

Alderman Road Project—Resident Letter of Opposition

Attention Polk Planning Commission:

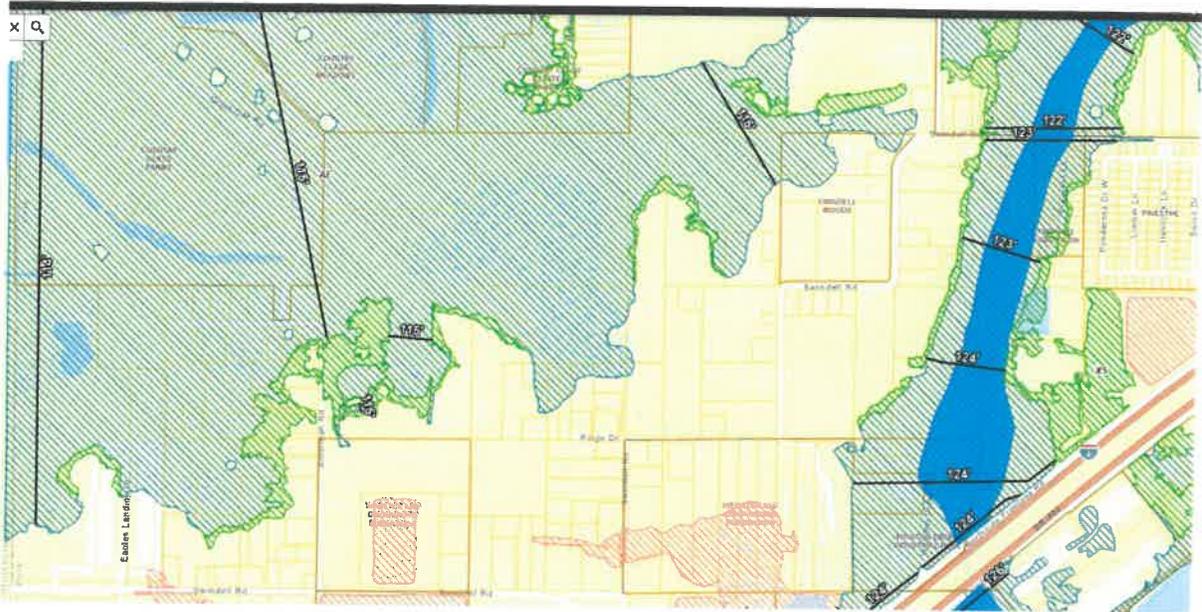
I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed land-use and zoning changes for the property located at Alderman Rd. I am a multiple degreed engineer, with direct experience in stormwater issues affecting this area. My family has owned property along Itchepackesassa Creek since the 1950's, and I own 11+ acres of land including creek frontage. I strongly urge you to reject this project proposal due to the significant risks it poses to our community.

I have conducted extensive research into the flooding dynamics of Itchepackesassa Creek, with support from Dr. Ni Bin Chang of UCF's Stormwater Engineering Academy, who provided me with a letter of support. This research confirms what many residents already know—our local watershed is failing, and adding further development will only exacerbate the problem.

Polk County should be acutely aware of the capacity and conveyance limitations of Itchepackesassa Creek, as well as the severity of flooding experienced across a large area of connected floodplains. During overflow events, the creek pushes upstream into primary drainage systems—such as the drainage basin along County Line and the main tributary connecting to Blackwater Creek and Walker Rd ditches. This, in turn, overflows into secondary ditches within various communities before spilling onto floodplains, roads, and other low-lying areas.

This project necessitates a significant land-use and zoning change for a parcel currently zoned in alignment with the surrounding communities. Once a land-use and zoning change is approved, the available protections for this area become severely limited. Even the most advanced engineering controls cannot mitigate the underlying drainage issues in this region, as the bulk of the Itchepackesassa Creek system is privately owned and remains poorly modeled in official studies. It does not require a technical background to appreciate that this site is located on a sensitive area.

Below is an illustration from the floodplain viewer, which shows the AE and X rated flood plains covering the site, and their relationship with the overall flood plain:



The developer will argue that these topics are addressed by permitting processes and that their engineering partners will conduct drainage studies and include engineering controls. In this area, that is an inadequate control. The Planning Board and the Polk County Commissioners are the only ones able to protect the non-structural controls protecting this community. Assurances of engineering controls and review by water management does not absolve the planning board from its responsibility to consider the importance of land-use and zoning as a protective control. The permitting process will validate specific criteria, which does not fully account for the uniqueness of this situation. The Varrea project in Plant City, for example, stands as a testament to the failures of such planning, as does the severe flooding experienced during Milton, where homes were lost despite prior assurances that risks were “mitigated.”

Plant City Commissioners approved land-use and zoning changes to converting a 1,000 acre rural/agricultural property to a mixed use master planned community. The project dismissed public opposition and credible flood concerns. This massive project went through all permitting processes as well as water management/County/City review. The first residents of Varrea moved into the community July of 2023. Immediately following development residents reported new/enhanced flooding on surrounding properties.

Established homes to the north of this site were significantly impacted, as properties that were previously the “highest” in the area were now looking up at the new development. Other established homeowners on the East side of Charlie Taylor Rd have been catastrophically impacted. These issues appeared during the first minor storms, as homes outside the identified flood zone experienced their first taste of property flooding.

Despite every assurance of the developer, their engineering partners, water management representatives, and the City, residents have experienced exactly what they said would happen following this project. Property owners now experience new flooding, deeper flooding, or have properties that are now incapable of draining. Hurricane Debby exposed these problems and resulted in the developer dispatching their engineer to study their controls and the Creek to understand the situation.

Below is an image of Varrea Phase 1 after Milton. The evidence of flooding should make you skeptical of any engineering assurance accompanying project plans in this low-lying region.



While the development experienced flooding at levels shocking new residents, the impact on the surrounding area was magnitudes worse. During overflow, Itchepackesassa Creek pushes upstream into primary drainage systems (drainage basin element along County Line, main tributary connecting to Blackwater Creek, Walker Rd ditches, etc.), this overflows into secondary ditches (those in the various communities), then spills onto floodplains, over roads, and everything else low-lying in this area.

Normal drainage for this area flows under the Knights Griffin Bridge, with some overflow towards the McIntosh Preserve. After Varrea's development, portions of the "natural" overflow found a new home, turning Charlie Taylor Rd into the main path for overflow from the bowl to push through. Charlie Taylor Rd experienced deep over-road flooding, and multiple homes along this road experienced deep structure flooding and were deemed total losses. The flooding extended over Knights Griffin Rd, an area that has never experienced over-road flooding in its history.



Itchepakesassa Creek is a failed watershed. The system is out of balance and available models associated with it outdated & incomplete; it is impossible for even the most capable engineering efforts to ensure effective controls. Similarly, while the permitting and review process will consider draining characteristics of the subject parcel, they do not consider the system environment.

