand why the developer wants to build so many houses right beside us, I thought there would be about 30 homes over there please reject the developers request for the following reasons:

- 1 My mom drives me to school everyday and the increase in traffic on this road will make me late for school everyday.
- 2 The increase in number of people living on Ridge Road will make my parents feel unsafe and I won't be allowed to stay home alone I will have to go everywhere with them.

Thank You

Rachel Sanders Age 13

To Richland County Planning Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of myself, Angie Webb, and my husband, Eddie Webb. We live on Healing Springs Road in Hopkins, SC, which is a turn off of Ridge Road. We have lived in this community for over 25 years. We raised our children and now grandchildren here and have thoroughly enjoyed the peacefulness that comes with this community.

We are voicing our opposition to the proposed re-zoning in this area which would allow construction of the proposed medium/high-density residential housing development near 1113 Ridge Road. A development of this type would lead to decreased property values, significant increases in traffic on a narrow 2-lane road (Ridge Road) and potential increases in the crime rate in this area. Also, the serenity of the area would be disrupted considerably.

Please consider our concerns and vote "NO" to this rezoning which would allow this development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Angie Webb
Eddie Webb

July 8, 2020

Richland County Planning
Commission 2020 Hampton Street
/ PO Box 192 Columbia, SC 29202

RE: Zoning Change #20-013MA from RU Rural to RS MD / Ridge Road, Hopkins Public Meeting via YouTube

Good afternoon members of the Richland County Planning Commission,

First, I would like to start off by thanking you all for your volunteer service to Richland County. Currently I am a Richland County Recreation Commissioner and the Democratic nominee for South Carolina House District 80 so I am fully aware of the difficult and sometimes unappreciated work you all perform for the citizens of Richland County. I am specifically writing this letter to you all in hopes that you all will honor the requests of the community members and deny the request of the opportunistic developers to rezone this property from Rural to any other zoning specification.

I have had multiple conversations with the members of my community including the current and previous Colonels of McEntire as well as with our Council representative Chakisse Newton and we are ALL in full agreement that any changes to the current zoning would be extremely detrimental to the citizens of our community in ways of traffic congestion, over development, and potential loss of an airbase that is extremely vital to our community.

Again, I'd like to thank you for the work you all are doing for the county and I know you all will listen to your constituents and make the best decision for us all.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jermaine Johnson

To whom it may concern:

My husband and I are denizens of the Ridge Rd. Community, and we want to plead passionately against the rezoning of the 192 acres on Ridge Rd. near the corner with Lower Richland Blvd.

- Ridge Rd. is already a very busy cut-through for traffic from Leesburg Rd. toward McEntire and Sumter,
- the schools and roads in this area are already full during normal times,
- law enforcement, fire and EMS are already very busy out this way and would be tremendously more overworked if it was rezoned,
- there are already so many wrecks on Leesburg Rd. and Sumter Hwy that it is hard to believe,
- there is no bus service in our area,
- and the wells and septic tanks of the existing community do not need the extra stress of that sandy land's old and deteriorating infrastructure.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. Rezoning wasn't the right thing to do in the past, and it still isn't.

Sincerely,
Tom and Jennifer Mancke

Scott and I have lived in the Lower Richland community for the past 22 years. We reside on Healing Springs Road, about 1 mile from proposed rezoning of 1113 Ridge Road. Currently there are 12 homes in our neighborhood. Each home is custom designed and built by the homeowners. No two houses are the same. We are not a cookie cutter neighborhood, piled on top of one another with little room to grow or breathe.

Ridge Road is 2.24 miles long and has under 150 homes from end to end.

- **San Marco** – approx. 39 homes, 6,540,000 sq ft or 150 acres – average of 3.84 acres per home
- **Clearview** - 31 homes, 5,349,000 sq ft, or 123 acres – average of 3.96 acres per home
- **Wolf Laurel** - 12 homes, 2,201,000 sq ft, or 50.5 acres – average of 4.2 acres per home
- **Penn Rd** - 15 homes, 2,212,000 sq ft, or 51 acres – average of 3.38 acres per home
- **Healing Springs** - 12 homes, 1,442,000 sq ft, or 33 acres – average of 2.75 acres per home

The propose zoning change of 1113 Ridge Road from **Rural to Residential Medium Density** based on the Zoning District Summary provided in the agenda, the minimum lot area of 8,500 square feet based on the gross density calculations the maximum number of units that rezoning this area to Medium Density would be 978 units. This is just not feasible on a two-lane undivided road. I have read and re-read all the items in the agenda document. Some I understand and others I do not but speaking as a homeowner that travels Ridge Road several times a day. Ridge Road cannot accommodate the influx of cars on this road. Most automobiles that travel on this are using the road as a cut thru to Hwy 378. The speed limit on this road is 45 mph, however at any given time, you can bet that most are travelling in excess of this limit. How could a two-lane road accommodate the additional traffic demands? Getting to and from town would cause major delays and we would end up looking like Northeast Columbia all traffic jams and most of the resident upset with the officials that allow this to happen.

