

P. O. Box 15449
Brooksville, Florida 34604
July 20, 2024

Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
15470 Flight Path Drive
Brooksville, Florida 34604

Dear Members of the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners:

We are writing as citizens and taxpayers of Hernando County in regard to **CPAM File 24-01/Zoning Request File #24-05 ("Request")**. As long-time residents of the Lake St. Clair area (physical address: 25865 Tilly Hawk Lane, Brooksville 34602, District 4, Jerry Campbell, Commissioner), we are very concerned that the change of designation from Agricultural to PDP-Rural would negatively impact the delicate balance of nature of the pristine waters of Lake St. Clair and the surrounding acreage. To say that the change is necessary so that the Applicant can develop the "first Countryside Conservation Community designated in Hernando County" is not compatible with the natural conservation already occurring by limiting dwellings to one per 10 acre parcel. The strain that will be put on the Lake with the proposed 20 additional households (versus 8) is disturbing. We have watched the Lake shrink in past years and this proposal would only add to that problem.

We also have a concern over increased traffic on Dan Brown Hill Road (which Pasco County has refused to pave) due to the proposed development as well as no provision to address Spring Lake Highway traffic increase. Have you considered the bottom of the hill where Spring Lake Highway intersects with Church Street as being a dangerous intersection that will have significantly increased activity with multiple members of 20 additional households compelled to use that route?

In addition, on the other 75% of the lakefront of Lake St. Claire, there is less structural density than that of the proposed development. In searching for a place to build a "Countryside Conservation Community," why didn't the Applicant select an area (when he purchased the land in January of 2024) that is already zoned residential instead of choosing to effect a change that benefits none of the existing residents or the exiting environment? Indeed, we chose the area decades ago BECAUSE of the designation of Agricultural. We consider it a breach of contract that Commissioners would consider this proposed change, and granting the proposal would betray our trust in our elected officials.

In addition, we have a number of issues that we would like the Board to consider and clarify. Those issues follow:

- 1) 20 households with: a) wells and septic tanks; has testing been done for the quality of the water, depth to reach water for well? (b) No provisions are indicated for utilities (WREC, telephone, internet, etc.) How does that promote the balance of nature of Lake St. Clair and adjacent lake?
- 2) How are they maintaining "rural views" for those of us on the opposite side of the Lake who will have to look at houses along the hillside instead of natural forest?

- 3) How are they maintaining the “functional integrity of natural resources including wildlife habitat” and “protecting all of the native forest included in the open space” when they propose 2 miles of hiking and biking trails through the 21+ acres of remaining natural forest habitat?
- 4) What about the lakefront natural forest areas? The plan shows fully forested lots along the lakefront as well as 4 other fully forested lots. How can destroying the natural forested areas along the Lake in order to build houses there NOT impact the Lake and the wildlife who are currently residing there (which includes a family of 3 bald eagles). How can you claim “conservation” when it sounds more like destruction of a pristine, peaceful, beautiful and delicate natural environment? (9 of the 20 lots are fully natural forested according to the Applicant’s maps.)
- 5) What is the proposed setback for dwellings from the lake shore? (50’ is far from adequate)
- 6) What specifically are “agricultural pursuits” other than “community gardens?” How would they manage the impact of fertilizer run-off into the lake for such pursuits?
- 7) What specifically are “passive recreational areas” and “open active recreational areas?”
- 8) If there are “field sports,” a) how do they manage/limit/forbid the admission of nonresidents from accessing the space and b) what specifically would the fields be?
- 9) Will they allow nonresidents to access the Lake? (The Lake cannot sustain that much activity and remain healthy.) If not, how will they enforce that? (Keep in mind, granting access means all of our properties around the Lake can be accessed without our permission and may potentially make us liable if anyone is hurt while on our property.)
- 10) What are the proposed costs of the proposed lots? (Impacts our own property taxes)
- 11) What are the proposed bylaws and fees of the proposed HOA?
- 12) Will there be a boat ramp or dock in the public area?

Please note that if this development and the Land Use designation are changed, **there will be no going back.** Indeed, it will set a dangerous precedent for another such “community” in our already fragile environment. (i.e. The land immediately adjoining the proposed community to the West and East look to be a future candidates.)

In closing, we on the South side of Lake St. Claire do not believe houses on 2 acre lots are “compatible” with our surrounding area. We fear the land use that is proposed will negatively impact the “life” of Lake St. Claire and the animals that have made it their home, many who have taken up residence after being pushed out of other areas. We ask that you consider our concerns and issues before granting the proposed changes to existing zoning and development. Please stand up for YOUR Hernando County citizens...NOT a proposed developer seeking to make money off of our pristine and fragile environment.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela and Robert Pickard

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