In a related project hearing, Dr. Chang provided a support statement strongly recommending a complete system model be developed for this area before allowing major land-use changes and intense development. The current Itchepakesassa Creek

watershed study by Jones Edmunds will not be finalized for about another year and a half, so this project will rely on a decades-old model.

In a past project hearing on Swindell Rd, Walter Reitner, a resident stormwater engineering expert, recommended County Commissioners wait for the completion of the ongoing watershed study before approving projects in this troubled region, explaining the flood-prone nature of the Itchepackesassa/Blackwater Creek system. Even if the model were newer, the bulk of the Itchepackesassa Creek System is privately owned and managed, so the model neglects to detail much of the system. Polk County's drainage director has confirmed this to me (Exhibit A).

Furthermore, site-limited engineering studies do not consider the impact to the broader system which comes with altering the topography and groundwater characteristics around that parcel. The engineering study will design a capacity of storage volume to offset some volume of fill introduced to an area, and a theoretical calculation that positions that the water draining off this site after the project will not be greater than before the project. While this is important for dealing with nuisance flooding and rainwater runoff, it is a near inconsequential factor for how surrounding properties will be impacted during an overflow.

Itchepackesassa Creek experiences a "backflow" event, where pressure from the main creek channel causes an upstream push into the "tributaries" that feed into the creek. This phenomenon has been documented in past studies and observed during every major flood event in the region.

Our community has provided aerial footage from Hurricane Irma, which shocked the engineers conducting the current watershed study. During Hurricane Milton, residents of Country Class Farms confirmed the southward flow of water through their properties from the creek along County Line. This represents an "upstream" flow occurring more than four miles from the main creek channel.

This backflow spreads across all connected floodplains. The pressure associated with these events is so extreme that most experts refuse to believe it is real until they are presented with direct evidence.

My property includes approximately 600 feet of creek frontage at the midpoint of the Army Corps study area. During Hurricane Milton, overflow from the creek covered every inch of my 11.25-acre property, with the main pasture area and forest submerged under approximately four feet of water. My property alone stored an estimated 15 million gallons of water.

This flooding extended across all connected floodplains, community roadways, and beyond, simultaneously covering several thousand acres. The floodwaters also impacted the floodplains on the subject property. Homes adjacent to this property, including those off Paige Drive, experienced significant flooding—even those not previously identified as being within a floodplain.

The image below shows approximately 100 feet of sediment that accumulated to form a sandy “road,” extending perpendicularly from the creek at a cattle crossing.



The image on the right shows where the creek deposited sediment, raising it to the elevation of the pre-existing spoil piles that typically contain the creek (usually 4–6 feet from the channel base). Significant portions of my property saw their elevation increase by 12–24 inches due to the accumulation of tons of sand.

These backwater hydrology effects become apparent only when a system is out of balance and overloaded. While riverine flooding can occur elsewhere, it is difficult—even in Florida—to find a situation as extreme as this. *The Ledger* has reported on flooding in this

area numerous times, documenting feedback from Polk County engineering officials who have stated that there is nothing they can do to mitigate the situation.

It is reckless and irresponsible for any entity to consider land-use or zoning changes along these low-lying floodplains. Such changes alter the topography of large areas, permanently affecting water flow characteristics during flood events. Every gallon of water that can no longer flow onto this parcel will instead be displaced onto surrounding properties. Every gallon of water whose natural flow is altered will cause adverse impacts elsewhere.

The engineering assurances for this project will not adequately address these concerns because they simply cannot. The necessary data does not exist for anyone to properly model this scenario, even if required. When the County and water management agencies issue a permit for this project, they will not have the ability to validate the risks or model this situation accurately.

Protecting established communities requires safeguarding current land-use and zoning standards for this property, which only allow for low-density rural development or agricultural use. Development in this area should adhere to existing zoning and land-use guidelines, minimize disruption to floodplain areas, and avoid any reduction of wetlands.

Ideally, the County should mandate a comprehensive system-wide model of the Itchepackesassa watershed before approving major projects—whether within Polk County or in its neighboring jurisdictions to the west.

Polk County has dealt with flooding from this area half a century. In the 90's the County commissioned the Army Corps of Engineers to study the problem. That report deemed most solutions environmentally or economically infeasible. The authors also assumed no future land-use and zoning changes for the undeveloped parcels in the region, as most were low-lying and not suitable for development. That report also cited urban sprawl and increasing strain on the watershed due to development activity in the watershed.

Between Varrea, Varrea Phase 2, Timber Ridge, the future Blue Steel Industrial Site, the Welldyne complex built in the 2000's, the Alderman Rd Warehouse, and the Walker Rd Dairy development we are expanding a semi contiguous berm along the fringes of this flood area. Unless there is a project to expand the conveyance downstream of this area or introduce massive upstream storage capacity this area will continue to experience severe flooding. Each new project which encroaches on these connected floodplains, increases

the strain on remaining parcels. The image below illustrates the overall floodplain area and approximates the location of the many projects.



The “normal” drainage for this area is through the Creek, exiting through the Knights Griffin Bridge towards the Lower Green Swamp preserve. In overflow state this reverses and eventually the creek pushes due South over its banks filling the floodplains.

Regarding infrastructure, the communities surrounding this property site are rural/ag use with an extremely low-density profile. Alderman & Swindell Rd are secondary roadways, not designed to support high volume or high weight traffic. Towards the east of this property Swindell Rd is curve-filled, narrow, and floods in multiple locations. The road is insufficient to support tractor trailer traffic, and an industrial warehouse at this location will undoubtedly result in traffic here. There is no hard mechanism to force traffic to the west on Swindell Rd, and I-4 traffic issues routinely result in navigation mapping drivers onto secondary roads. This was part of the justification leading to the denial of a similar project proposed on Swindell Rd.

Similarly, the communities along this area operate predominantly off wells and septic systems, due to the limited rural infrastructure. An industrial development at this site will require the County to expand infrastructure at a scale which is impractical for a single project and will result in disruptions for the surrounding area. Assuming the County can

rationalize building the required infrastructure financially, there are serious environmental risks posed by extending sewer and water to this property due to the significant wetlands around the parcel. Additionally, expanding infrastructure to this area removes a major barrier, facilitating increased development intensity of remaining undeveloped parcels equally unsuited for it.

Ample research exists to affirm industrial as the highest intensity classification of development, and the one with the most severe environmental impact. A warehouse campus will introduce significant impervious materials to the parcel, along with pollutant prone vehicle processes. Studies have consistently shown that the effectiveness of engineering controls such as retention ponds is theoretically, frequently falling short of design for both stormwater mitigation and pollutant remediation. Given the hundreds of homes relying on well water with immediate proximity to this site, a land-use and zoning change that will allow significant pollutant load in the area poses a serious risk to existing residents. A warehouse on this parcel will introduce light and noise pollution as well, which will adversely affect the property values and environment for established homes nearby.

