|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sonya Gross and Norman Oslik, Co-ChairsDeb Warner, SecretaryDavid Hofstad, Treasurer |  | Progressive Cheverly [progressivecheverly.org](http://www.progressivecheverly.org/)  | 3020 ParkwayCheverly, MD 20785 |
|  |  |  |  |

July 28, 2017

Joyce Nichols

Zoning Hearing Examiner

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, 4th floor
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
ZHE@co.pg.md.us

Public Input at Hearing on Special Exception SE-4792

Concrete Batching Plant in Bladensburg, MD

Dear Zoning Hearing Examiner Nichols:

            On behalf of Progressive Cheverly we wish to express our strong opposition to Ernest Maier’s application for a Special Exception (SE-4792) and two variances to build a concrete batching plant in Bladensburg.  We also support the opposition’s request for a delay in this hearing based on the reasons specified in their letter of July 11, 2017. Progressive Cheverly is a person of record.

                Progressive Cheverly is a grassroots organization made up of Cheverly residents that for twelve years has worked to address a broad range of social justice and environmental issues at all levels of government.  Beginning in 2005, Progressive Cheverly worked for many years with the Cedar Heights Civic Association, the Town of Cheverly, and other surrounding communities to oppose the approval of a Special Exception to build a concrete batching plant in the industrial area on Sheriff Road.  Ultimately, we lost.  The application was approved although to date it has not been built.  Many of the same issues we raised relate to the Ernest Maier application.  Only this time we hope that our county officials will realize that allowing the building of the concrete batching plant further compromises the environmental problems that already exist in Bladensburg.  Specifically, we believe that building the plant will result in poorer air quality, additional water pollution, more noise, and increased truck traffic that will negatively impact the health and wellbeing of not only Bladensburg residents but all the surrounding communities.

There is no question that a public hearing is critically important to understand what an additional plant of this nature will mean to the health and safety of the immediate residents, to the many school children who attend schools in the immediate area, and to pedestrians and drivers who currently use Bladensburg Road and nearby roads.  This is already an area that has too much traffic.  What does it mean to add 80 additional heavy trucks to this mix?  What is the cumulative impact for the residents with the addition of another industrial plant that spews more concrete dust in the air. What will this pollution mean for the Bladensburg Waterfront? What price will the residents and businesses in Bladensburg and nearby communities pay in the way of environmental degradation and reduced quality of life if the concrete batching plant is built?

We are very concerned about how the proposed concrete batching plant will impact public health.  The staff technical report prepared for the Planning Board concludes that the current concrete block plant on the site “has not adversely affected the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area.”  Yet, the staff Technical Report provides no evidence supporting this conclusion.  In fact, residents near the plant site complain about the concrete dust in the air.  The historic African American Kingdom Missionary Baptist Church right next to the plant regularly has to sweep concrete dust from the front of the church before services.  And Brendon Quinn, owner of Ernest Maier, freely admits that debris from the plant has been flowing for years into the Moss Run stream adding to the pollution of the Anacostia River.  These conditions clearly jeopardize the health of Bladensburg residents, workers and nearby communities, not to mention the pollution dumped into the nearby streams.  A health impact assessment should be done to provide a fair and unbiased look at the impact of the current operations and potential impacts of the proposed concrete batching facility and the associated truck traffic.

You may remember that with the Marvaco Special Exception application (SE 4502) for Sheriff Road, the Prince George’s Health Department responded to a remand order with a proposal for a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Air Quality Testing and recommended that approval of the special exception be deferred until the studies were completed and analyzed. (Letters from the Health Department dated December 27, 2007 and August 28, 2008). These necessary studies were never done. Unlike the Sheriff Road concrete batching plant case, it is again our fervent hope that a full HIA and air quality test will be required for this special exception.

            If you view this proposed concrete batching plant in terms of its impact on the broader community, it should be clear that this application for a special exception should be denied.  It is our hope that your hearing will help bring to light these issues.  If you have any questions, I can be reached at mtgolde@gmail.com or 301-322-5272.

 Sincerely,

\ Madeleine Golde for Progressive Cheverly

Co-Chairs: Sonya Gross and Norman Oslik

chair@progressivecheverly.org