The Hopkins area is known for the rolling hills and bluffs, spotted with different variety of hardwood trees. The majority of the residents in this area located here for the privacy and the availability of acreage to accommodate their lifestyles. A high-density subdivision of cookie cutter homes stacked on top of each other, is what this area does not want or need and I do not think that it maintains the integrity of the master plan for the Lower Richland Area. The water and sewer infrastructure cannot handle this type of neighborhood nor could this two-lane road. According to the *Lower Richland County Richland County Strategic Community Master Plan* it states that new demand for water service is allocated on a first come, first serve basis and there are no additional allocations in place for Lower Richland Community.

Please uphold the recommendation for disapproval of rezoning this property.

Scott and Stephanie Morehouse

I am requesting that you deny the request to rezone this property from Rural to any other zoning specification.

This area is NOT suitable for the type of development that would be allowed under any type of zoning other than rural. The infrastructure as a whole cannot support it.

This area has already seen tremendous growth recently; farmland and wooded areas have been wiped clean. With the new neighborhoods built off LR Blvd and Hwy 378 recently, the LR ecosystem and wildlife have already suffered enough.

The Ridge Road property is within the Upper Cedar Creek Watershed (the watershed cuts across it). This is one of a few creeks supplying The Congaree National Park. Putting a sizeable neighborhood on top or through this watershed will significantly impact this valuable resource. It also feeds a number of private ponds and provides well water to area residents. We DO NOT want city water as an alternative as we DO NOT want to be annexed into the City of Columbia.

This land also has two Forested Wetland areas that do not need to be disturbed. The more human disturbance within the watershed and wetlands, the greater the negative impact.

The property is directly in the middle of the Military's Joint Land Use Agreement between McEntire and Ft. Jackson. Developing this land will be detrimental to military operations resulting in potential base closure of McEntire with an annual revenue loss of \$180 million per year. Continued development would affect flight plans, crash zones, and transportation issues for these two bases.

Since the county is currently in the middle of a development code assessment to change the zoning districts, any current zoning requests that have a moderate to severe affect on the surrounding area need to be postponed until the new zoning designations are in place.

Likewise, due to COVID19, any moderate to severe rezoning requests need to be postponed until the communities impacted are permitted to attend meetings and hearings IN PERSON instead of us voicing our concerns by letter and watching via YouTube. We have a large number of elderly in our area that do not have the means of sending emails & letters and using YouTube so our community is losing a very valuable voice!

Thank you for your time in reviewing my concerns,

Christine Harrelson
4464 Old Leesburg Road
Hopkins, SC 29061

This is to register my opposition to the rezoning of 192 acres on Ridge Road from rural to medium density residential property for the following reasons:

- 1). The Ridge Road current infrastructure is not designed to support the addition of so many families;
- 2). Highway 378 is already severely congested in the early mornings with people going to work, during the daytime hours with regular traffic, and in the evening with people returning from work;
- 3). Burnside Farms just dumped many new homes and traffic onto Highway 378;
- 4). The additional Ridge Road traffic will now be combined with the traffic coming and going to and from Sumter.

Robert D. and Iva T. Chapple
160 Clearview Dr, Hopkins, SC 29061

Dear Planning Commission,
I am writing this letter to express my concerns regarding the proposed zoning changes in the Lower Richland area pertaining to the request of 1113 Ridge Road. I live on Ridge Road strongly protest against the changes that would have a detrimental and disruptive impact on our community and surrounding areas. Reasons for my opposition of this proposal includes the following:

1. The rezoning of the property doesn't fit inside the scope of the Southeast Neighborhood Master Plan, which took more than a year to develop at a cost of \$300,000+. The plan is a contract Richland County developed with its citizens. We ask your support in honoring the agreement.