I ask the Planning Board thoroughly considers the risks this project poses to established communities. Consider why the county has restricted the zoning in this area for decades? Why increased the acreage requirements, and required lower density development over the past decades? Zoning and land use are recognized non-structural flood mitigation controls. For the past five decades these have been the primary controls for this troubled area. Residents have largely given up hope that the flood situation can ever be improved but we are pleading that you avoid compounding them. In the past my livelihood relied on Florida Construction so I am not against development. However, with my unique understanding of this troubled environment, I am vehemently opposed development that requires land-use and zoning changes impacting these flood plains.

Respectfully,

Brian M Holbrook,

MBA, MS

Appendix A:

This is an email from the Polk Roads & Drainage Engineering director previously confirming that the majority of the creek system is private and not detailed in prior studies.



Brian Holbrook <bholbrooksourcing@gmail.com>

RE: [EXTERNAL]: Itchepackesassa Watershed Inquiry

Jarvis, Jay <JayJarvis@polk-county.net>
To: Brian Holbrook <bholbrooksourcing@gmail.com>

Fri, Dec 1, 2023 at 2:42 PM

Brian,

From what I can recall your list of studies is good and I don't recall any thing after the 2010 study that resulted in the project on the park property; until the SWFWMD study that is currently underway.

I cannot address the amount of development in the watershed.

A majority of the Itchy Creek System is private and I do not believe there was a lot of detail done beyond the main creek system previously.

Any monitoring stations along the creek would be the Water Management Districts or USGS (?).

I hope this helps.

Sincerely,

Jay M. Jarvis, P.E., Director

Polk County Roads & Drainage Division

3000 Sheffield Road

Winter Haven, FL 33880

(863) 535-2200 Office

(863) 534-7339 Fax

Appendix B:

Support letter provided by Dr Chang highlighting the need for a system-wide study to understand result of changes in this area. This letter was provided in support of opposition to a similar size warehouse project 2500' to the west of this property. Both properties impact flood plains that are connected and drain into the same drainage basin element. Dr Chang has developed multiple research proposals with support from State Representatives, Senators, and County Commissioners seeking Federal or State funding to study the flood problem for this community, and potential solutions.



Civil and Environmental Engineering Department
Engineering Building 2 Suite 211
(407) 823-2841 • Fax (407) 823-3315
<http://www.cce.engr.ucf.edu/>

Jan 7, 2024

RE: Support for Country Class Meadows HOA Opposition to Land Use Changes and Rezoning

Dear Plant City Commissioners:

I am writing to express my support for Country Class Meadows HOA's concerns on the proposed land-use changes and rezoning required by the Blue Steel Industrial Development Project. I am a Professor of Sustainable System Engineering with 30+ years of experience in research, teaching, and outreach services. As a researcher, I seek interdisciplinary sustainability solutions deeply rooted among intertwined issues in system engineering, industrial ecology, ecological engineering, environmental engineering, hydrological science, and spatial informatics. I hold a Ph.D. in Environmental Systems Engineering and am the Director of UCF's Stormwater Management Academy. Beyond research interests, I teach engineering science courses in the areas of hydrology, ecology, environmental and water resources systems analysis, groundwater hydrology, groundwater modeling, and ecological engineering.

This letter expresses my personal opinions based on review of project information shared by the HOA, including available Watershed Management Plans, the Hillsborough County Stormwater Management Masterplan, FEMA FIRM Maps, and Hillsborough County Local

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Mitigation Strategy. There are potential risks associated with major development and land-use changes without a current system-wide study. Flooding challenges experienced by neighboring communities along the Itchepackesassa Creek system are well documented and have been the subject of formal study decades ago. The environment of this topic of concern is complex, involving hydrological analyses for two watersheds conducted years ago by two different agencies. Relying on current aged watershed studies may limit effectiveness of any engineering controls attempted by the developer. The Itchepackesassa Creek watershed study is obsolete and has no updated report. Similarly, significant elements of the Itchepackesassa Creek drainage system are privately owned and maintained, and separate models used decades ago may be limited by how they reflect them. Project uses a 2008 FEMA FIRM map, which is aged and does not reflect the flood plain expansion evident in the 2022 version. Maps confirm project site contains multiple flood plain elements, which are connected to shared drainage lines feeding Itchepackesassa Creek. In general, construction within the 100-year flood plain and on wetlands should be avoided where possible unless there is engineering infrastructure such as low impact development to avoid flooding and water contamination. Project plan depicts such construction and potential impact on surrounding drainage systems should be studied and simulated by a more systematic way using integrated hydrological and hydraulic models.

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Zoning regulations and land-use designations serve as control measures for communities and may ensure that development is conducted in a sustainable manner. While permitting processes are intended to provide additional safeguards, stormwater runoff models alone may not be valid for the global environment which is heavily influenced by the base flow from groundwater systems. Residents in this community describe peak flood conditions occurring days following storm events, making understanding of timing of any downstream discharge critical for flood management. Additionally, major topography changes of this scale due to urbanization effect may alter water flow and impact surrounding areas, as experienced by residents following the construction of the 262-acre Walker Road recreational park in 2017. This site is of similar size and considered a more intense development class with greater impervious surfaces. Site is upland of established communities with documented flooding issues, which may be impacted by significant changes to the drainage network. Forthcoming land development close to the suburban to the west further place the situation in a worse pathway.

An integrated hydrological analysis for flood impact assessment of the site and surrounding network should be conducted to simulate stormwater management conditions before and after the potential land development, and how low impact development strategies might help mitigate potential flood impact. Without a current system-wide analysis, the risks and potential negative consequences to surrounding properties are unknown, and it is difficult to properly

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assess design controls. I encourage the City to consider the concerns presented by the HOA's representative, and strongly recommend additional study on this complex situation. Should I be of any help, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely Yours,

Ni-Bin Chang

Ni-Bin Chang, Ph.D., P.E.
Professor, Dept. of Civil, Environmental, and Construction Engineering
Director, Stormwater Management Academy
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL, 32816
Email: nehang@ucf.edu
Phone: 407-823-1375

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Yannone, Lyndsay

From: David Lefler <davidslefler@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 5:35 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Cc: David Lefler
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Alderman Road & Swindell Road development

You don't often get email from davidslefler@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I would like for this email of opposition to be put in the file with the items in the subject line of this email.

1st and foremost thank you for what you do and assisting in the receipt and filing of this email.

Respectively, as a third generation, Polk county resident, I am strongly against this proposed land use change.

Polk County and through out central Florida is out of control with warehouses and housing developments! This needs desperate and fast attention in helping to protect local rural area land owners for future generations to come.

Why are we allowing the over development that is not conducive to the area?

Where are the local rural citizens to go?

