

TO: Genoa Township Neighbors

On November 22nd, the Chairman of the Westerville City Planning Commission said August Woods and Highland Lakes neighbors were frowning on Ohio Health expansion and modification proposal because “It impacts our little part of the world!” Seriously?

Below is a recap of the recent meetings for the Ohio Health modifications, as well as next steps that need to be taken to ensure Ohio Health is not allowed to move forward with the expansion and modifications they have requested.

The Facts

- **Ohio Health is planning to expand and modify its original purpose to include a 24/7 emergency room and a helipad.** This is a huge departure from what they proposed back in 2005/2006 and what was approved. The site usage was approved for an outpatient surgical center to be operated during the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- **An ER is only the first step for Ohio Health to continue to expand on this site.** Ohio Health owns the property (approx. 21 acres) to the east, which runs all the way to the Meijer's property. It is very likely that if the ER is approved and built, a full service hospital will follow.
- **One full service hospital in Westerville is enough.** St. Ann's is only 2.8 miles away. Traffic is already an issue within Westerville – adding an ER on the corner of Polaris Parkway and Africa Road will only serve to create additional dangerous traffic situations in an already congested area.
- **We need to keep Genoa Township “A Nice Place to Live”.** Looking at an aerial photo of the Ohio Health site, all that surrounds it to the north, east and northwest, is residential, mainly in Genoa Township. The condos, "Estates At Polaris Village" are located in the city of Westerville. Will Genoa Township still be “A Nice Place to Live” with a full service 24/7 emergency room, surrounded by snarled traffic, sirens blaring and a helicopter flying overhead?
- **Property values are sure to go down in an already depressed market.** Property values are already reeling from the economic downturn. Putting an emergency room and helipad on the Ohio Health property surely won't increase property values.... it will drive them down even further.
- **Crime will increase in the surrounding area.... that's a given.** It's a fact that an emergency room will increase crime in our area. Safety in our neighborhoods and surrounding areas must be a top priority.
- **Ohio Health has made a minimal effort, at best, to communicate with neighbors about the proposed changes.** On October 25th, I attended the Westerville Planning Commission Meeting. There were no other neighbors, likely because most neighbors knew nothing about the agenda that included a discussion about Ohio Health's proposed changes. I specifically discussed concerns about limited or no communication with the neighbors, the noise of sirens that comes with a 24/7 ER and the noise of helicopters landing and taking off. The vote was tabled to the November 22nd Planning Commission Meeting.
- **As a result of neighbors attending and speaking at the November 22nd Planning Commission Meeting, we were successful in getting the expansion issue changed from a minor to a major one.** The vote now goes to the Westerville City Council.

Upcoming Westerville City Council Meetings and the Ohio Health Request

The schedule and procedures for hearing this case before the Westerville City Council are as follows:

- **There are three official readings of the case at three separate meetings between November and January.** These meetings occur at 7:00 p.m. at 21 S. State in the City Council Chambers.
- **On Tuesday, Nov. 30th, the case will be read into record at a council meeting.** The reading into record is all that is supposed to happen at this meeting; no public discussion is planned to take place at this meeting.
- **On Tuesday, Dec. 7th the next reading will take place and the public will be able to participate to share concerns.**
- **On Jan. Tuesday, 4th, the third and final reading will take place.** After public discussion, the Westerville City Council will vote on the expansion and modification requested by Ohio Health.
- Joe Clase, Director of Development and Zoning for Genoa Township, plans to attend as many of the meetings as possible.

Upcoming Genoa Township Trustees Meeting and the Ohio Health Request

- On Thursday, December 2nd at 7:00 p.m., the Genoa Township Trustees will be meeting at Genoa Township Hall. The Ohio Health request has been penciled into the agenda. **We need as many neighbors as possible to attend this meeting to show our concern**, especially if we want Genoa Township to represent us on this issue. We will explain the situation and ask them for a formal proposal opposing the site changes to the Ohio Health facilities. A list of reasons needs to be composed as to why we feel it is detrimental to our neighborhood and community and requesting their support. We are waiting to hear back from the Westerville City planning office to see if that proposal must be submitted to the City Counsel before their hearings or during.

How You Can Help – Get your neighbors INVOLVED!

How You Can Help – ATTEND MEETINGS!

- **The more neighbors that attend the meetings, the more impactful our presence will be!**
- **Tuesday, Nov. 30th, 7:00 p.m. – Westerville City Counsel Meeting**
- **Thursday, Dec. 2nd, 7:00 p.m. – Genoa Township Trustees Meeting**
- **Tuesday, Dec. 7th, 7:00 p.m. – Westerville City Counsel Meeting**
- **Tuesday, Jan. 4th, 7:00 p.m. – Westerville City Counsel Meeting**

How You Can Help – WRITE LETTERS!

- The more neighbors that write letters to the editors of our local papers and the Columbus Dispatch, the worse the publicity will be for the city of Westerville and Ohio Health. At times, reporters from one or both of the local papers attend the Genoa Township Trustees meetings – this would be great publicity for the cause.

Miscellaneous Information

- We are trying to ascertain whether or not Ohio Health and the City have agreed to any financial or tax deals on this, or if it is just the promise of 100 jobs and a presumption that this is just what Westerville needs. This is more of a cliché, "if you build it, they will come," than a need today.
- **One of the Ohio Health executives, Steve Garlock, previously served as a member of the Westerville Planning Commission.** This is Ohio Health's inside track to getting this approved by Westerville officials. We have the potential to

derail this.

- **If Westerville officials do not see the negative impacts of this proposal and approve the expansion and modifications requested by Ohio Health, we can still make an impact to Westerville in the future.**
- **Although we don't want to do this, we can take the following actions:**
 - Our property taxes will go down due to lower property values so Westerville Schools will get less money. Future levies should be voted down.
 - Stop shopping in Westerville; instead, shop in Columbus, just down Polaris Parkway or in other areas to further impact Westerville.

Our quality of life, as we know it today, is in jeopardy! As neighbors pulling together, we have the opportunity to stop this plan. Please help! Let me know if you have any questions. My cell phone number is 614-599-4999.