

March 27, 2006

Dear Amberfield HOA Resident:

As many of you know, the City of Gaithersburg has been discussing the annexation and development of the Crown Property site (located at the southwest side of Fields Road, bounded by Sam Eig Highway at the northwest and Omega Drive to the southeast). The developer proposes building 2,250 condominiums, townhouses, and single-family homes as well as 320,000 square feet of commercial space at the Crown Property site.

Currently, Mayor Katz and the City Council are allowing nearby residents to send them their comments and concerns about the site. You can obtain their email addresses at the following website:

[http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/poi/default.asp?POI\\_ID=258&TOC=256;258;](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/poi/default.asp?POI_ID=258&TOC=256;258;)

We encourage any Amberfield resident who may have concerns about this project to email the Mayor or the City Council as soon as possible. You can learn more about the project at the following website:

[http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/poi/default.asp?POI\\_ID=1251&TOC=107;83;1251;](http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/poi/default.asp?POI_ID=1251&TOC=107;83;1251;)

You can also learn about the project through the Gazette Community Newspaper.

One concerned Amberfield resident wrote a draft letter (copy below) to which you may want to refer in whole or in part.

**You are advised that the content of the letter shown below does not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the Board of Directors for Amberfield Home Owners Association, Inc. or a majority of Amberfield residents, and has been provided merely to raise awareness among Amberfield residents to issues which may or may not be relevant to them. If, after reviewing all of the relevant issues and facts, the Board of Directors elects in its sole discretion to assert an opinion or to issue an advisory letter as to the development of Crown Farm, a copy thereof will be posted on this site.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

*Amberfield HOA Board of Directors*

## **DRAFT LETTER FROM CONCERNED HOMEOWNER:**

*Dear Mayor Katz and City Council Members,*

*As a resident of the Amberfield Housing Community located between Muddy Branch Road and Great Seneca Highway in Gaithersburg, I am writing to express my concerns about the potential impacts resulting from Crown Village Farm's proposed development of about 2,250 condominiums, townhouses, and single-family homes as well as 320,000 square feet of commercial space at the Crown Property site.*

### **Traffic Congestion**

*My first concern is with the increase in traffic congestion resulting from the proposed development. During morning and evening rush hour, traffic is already quite congested along Sam Eig Highway and Great Seneca Highway near the Crown Property site. Traffic is especially congested along Sam Eig Highway just before the I-270 exit. The proposed development plan is likely to exacerbate current traffic congestion, especially during morning and evening rush hours, and along I-270.*

*Although Crown Village Farm's proposed plan creates a transit center, if present trends continue, many future Crown Property homeowners will most likely use their cars rather than using public transportation for going to work. Providing homeowners with free shuttle bus service from the transit center to the Shady Grove may ameliorate traffic congestion; however, most homeowners will probably still use their cars to go to work, especially when their workplace is not located near a Metro stop.*

### **Green Space**

*Second, I am concerned with the lack of green space proposed at the Crown Property site. Out of the 176 acres of Crown Property land, Crown Village Farm proposes dedicating only five acres to Gaithersburg as parkland. While I appreciate the developer's donation, given the number of acres at the site, I feel this is an unbalanced plan. This is especially true, since about 94 acres of the property is located in the countywide program to preserve agricultural land through the use of transfer development rights.*

*There is already considerable residential and commercial space but very little available green space near the Crown Property site. Preserving green space should be given high priority by the City of Gaithersburg. The importance of green space should not be underestimated. Green space provides recreational and other benefits to Gaithersburg residents as well as habitat for local wildlife.*

*Moreover, green space allows rainwater to replenish groundwater levels, which, in turn, replenishes local streams and helps ameliorate potential future droughts.*

*The Crown Property probably represents the last opportunity for the City of Gaithersburg to acquire a substantial amount of green space for current as well as future residents. Allocating green space to the Crown Property would benefit not only Crown Property residents but also the local residents of Shady Grove Village, Warther, Amberfield, and Quince Orchard Park.*

*I believe that the City of Gaithersburg should grant Crown Village Farm the right to develop the property in exchange for preserving at least 30 to 40 percent of the Crown Property land as green space. One suggestion for achieving enough green space might be to disallow or significantly reduce commercial and retail development and only allow Crown Village Farm to develop one single-family detached home for every acre of land.*

### **Higher Taxpayer Costs**

*Third, I am concerned with future costs to taxpayers resulting from this project. This project is likely to increase the future costs to the City of Gaithersburg for education, police, fire, and related services. I propose that the City of Gaithersburg assess impact fees on Crown Village Farm to help pay for these cost increases resulting from this project.*

### **Summary**

*During your deliberations, I hope Mayor Katz and the Gaithersburg City Council are guided by the following questions:*

- *What do Gaithersburg residents really need and want?*
- *How can the development of the Crown Property site be planned to improve the quality of life for Gaithersburg residents?*

*I realize that the Crown Property site is a prime development area. However, given that the enormous amount of residential and commercial development that already exists near the Crown Property site, I would urge Mayor Katz and the Gaithersburg City Council to consider significantly reducing the scale of this project to promote less traffic congestion, greater green space, and lower future taxpayer costs.*

*I believe that proper and careful planning of this project will lead to a higher quality of life for all Gaithersburg residents and will enhance the city's position as the 17<sup>th</sup> best place to live (as reported by Money Magazine). I wish you all the best in your deliberations.*

*Sincerely yours,*