I'm a 3rd generation land owner on my family property and with every development around us we witness 1st hand the watershed and water table change in our area. Increased localized flooding occurs when the burms that the warehouses are built on are 3-5' higher than that of normal ground level around us.

We as Polk County voting citizens are asking for the the Polk County and planning commissioners to please take a very extensive look into the overall absurd development of rural land in our county.

I have 3 developments (2 that are proposed looking for approval and 1 that already has it) 2 of which are 500' from my property and the approved one is 2000' from my property. We have plenty of solar farms around us as well, they certainly seem to only make it hotter around here, so please no more of those either!

We choose to live in this area because it is open. Most families that live here are second third and fourth generation, the ones that are not who moved here in the past year to 10 years chose this area, again for its openness, tranquility and it's natural beauty.

Over development of our county is leading to many issues that are negatively impacting our once beautiful county. It is certainly not conducive to the landscape and does not match current zoning for rural ag area. The "supportive transit development" of the I-4 corridor needs to be reevaluated desperately!

- To many Warehouses and housing is certainly not eye appealing to rural areas. They stick out like a hemorrhoid and are damaging to the landscape.

- overwhelming traffic volume on local roads and traffic, these 20' roads can not handle the amount and abuse all the extra traffic bring to the area. Increased volume of traffic accidents near and around our local streets, several have been fatal. How often does planning commission reach out to the Polk county sheriffs department and see just how many accidents occur in the local area that is being subject to development? The nearest intersection which is just about a lil more than a quarter of a mile away from me has at least one to two accidents every month. They just had one this past Sunday the 16th of March.

- Increased loss of more wildlife habitat that is detrimental for the wildlife we have just right here in our neighborhood... such as but not limited to; scrub jay, cardinals, ospreys, rabbits, gopher tortoises, sand hill cranes, fox squirrels, red cockaded and pileated wood peckers, the American Bald Eagle, mourning dove and plenty more that are really needing a home area.

- increased localized flooding with every development in our area, we have pictures and documentation of increased levels of flooding over the past 5 to 10 years, again I am third generation on this property it has never been so wet around us in the rainy season as it has been in the past 10 years.

- Increased heat in and around our area, with every concrete or asphalt and solar farm development. Temperatures are on average 5 to 8° higher than they were 20 to 30 years ago, farm journals from my grandparents document this.

- Steady increase on property tax and homeowners insurance. Over the past 10 years, we have seen increased development in our area, which honestly does not make sense, you have more homes, therefore, you have more homeowners paying property taxes and homeowners insurance yet continually ours are increased year over year. At some point it is really like you're trying to make it unaffordable for us to live here. Is that the goal?

Help protect Polk County and Polk County Floridians!

David Lefler
863-557-2599

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Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Kerri Lefler <klplefler@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 12:56 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Opposition to ALDERMAN ROAD WAREHOUSE PROJECT LDCPAL-2024-13
• LDCD-2024-7 (ID # 38)

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I am asking that you support your staff's findings and DENY this warehouse project.

There is nothing about this plan that is compatible with the surrounding residents who will be negatively impacted by it.

Please include my letter in the Commissioner's digital packet.

Sincerely!
Kerri Lefler
4455 Swindell Rd.
Lakeland, FL 33810

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: ANDREA TURBEVILLE <dwtapt@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 1:13 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Fwd: Letter of Opposition Planning Commissioner Package

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Just making sure you got this email in
Opposition to zoning change.
Please confirm
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: dwtapt@aol.com
Date: March 19, 2025 at 1:41:06 PM EDT
To: lyndsayingannone@polk-county.net
Subject: Letter of Opposition Planning Commissioner Package

Board of County Commissioners/BPC District
Case Idcpal-2024-137 & LDCD-2024-7
PLAESE INCLUDE IN PLANNING COMMISSIONER PACKAGE

This email is to express my opposition to the zoning change of the property on Alderman Road.
My name is Andrea Turbeville and I live at 626 Giant Oak Rd. and Country Class Farms.
Our home and cattle ranch are in close proximity to the Aldermen Road property.

Our concerns as a community are mainly the flooding.
As you know, we are in a flood prone area and also in the Itchepackessassa Creek Watershed area.
Covering this area with warehouses or a business park with concrete, would exacerbate the already flooding that we experience on a yearly basis.
Last year's hurricane Melton we experienced 5 feet of water on our cattle ranch. During Irma and 2017 we experienced 3 feet of water on our ranch. The continually building in this area is only making the flooding worse that we are ready half.

Also, we are landlocked and Country Class Farms, on Giant Oak Road runs to Alderman Road and then out to Swindell. That is our only ingress and egress into our properties. The traffic on small back roads would be overwhelming for us to get in to our

properties with the already congestion we experience when I4 has a back up Google map routes them right down Swindell Road to I4.

This piece of land also is surrounded by three neighborhoods, two of which are large HOA communities. Having warehouses or a business park in the middle would greatly deplete our property values.

We have worked our lifetimes to acquire our homes and land. This small area in northwest Polk county has been zoned Rural/ agricultural for many years .This is NOT the area to build wearhouses.

There is plenty of land that would be more conducive for this type of development.

I sincerely hope that the Polk county planning commission will do the Right thing and deny this zoning change.

Sincerely

5

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Steve Mitchell <steve@mitchellcustom.homes>
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2025 7:11 AM
To: Call, Planner On; Nance, Ivan; Anderson, Scott; Bolton, Robert; Dunn, Benjamin
Cc: Yannone, Lyndsay; Kaufman, Angela
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Opposition to ALDERMAN ROAD WAREHOUSE PROJECT LDCPAL-2024-13
• LDCD-2024-7 (ID # 38)

I am writing to ask that you please deny this project. The overdevelopment of this area is affecting the delicate balance of the ichepacakssa flood area and forcing all these local residents land to be flooded. Also as a cyclist there is no safe routes for us to ride and all the additional semis on the roads make it extreelemy dangerous. Just yesterday another rider was hit by a semi on our normal route because he pushed him off the road.

There is no where for us to ride safely.

The north side of I-4 is a rural agricultural and residential area. Enough with the warehouses already. Please stop

There are millions of square feet of vacant warehouses now not leased and overdeveloped all up and down county line and drainfield rd.

Please support staff's findings and DENY this warehouse project.

Thank You,

Energy Star Home Builder on your lot.
www.MitchellCustom.Homes

CASH HOME BUYER!

Steve Mitchell

Certified Residential Contractor, Certified **Plumbing contractor**

863-640-7355(SELL)

863-272-9394 Office



Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Edith Leonard <eleonard2@tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2025 6:03 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Opposition Letter for Denial of the Alderman Road Warehouse Project LDCPAL-2024-13 LDCD-2024-7 (ID #38)

[You don't often get email from eleonard2@tampabay.rr.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Good Morning. My name is Edward Leonard. I am President of the Country Class Farms HOA. I live at 805 Giant Oak Rd., Lakeland Fl. 33810. Telephone 813-245-7242. I am in opposition to this project because primarily it doesn't fit into the Comprehensive Plan. Plus there are so many residents that will be negatively affected by it. Last hurricane we had three feet of water in the middle of our road. Our garage flooded. Our neighbors lost expensive cars, we were unable to get out of our neighborhood for five days. Please let my letter be included in the Commissioner's digital packet so they see it prior to the meeting. Thank you.