2. It proposes a threat to base closure of McEntire Joint National Guard Base, which generates \$180 million dollars to Richland County in jobs and in revenue to area businesses each year. McEntire needs to maintain a crash zone of a 5-mile radius for the F16 jets which land there daily. McEntire is on the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) list for possible Base closures and any negative growth in the area would increase the chances of base closure. The current neighborhood master plan is to keep the area rural. We need to stay rural and keep the \$180 million dollars in Richland County.
3. Without Impact Fees, current funding would not be able to accommodate the increase in crime. There will be a lack of law enforcement, Fire and EMS Responders. In the past, we have had frequent incidents of theft and car break-ins. Rezoning would only make this worse.
4. The schools are at full capacity. The Southeast neighborhood plan addresses the need for new schools, but no work has been done.
5. Road infrastructure cannot handle the increase of traffic that comes along with High Density with 16,330 additional vehicle trips per day, Medium with 12,702 or Low Density with 9,072 additional vehicle trips per day. The roads are designed to handle 8,600 vehicle trips per day and is currently ranked at a Level of Service (LOS) C. Road infrastructure cannot handle the increase of traffic that comes along with Low, Medium or High Density.
6. There is no public transportation.
7. The sewer and water need for the development will impact current residents' wells which we use for our drinking water.
8. The parcel of land has historical artifacts such as Native American pottery, arrow heads, etc. In the past these items have been found by residents of Ridge Road and residents of its connecting roads.
9. The rezone will have a significant impact on our property values and threatens the safety of our area. We have numerous accidents in the area, especially on Leesburg Road. Rezoning would really cause the accidents to increase due to high traffic.

Please support our community by retracting or discontinuing the application process and allowing our current zoning to remain in place for the safety and best interest of all concerned.

Sincerely,

Dr. Erica Fields 1148 Ridge Road Hopkins, SC 29061

Dear Planning Commission-

My name is Elizabeth Waldrop, and I live just off Ridge Road in Lower Richland. My driveway is exactly 2 miles from the property that is proposed to be rezoned from Rural to Medium Density Residential. I humbly ask you to deny this rezoning request.

I (and many of my neighbors) chose to live in this area, and hope to continue living and even retire here, BECAUSE of its rural nature. The vast majority of homes on Ridge Road and its adjoining streets are larger, brick, single family homes on lots of at least 2 acres. Rezoning the huge 192-acre plot of land as Medium Density in this rural residential area will overwhelmingly destroy the very character of the surrounding area.

A whopping 192 acres of Medium Density residential on Ridge Road is a dangerous precedent to set for zoning in our immediate area. I fear the encroachment of Medium Density residential areas into this quiet, rural area will cause many existing owners of the established homes on larger acreage to leave, and attracting similar owners will be increasingly difficult.

Roads and schools in this area are already poor. Driving on Garner's Ferry in Lower Richland and from Garner's Ferry on Leesburg toward Ridge Road is already an eyesore that is becoming more run-down and crime-ridden. Turning onto Ridge Road from the Leesburg side is a breath of literal fresh air as the properties become rural. 192 acres is a huge property, and allowing it to be re-zoned as Medium Density Residential is an enormous and dangerous precedent to set for this rural part of Lower Richland. Please deny this rezoning request in the best interest of Richland County.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Waldrop
Local Homeowner

We are residents of Ridge Road, Hopkins, SC. Currently we are surrounded by good neighbors and are concerned about the development of our area. We enjoy seeing our wildlife and we thoroughly enjoy our quiet community. If there are thousands of houses added to this area, this will no longer be a quiet, quaint community. We are afraid that the properties will turn into rental properties that are not cared for. We ask that this area not be rezoned so that we will continue to enjoy our rural community.

Regards,

Marvin & Susan Douglas

Good morning,

I currently reside and own property at 112 Alexander Pointe Drive, Hopkins, SC 29061.

One point of concern I have with development of that property is increased traffic on local roads. Where would entry points to that development occur and what, if any, improvements to current road infrastructure would occur to alleviate potential traffic issues?

Very Respectfully,

Zach Webb

Dear Planning Commission & Council Members,

My name is Stephanie Cowart, and I feel that is my duty to both my family and community to voice my opposition to the rezoning of the property in question from Rural to Medium Density. I have been a member of the Ridge Road community for the past 12 years however, I have friends and family who have belonged to this community for my entire lifetime. We are a tight knit community and look out for each other as best we can.

As things stand, we face a great deal of crime in our community for which it seems that we are the only help we have to combat this issue. By introducing a development to this area, you would be exacerbating the crime issue. My family have been victims of malicious behavior on numerous occasions these past few years.

