

Frank and Dr Aurelia Bihari



Municipality of Middlesex Centre
10227 Ilderton Road
Ilderton, ON
N0M 2A0

May 5, 2023

RE: Objection to Official Plan Amendment (OPA 62) And Zoning By-Law Amendment (ZBA-07-2023) – Application for Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law, HGLW Inc. (708 and 714 Gideon Drive)

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been brought to our attention that an application has been filed with the Middlesex Centre Municipality, requesting re-designation/re-zoning of 708 and 714 Gideon Dr. property. The property is currently zoned for Agricultural use; the application requests rezoning to an Agricultural Special Policy Area designation to accommodate recreational uses (private community centre/sports fields) and a medical clinic. The proposed planning is asking for a number of large parking lots, soccer field/running track and almost 87,000ft² main building (in addition to other, proposed infrastructure-related outbuildings).

We would like to **file an objection** to the change in zoning to the above-mentioned property, on the following grounds:

COMMUNITY/REGIONAL CONCERNS

Environment

- Our rural community is facing yet another urban sprawl and possible real estate speculations, associated with the elimination of arable farmland, environmental damage and loss of wildlife. This runs contrary to the Middlesex Centre Strategic Plan vision: *“A thriving, progressive and welcoming community that honours our rural roots and embraces our natural spaces.”* (<https://middlesexcentre.on.ca/services/residents/strategic-plan>).
- The proposed area is sited right in the middle of agricultural land, livestock pastures and horse farms, right across from the Komoka Provincial Park. Building a clinic, office, restaurant, store, or retail (with their associated parking needs) will have an enormous negative impact on the surrounding environment: concrete/asphalt jungle (proposed 518 parking spaces, in addition to the existing

concreted-over area) and the destruction of the existing farmland/parkland, as well as excessive noise experienced by the neighbourhood. Therefore, the input from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Upper Thames Valley Conservation Area needs to be taken into consideration in any decision-making.

- Any re-zoning changes to the current property will generate a significant increase in traffic, further compounding already-existing problem with the excessive speeding experienced along Gideon Dr, Brigham Rd and Elviage Dr. Due to the proximity to the Komoka Provincial Park, wildlife (particularly deer) are numerous; these animals cross the roads (especially after dark), contributing to many vehicle-animal collisions in the area. This will lead to an increase in traffic accidents/potential fatalities.
- The large proposed parking lots will exacerbate the excessive noise and traffic problems in the area. Moreover, a soccer field is a very noisy/rowdy sporting enterprise.
- The proposed increase in building height means a multi-story commercial building in a rural community.
- Currently, the site is a home to a significant number of wildlife species (owls, raptors, song birds, deer, coyotes, foxes, beneficial insects, etc.), particularly with its proximity to the existing provincial park. The removal of the existing trees, hedgerows and meadows will have a huge negative effect on their populations.
- Vegetation and trees will be eliminated: more concrete will be poured to accommodate the proposed building(s). This will raise the temperature of surrounding area and create drainage problems. The proposed plan will need a thorough hydrological/environmental assessment.

Infrastructure

- Lack of infrastructure and increased need for septic/sewage: to our knowledge, all surrounding properties rely on wells for their water supply, and septic tanks for sewage/waste (this includes the property in question). The proposed expansion to the site will have a significant negative impact on the hydrological milieu of the area. Depending on the number of people attending the proposed sports centre/frequency of attendance will increase the amount of waste generated, creating a potential risk for sewage seepage and groundwater contamination in the area.
- Having a sports complex of the proposed size will lead to excessive noise by the complex users (whistling, cheering, yelling, car honking, door slamming, loud music), as well as an increase in artificial illumination. All of these will have a significant negative impact on the quality of life for the surrounding residents and the provincial park.
- Middlesex County already has at least two sports centre/community centres very near the proposed location: (a) community centre/sports-fields at 2652 Gideon Dr in Delaware, and (b) Komoka Wellness Centre (a large community centre/sports arena) at 1 Tunks Ln (off Glendon Dr) in Kilworth. Medical centre complexes and

restaurants are already amply available at Oxford St/Glendon Dr (Riverbend community), as well as on Gledon Dr in Kilworth. Moreover, Echo Valley Golf Club (located just a few hundred metres south of the proposed area) and the Oaks Golf Course (several hundred metres down the road on Gideon Dr), already have club houses (restaurant, retail); adding another facility of this nature is redundant, excessive and superfluous – there is absolutely no need to destroy farmland to build another one in the near vicinity.

PERSONAL IMPACT

- Effect on our well/water supply: approximately 60-70% of the proposed area appears to be covered with asphalt or concrete; this will negatively impact our water quantity/quality.
- Impact on our apiary – foraging honeybees: bees require a minimum of 3 square miles of foraging area. Physical and chemical (herbicides, pesticides, insecticides) destruction of meadow habitat will kill our bee colonies.

We appreciate the effort and the initiative that the new owner(s) of the property are taking to improve the existing site (and not let it be run down). However, the improvement needs to remain within the context and the character of our valued rural community. We offer several alternative suggestions for the proposed site that we believe will make good environmental and business sense, as well as maintain a positive rural community relationship:

- Convert the property back to an agricultural use (farm/single family) residential zoning;
- Convert it to an upscale single-residence estate;
- Rehabilitate the golf course/driving-range (if the owners have their heart set on a sports centre) – this would not require an extensive building of new facilities or extensive parking lots;
- Open a small equestrian centre – plenty of barns on the property, fits with the character of the neighbourhood.

Thank you for your consideration. We are sure that the Middlesex Centre County is already aware of all the safety (traffic, fire, law enforcement, emergency response time) and liability issues involved with the proposal. We hope our concerns will be taken into the account. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us, by telephone ([REDACTED]), writing (the address above), or e-mail [REDACTED]

Best regards,



Frank and Dr Aurelia Bihari