Edward Leonard
President, Country Class Farms HOA

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Edith Leonard <eleonard2@tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2025 6:51 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Flooding from Last Hurricane

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Good morning. At 8:00am, that morning after hurricane Milton, there was no water. At 11:00am we were flooded. This is not good. Please, if you can show these photos. Thank you

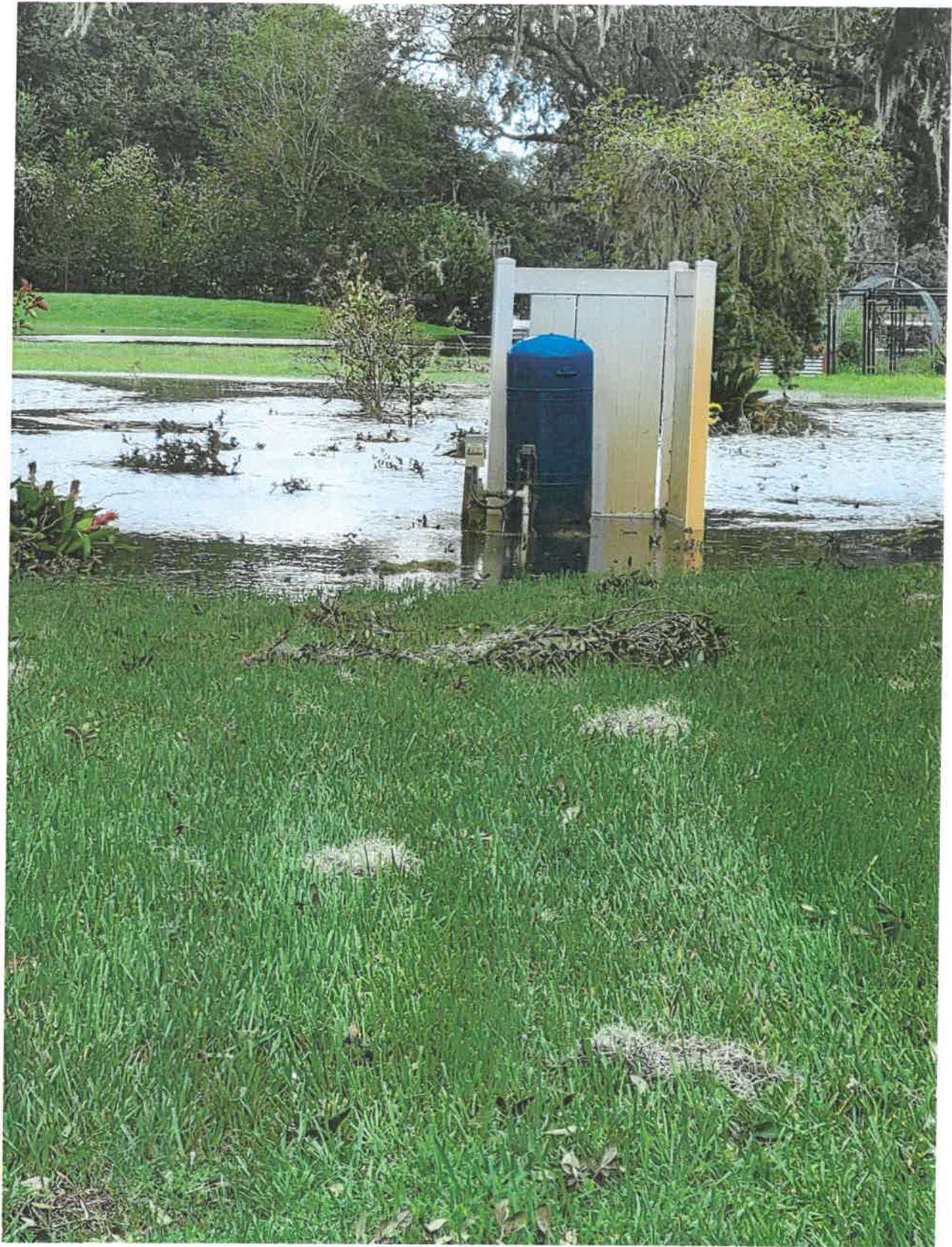
Edward Leonard President Country Class Farms HOA

Begin forwarded message:

From: Edward Leonard <edleonard47.el@gmail.com>
Subject: Flooding
Date: March 30, 2025 at 6:12:20 PM EDT
To: Edith Leonard <eleonard2@tampabay.rr.com>











Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Dennis Craig <dcraig45@tampabay.rr.com>
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 10:27 AM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: idcpal-2024-137

You don't often get email from dcraig45@tampabay.rr.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Ms. Yannone,

As one who experienced waist deep water on my property after Hurricane Milton and knee-high water after Hurricane Irma I would like to register my opposition to the above referenced proposed warehouse project on Alderman Rd. I personally witnessed the water rushing across Alderman Rd. from that pasture from East to West and into our established residential neighborhood.

Thank you.

Dennis M. Craig
5129 Alderman Rd.
Lakeland FL 33810

863-606-5598

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Yannone, Lyndsay

From: LaNae Luttrell <lanaejoy101@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 9:43 PM
To: Bolton, Robert; White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Resident Opposition to LDCPAL-2024-13 AND LDCD-2024-7
Attachments: Luttrell Opposition Letter to LDCPAL-2024-13 and LDCD-2024-7.pdf

You don't often get email from lanaejoy101@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Attached is my opposition letter for LDCPAL-2024-13 and LDCD-2024-7 (ID #38) which will be heard before the Planning Commission on Wednesday, April 2.

Please include the attached PDF in their digital packets so that they can review the information prior to the hearing, as it is a lot to unpack. I will also be sending you an update to SWFWMD's ongoing study regarding the Itchepackesassa Creek in a separate email to include as well.

Thank you very much for your help. If you could please send me confirmation that this email and the attached letter was received and included, I would be very grateful.

If this information needs to be sent to a different person or department, please forward it on my behalf and let me know where I should have sent it. I will be sure to send it there next time.

Sincerely,
LaNae Luttrell
4708 Charlie Taylor Road
Unincorporated Hillsborough County
813-482-6575

LDCPAL-2024-13 • LDCD-2024-7
Polk County Planning Commission • Wed. April 2, 2025 • 9:00am

My name is LaNae Luttrell. I live at 4708 Charlie Taylor Road in Unincorporated Hillsborough County, just along the Polk County border.

