

TESTIMONY OF LYNNE BATTLE ON
THE ABANDONMENT OF WESTBARD AVENUE
AND RIDGEFIELD ROAD
DECEMBER 15, 2020

I am Lynne Battle, a resident of Westbard Mews on Westbard Avenue where I am directly impacted by the proposed abandonment of Ridgefield Road and the realignment of Westbard Avenue. I am speaking for myself and the Westbard Study Group.

I believe that the proposed abandonment provides no benefit to the public at large, but rather serves primarily to benefit the developers of both the Kensington Senior Living Project and the proposed redevelopment of the Westbard Shopping Center, whose entrance will be enhanced by this action. Since the abandonment will apparently proceed nonetheless, I strongly urge that the abandonment and realignment of Westbard Avenue be accomplished with an emphasis on three important requirements that would offer the public some benefit.

First, it is critical for the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the community that a traffic light be installed at the intersection of the proposed realigned Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road at the time that this construction takes place. This intersection will be frequently crossed by local residents on foot including school children and passage without a light will be extremely dangerous. Furthermore, neighborhood cars on Ridgefield Road approaching Westbard will find it precarious to turn left toward River Road unless a traffic light is present. This cannot wait until a year or two after construction for further study. It must be installed now to ensure no deadly accidents, and all costs must be absorbed by the developers being benefited.

Secondly, we strongly believe that attention must be paid during construction to the Willett Branch Greenway which is the single most important public benefit of this entire redevelopment, and which will be impacted due to its adjacent location. When the road is rebuilt, it will have to be constructed over the Kenwood branch stream as it flows into the Willett Branch at the beginning of the proposed Greenway

adjacent to River Road. During construction, the flow of one stream into another should be made into a small waterfall feature that would set off the beginning of the park and is part of the Parks Department's design. We understand that unless it is built while the road is being constructed, the proposed waterfall will probably not be possible to build later on. Again, all costs should be borne by the developers.

Finally, the road abandonment will create a new area on which no construction is contemplated – Lot 24, Block D. There is no reference to the intended use of this block. While the preliminary plan envisioned it as a place to put a large number of mitigation trees, we have always believed that the area would be best utilized as a place for stormwater management (SWM) for the road as a whole. Indeed, at the hearing on the preliminary plan, members of the Planning Board advocated that the developer use SWM best practices for the new Westbard Avenue, in keeping with the Sector Plan, which states that “SWM treatment should be done on-site wherever feasible, and the use of waivers should be limited. Otherwise, road run-off is likely to go down into the newly established greenway park adversely affecting its water quality and recreational uses. Accordingly, the establishment of

optimal SWM practices on this parcel now as the road is being constructed should be mandated.

I appreciate your attention today and hope you will support these three critical recommendations.

Submitted By Lynne Battle on Behalf of The Westbard Study Group (Lynne Battle, Jenny Sue Dunner, Marnie Shaul, and Susan Spock)