

May 31,2017

Mr. Jon Crumbie, Planning and Design Coordinator  
Division of Planning and Design Services  
City of Louisville

case #17CUP1032

Mr. Crumbie,

On May 22, 2017 I attended the neighborhood meeting at Beargrass Christian Church to find out about the proposed off-street parking for the Willis-Klein Showroom (case #17CUP1032). In short, Mr. Klein will pave over two lots off Ridgeway Avenue in our neighborhood to accommodate his business. In order to accomplish this, he will knock down a house on one of the lots. Despite the claim that it is a "dilapidated" house, it is a perfectly good house that has been occupied for over fifty years before Mr. Klein bought it. I encourage you to see it for yourself. Additionally, he will remove six large trees and numerous scrubs from the neighborhood to accommodate this parking lot.

There were four ladies at the neighborhood meeting complaining about the present traffic problem at this location partially caused by The Plant Kingdom, another business located directly across Ridgeway Avenue from Willis-Klein. The semi-trucks that deliver and unload on the side partially block Ridgeway Avenue at Westport Road, directly across from the the proposed parking lot. This does not count the smaller delivery trucks, vans and customers that park on Ridgeway daily basis, seven days per week. Customers spill over during busy times well past the business's boundaries, and there is many-times overnight parking there. This is compounded by the fact that the corner of Ridgeway Avenue and Westport Road is a two-way stop with four directions of traffic and a railroad crossing in-between. I have been cut off numerous times going straight over the tracks onto Ridgeway Avenue by cars that make a left turn from Westport Road. This is a very dangerous intersection. According to Mr. Klein, there has been no traffic impact study done for this project.

#### SAMPLING OF STUDIES

There was recently a study done by faculty members at the University of Houston entitled, "Commercial Development Spillover Effects Upon Residential Values". Among the findings concerning smaller developments were:

1. "types of potential externalities suggested in the literature such as noise and light pollution, traffic congestion and aesthetic deterioration would be expected.
2. "the values of homes within the closest distance band produces the greatest reversal in prices, falling a full 7% off their peak"

A study by Paterson and Boyle (2002) examined the impact on home prices "of direct visibility" of such land uses (smaller developments). In their study these researchers conclude that "visibility of development significantly detracts from property values."

Zillow has been quoted by every major news organization in America, most notably by "Nightly

Business Report' on the Public Broadcasting Company. On December 26, 2016, Zillow was asked, "Does a Parking lot next door to my home lower property values?" ANSWER: "YES. Few people want to live next to or look at a parking lot."

The City Council of Maplewood MN (May 2001) told their staff to evaluate off-street parking in residential areas of their city. They solicited input from the community. The purpose was "to control certain land uses and activities that have a direct and detrimental effect on the character of the city's residential neighborhoods." THEIR FINDINGS --- "The city counsel finds that the parking of and storage of excessive number of vehicles can be a nuisance and can affect the neighborhood character as well as the public health, safety and welfare, property values and the reasonable use and enjoyment of neighboring properties."

There was a study published on "wiseGeek" entitled, "Why are Parking Lots Bad for the Environment". The following is an excerpt from this study: "Along with toxic liquids being washed into storm drains, air pollution, less green to absorb carbon monoxide and less soil to collect rainwater, it creates an "urban heat island" where the pavement retains the heat from the sun to lift the surrounding temperature a few degrees. --- "wiseGeek" was founded by 3 individuals with degrees from UC Berkeley, University of Virginia and Harvard Business School.

There was a similar study conducted by InvestigateWest that was published in the Journal of Environmental Science and Technology. The study concluded that the sealant used in parking lots is a cancer risk; found that they put off air-borne toxins and can be washed away in sewers and ground water. Researchers found toxins in homes showing up in the form of "dust" in homes close to parking lots. This study was repeated with similar results by The Geological Survey, University of New Hampshire, Baylor University and others.

## THE AREA

It is also important to note that the space owned by Mr. Klein is very inefficiently used. As stated by Mr. Klein at the neighborhood meeting, his building presently has 16,175 square feet. He also stated at the neighborhood meeting that his showroom takes about about 40% of the building. This leaves approximately 9,705 sq ft that could double his showroom space and leave 20% of the building (3,235 sq ft) for storage. This is only 1,095 sq ft less than a new, two-story building (5,400 sq ft per floor) to be erected during the renovation for a "showroom and storage area".

Mr. Klein wishes to add 40 new parking places to bring it to a total of 79 total parking spaces. He has 14 parking spots presently in front of his store. None of these spots will be effected by the renovation. He plans to add new pavement in front of these spaces which will add a minimum of 5 spaces to the total. He has 23 parking places on the side of the building that will also not be effected by the renovations. He has 26 parking spots adjacent to the railroad tracks. With the addition of the new building, this number will be reduced to 16 spots. It is my understanding that the City of St Matthews will make him redesign the front entrance which will be a loss of 2 additional spots. This leaves additional space in the middle of the existing lot for, conservatively, 20 new parking spots. This is a total of 76 parking spots. Although I am a designer myself, any architect worth his weight could redesign the present lot owned by Mr. Klein to get even more parking spaces comfortably. Mine was a conservative estimate. Likewise, if Mr Klein would hire a space planner to efficiently use the space (60% of wasted space mentioned above) he would not need the additional building and would have a total of 91 parking spots. NOTE: this estimate was based on dimensions using the parking lot at

Kroger Shopping Center on Hubbards Lane as a model.

It should be noted that I can see Mr. Klein's front parking lot from my back porch. In the last ten years, I have never seen the front parking lot full at any point in time during the day or night. In fact, seldom do I see it half full. It should also be noted that Mr. Klein's staff parks 2-3 company vehicles in the front parking lot on a daily basis. Business 101 (yes, I have a BS in Business) teaches you not to park company vehicles in front of your building; there're for customers.

I will be approximately 30-40 feet from the parking lot on my back porch if implemented. I hope you will imagine going out to eat or enjoying a nice summer day on your back porch while you look at a parking lot and listen to the noise; tis includes the motors, doors, etc but additionally the security horns go off on a weekly basis. This is not only totally unnecessary because of poor planning, but detracts from a nice, middle-class neighborhood. I hope you are one, like most of us, that would not like a parking lot next to your property. Your careful consideration would greatly be appreciated.

Sincerely,

W. Stanley Conrad