What you have before is a proposal from a developer who wants to put a warehouse in the middle of a long-existing, rural community, and an environmentally-sensitive area. Your Commission had the wisdom to deny this project on July 10, 2024 (just nine months ago) due to its incompatibility, and yet, here the developers come again with “tweaks” to their plan in an attempt to sucker you into an approval.

The owners of this property want to sell their land for top dollar, and I understand that. However, if a landowner, in a rural community wants to sell, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that the **BUYER** develops it in a manner that is compatible with the existing neighborhoods and development codes.

THERE ARE FOUR MAJOR REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD DENY THIS PROJECT:



1. IT IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH ANY OF THE SURROUNDING RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS

This project is surrounded on three sides by large-acre, rural residents and “hobby farms” on picturesque, small-acre lots that are worth substantial amounts. People chose to live in this area SPECIFICALLY because it afforded us the space and protection of agricultural zoning. I built an 18-acre, horse boarding business and depend on my pastures for my livelihood.

Neighbors have invested our lives, our businesses, and our financial security in our homesteads based on the land development codes that protected us when we purchased our homes. It is irresponsible to change them or ignore them in favor of a developer over the population who currently lives there...many, for decades.

2. IT IS A WILDLIFE CORRIDOR THAT MUST BE PROTECTED

This area serves as home to many endangered and threatened species. I have seen (and have photos) of most of these species on my land alone! (see attachment on last page) Neighbors who directly abut the project site can testify to this as well. I believe if you ask the current land owners, they would be forthcoming and tell you the same thing. Because of Plant City’s irresponsibility, there is an ongoing over-development crisis in this area that has forced much wildlife to be displaced. Therefore, the predators are seeking refuge and food on our lands and are killing our animals. My sister, who lives near me, has lost four goats to coyotes and bobcats in the last month alone! The location of the Alderman project is in a critical wildlife corridor that must be preserved.





3. IT INCREASES THE RISK OF FLOODING FOR RESIDENTS DOWNSTREAM AND IS PUSHING OUR HOMES FARTHER INTO THE FLOODPLAIN.

This map shows the 100-year floodplain according to SWFWMD and FEMA. **NOTICE**, roughly 80% of their land is in the 100-year floodplain! Residents downstream are “trapped” by four roads and sit lower topography. When it rains, water surges into this “swimming pool” and hits a choke point at the bridge under Knights Griffin Road.

We have been shoved farther into the 100-year floodplain due to over-development, **with NO improvements** to the Itchepackesassa Creek Watershed’s functionality. Because of this, our insurance rates have skyrocketed, if we’re lucky enough not to be dropped altogether.

To make matters worse, developers are swallowing up all available land surrounding our homes. No matter how the developer’s engineers “spin” the data, **water flows to the lowest point, and that will certainly not be their elevated warehouses.** The Alderman property is located a critical junction of the Itchepackesassa Creek watershed. Their land was underwater – as we all were after Irma, Debby, Helene and Milton. If you allow them to build this, you are taking away a huge area that is desperately needed to absorb floodwaters. Impervious surfaces cannot do that. No matter how many ponds they build, it will not be enough to contain the absorption ability of the ground they will pave over – please do not fall for this engineering fallacy. Surrounding residents have years of data to support otherwise.

Many families in this low-lying area lost their homes to Hurricane Irma, and now Milton. We were fortunate when our home survived Irma, but my husband, Travis, and I lost our home, barndominium and our horse-boarding business to Milton. Only one of my 18 acres did not flood. I had two feet of



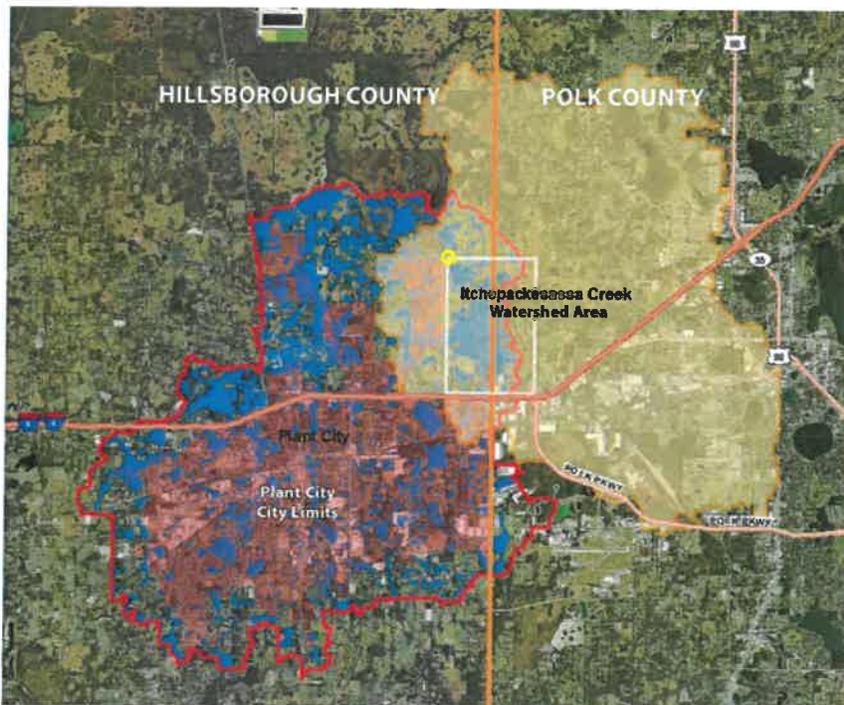
10/11: All but 1 of 18 acres is underwater. House and barn flooded.

water in my house and a foot in the barn. The house is now uninhabitable, and we have been displaced since October while we still continue to fight with our flood and homeowners insurance companies. They each point fingers at the other, and neither has come through yet to give us the funds to rebuild or elevate our home. It has been the greatest tragedy of our lives and I am telling you this, not to gain “sympathy votes,” but for you to understand **that this is a real threat, not hollow scare tactics.** I may have lost everything, but I am fighting for my neighbors so that they won’t have to go through this same nightmare.

I cannot speak to other areas, but the ugly truth about the flooding of our home and others from Milton is that – in this area – IT WAS A MAN-MADE event. Our pastures were underwater at 5:00pm the night before the storm even hit! Some entity was either pushing a massive amount of water into our area or someone downriver was holding it back. Until the cause is found, approving another massive project in this watershed is irresponsible.



4. SWFWMD IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE ITCHEPACKESASSA WATERSHED



The 1995 study by the Army Corps of Engineers clearly stated that this area was not suitable for large-scale development. The SWFWMD study done by Keith & Schnars in 2005 concluded the same thing. Despite hundreds of thousands of dollars on these studies, nothing has been done to increase the capacity of this watershed, and Plant City has flat-out chosen to ignore them.