I have two small children of my own and I have a genuine fear for their safety, as well as many other family members, should this development be introduced. Please do not allow property to be rezoned.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephanie Cowart

I am writing this email to ask planning commission to deny the Anna Fonseca, owner, of said property the right to change our zoning in this area. Our area can't support building all the houses she is requesting. How will the roads, transportation, and schools accommodate this many people. The flood of vinyl sided houses 5 ft apart will only bring in low income housing. My husband and I bought our first little house in Pine Lakes subdivision. It was such a nice neighborhood until it became a low income housing subdivision. Our once nice little neighborhood became a drug infested hood. We had to pull up and move because of drugs, theft, shots in the night and used condoms by our trash can in the mornings.

Our neighborhood is made up of mostly retired people. We worked hard to have a nice place. We wanted to leave the rat race and spend their golden years quietly. I enjoy getting up in the mornings drinking my cup of coffee on the back porch where I can occasionally see deer, fox, rabbits and coyotes run through our yards. Once this land is developed it will change everything as we know it now.

I hope that the builders know this is unstable land. The last builder was going to build a nursing home on that property. They spent a lot of money restructuring the land. Made a beautiful place of it. Had a big rain and all the hard work and money was washed away. Why do you think they sold it?

I am asking each county council member this question Would you want to live in a neighborhood as they are wanting to build. It is easy to make decisions if it doesn't impact you. If you pass the rezoning and the houses built, you and the builders will leave us and we will have the problems of the city.

These are a few of the most important things I would like for you to consider:

The county \$300,000 dollars to create the current Southeast Neighborhood Master Plan and the rezoning is inconsistent with the plan.

Increase crime and a lack of law enforcement, fire, and EMS responders.

Road infrastructures cannot handle the increase of traffic that comes along with Low, Medium or High Density.

No public transportation and no stores close to neighborhood.

This parcel of land has historical artifacts such as Native American pottery, arrow heads, etc.

McEntire National Guard Base requires a 5 mile radius for crash zone for the F16 jets.

If this property is to be developed, I ask that it be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

Please take all this information into consideration and do what is best for our neighborhood not the builder. Thank you for your time.

Sylvia Dandridge

Dear Sir/Madam:

Why? this will only enrich the pockets of Anna Fonseca and David Hilburn. They tried this in Blythewood and was unsuccessful and now they want to come into our neighborhood and destroy our peace and build 600 or more low income houses. These 2 people will not be affected by this invasion. It's easy for them because they won't have to the the destruction to our land, forest or wildlife, it is all about money.

I understand they are 2 wetlands on this land and plants that do not grow anywhere else, this needs to be studies so they are not destroyed by these greedy individuals.

My husband and I built our home ourselves with family and friends brick by brick. Now this beautiful place if rezoned will be a loud uncaring neighborhood. Do you know the impact this will be? roads overloaded, no public transportation, no stores, and overloaded schools. What will this accomplish? Noting but to fill the pockets of those who have no ties to this community.

We were told years ago that we have a master plan of the Lowers Richland area. What has happened to that plan? Has it been swept under the rug for a better deal? This plan should be honored.

Sometimes this will only bring crime into our peaceful neighborhood. Would you want this beside your home that you built and love for your retirement.

They are welcome to come and build as we did on several acres of land and build according to our community by-laws. We would welcome them but homes built 5 ft. apart brings devastation.

Let us live in our retirement homes in peace to continue the beauty of our land, the forest, the wildlife and quietness. Please protect us from money hungry individuals and protect us as ones who have been elected to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Keep us safe and whole.

Barbara and Charles Hinton
109 San Marco Dr.
Hopkins SC 29061

Commissioners of the Planning Commission, Richland County;

We live in this area because it is rural. In addition to the fact that we love our space and privacy and don't want to change our environment, we don't have the infrastructure to rezone to medium density or greater. There are already issues with people speeding along Ridge Road, some of them residents, but many of them using Ridge Road as a "cut-through". Adding to the traffic will make it considerably more dangerous. There are many areas with poor sight distance and the only reason we don't have more accidents is because of the lower traffic density. Add to the volume of traffic and people will be killed.

Sincerely,

Gail Rodriguez
Horrell Hill Community

I am letting you know one more time that as resident and property owner in Ridge Road, I am 100% percent opposed to any change in variance on Ridge Road. We need to remain rural.

Also, I want a copy of the two public hearing notices you are required to run in a newspaper of general circulation prior to any zoning changes under consideration.

Thank you,
Becky Gross