Due to the proven failure of this watershed, SWFWMD has hired Jones Edmunds to conduct an in-depth study of the Itchepakesassa Creek watershed. Until this study is completed, and improvements

are implemented, there should be a moratorium on development in this area. It is both negligent and holds Polk County and Lakeland liable to approve a project of this scale BEFORE ENGINEERS HAVE THE DATA to understand the issues of stormwater in this area. Once the data is complete, all entities will have the answers they need to build appropriately.

Please support your staff's findings and DENY this project. There is nothing about it that is compatible with the surrounding residents. It will adversely affect our homes, lives, livelihoods forever.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Imperiled Species Observed on/around Project Site



LIMPKIN

Native Imperiled



LITTLE BLUE HERON

Native Imperiled



FLORIDA SCRUB-JAY

Native Imperiled



OSPREY

Native Imperiled



SOUTHERN FOX SQUIRREL

Native Imperiled



AMERICAN KESTREL

Native Imperiled



ROSEATE SPOONBILL

Native Imperiled



SNOWY EGRET

Native Imperiled



BLUETAIL MOLE SKINK

Native Imperiled



GOPHER TORTOISE

Native Imperiled

Keystone Species



BURROWING OWL

Native Imperiled



WHITE IBIS

Native Imperiled



WOOD STORK

Native Imperiled



KEY RINGNECK SNAKE

Native Imperiled



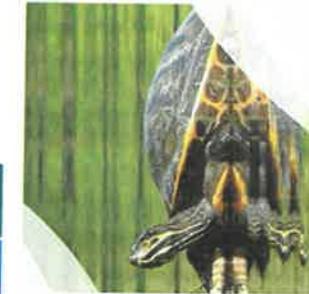
SANDHILL CRANE

Native Imperiled



BALD EAGLE

Native Federally Protected



SUWANNEE COOTER

Native Imperiled

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: smwjeeper@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 12:21 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Warehouse proposal at Swindell Road and Alderman Road- Public Hearing April 2

You don't often get email from smwjeeper@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Planning Commission:
Alderman Road LDCD-2024-7, LDCT-2024-20, LDCPAL-2024-13

We are writing you regarding the proposed request to rezone the Knight and Kelso property located between Swindell Road, Alderman Road, and Giant Oak Road.

We encourage you to **vote no to rezone** from Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR & RL) to Business Park Center (BPC) Industrial/Commercial, this property is surrounded by residential homes on all three sides.

The largest impact of this proposed development would be the water drainage across us and neighboring residential properties.

As shown in the attached photos from **hurricane Milton in October 2024**, the flooding was extensive, with water surrounding our home and all the way down Giant Oak Road. Flooding across our property also occurred in **2017** and **2004** after hurricanes, so this occurrence with **surface drainage** is becoming **more frequent with higher water levels** over the last 20 years.

We bought 2 acres on Giant Oak Road 27 years ago and built our dream home. Our property line is over 500 feet along the northwest side of the Knight field and this was all under water after hurricane Milton last year.

Warehouses and trailer trucks just do not fit into the surrounding neighborhoods. Zoning changes, would negatively affect everyone surrounding the proposed warehouse site.

- Water runoff and flooding issues, from the stressed Ichepackesassa Creek Watershed.
- property values will go down,
- noise from the trucks, and lights from the warehouses would be continuous,
- semi trailer truck traffic would increase onto Swindell.

This plan is not compatible with this beautiful neighborhood. Again, we **strongly urge you to vote no** to rezone this property on April 2.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary and Sarah Washburn
655 Giant Oak Rd., Lakeland, FL 33810

From our front porch looking west toward Turbeville home in distance. Neighbors kayaking down Giant Oak Road.











Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Julie Agronik <julesagronik@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 7:56 AM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Alderman Road zoning change; case number: idcpal-2024 -137

You don't often get email from julesagronik@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good Morning,

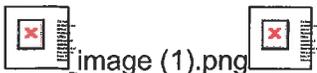
My husband and I are in opposition to the zoning change on the Alderman Road property as approving this zoning change would be disastrous to the community. Outside of traffic concerns and having wildlife on our properties, including gopher turtles that are protected, the hurricanes already cause major flooding in our community.

Post Hurricane Milton the flooding throughout the community was catastrophic. We had to use our kayak to check on our neighbors and we were not able to leave the community due to the height of the water as our SUV's would fail. Our neighbors across the street had an elderly person that passed away on their property. A couple of other neighbors lost their donkeys that fire and rescue left lying on the side of the road as there was no way to remove it from our neighborhood. We also had neighbors whose cows were swimming that we had to inform them to move to higher ground as quick as the water came in. That does not include no power, no water since we are all on a well system and no access to replenish our food supply with our fire and rescue folks having to drop off military rations to all families.

Please see pictures below - happy to provide videos if needed in a separate email.

Respectfully,
Julie Agronik

Email: julesagronik@gmail.com
Voice: 847-971-5659





Gopher Tortoise Program



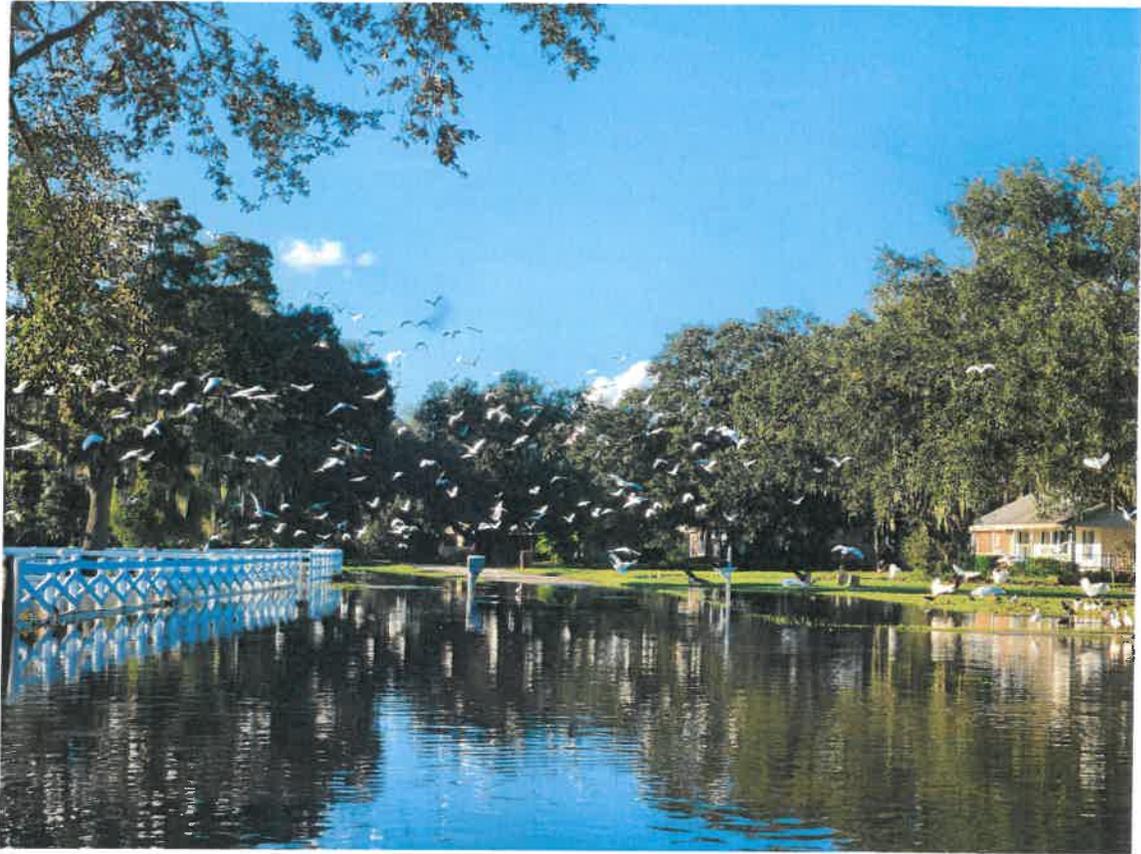
EXISTING GOPHER TORTOISE STATE PROTECTIONS REMAIN IN PLACE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife decision to not federally list the eastern distinct population segment of gopher tortoises is a significant success, however there is still work to be done. The gopher tortoise will continue to be state-listed as Threatened in Florida and existing state protections will remain in place.

















Yannone, Lyndsay

From: ANDREA TURBEVILLE <dwtapt@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 2:18 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Alderman Road opposition

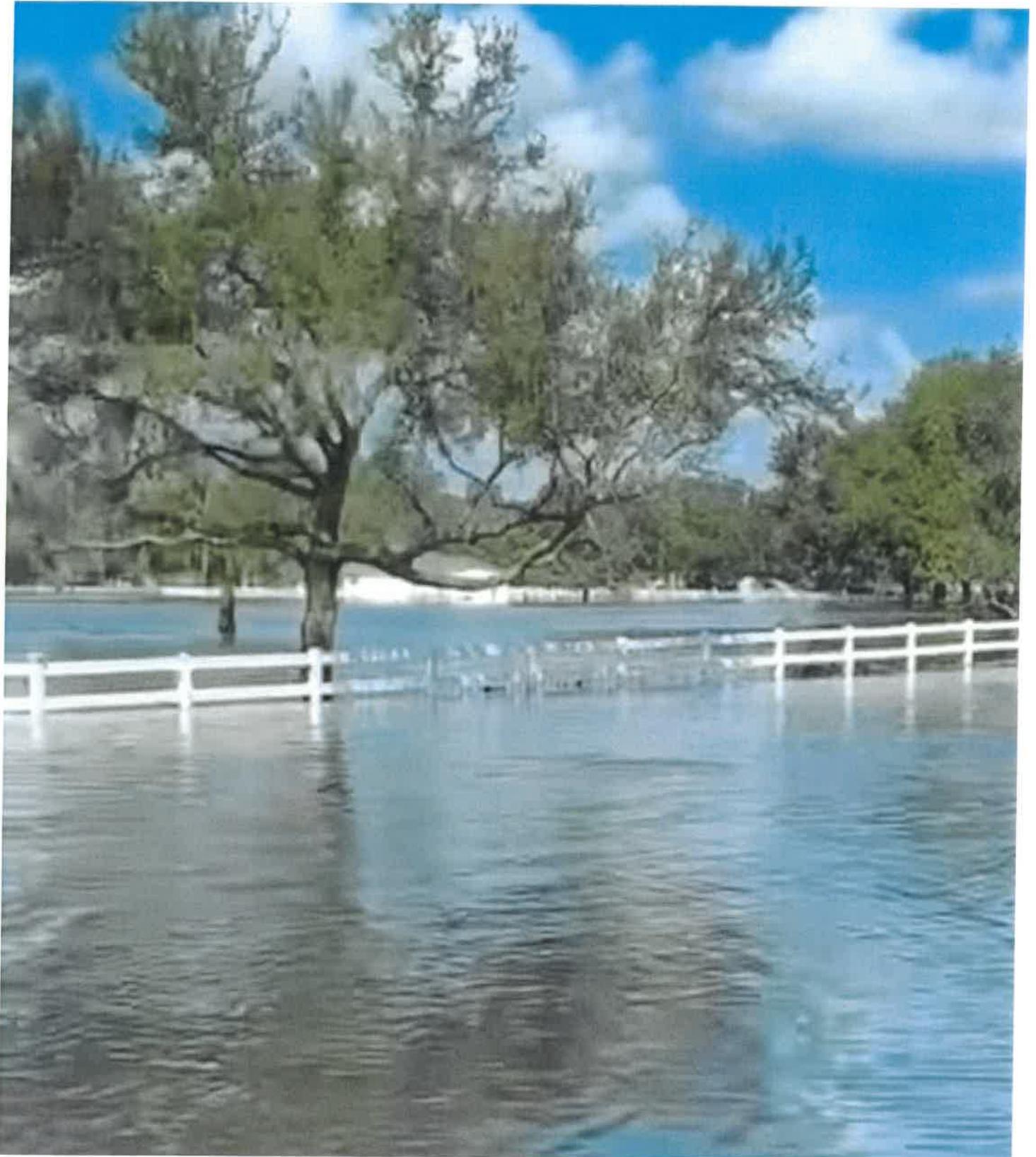
[You don't often get email from dwtapt@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Would you be able to add these pictures with my email I sent in? I was going to bring them to the meeting Wednesday, but something has come up today and I won't be able to attend. I would like them to be on record. Any help would be much appreciated so sorry for the late entry
Andrea Turbeville
5 Feet of Water after Milton
Giant Oak Road





< Polk County Sheriff's Office







Sent from my iPhone

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Brian Holbrook <bholbrooksourcing@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 10:23 AM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay; Call, Planner On
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Comments for Agenda Point 13: LDCT

You don't often get email from bholbrooksourcing@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Lyndsay--I don't think I will be able to attend tomorrow's meeting in person. I submitted an opposition letter to the Alderman Rd project, but was hoping I could still provide comment to Agenda Point 13, the proposed stormwater management and land development code updates below?

I am a resident of the stressed Itchepackesassa basin and strongly support the proposed LDCT updates. I hold multiple engineering degrees, and have reviewed the problems of our area with leading stormwater experts that validated concerns of the inadequacy of the permitting and water management review process to address flood risks in stressed basins such as ours. Everyone on the Polk staff that worked on these proposals should be applauded for understanding the uniqueness of areas such as this and proposing pragmatic enhancements which may bridge some of these gaps.

The flood-prone areas of our county are clearly established, and the county has decades of documentation showing how serious this issue is. The deficiencies of many of these areas is precisely what leads to the many undeveloped parcels of land in many of them. Areas such as ours have been protected by land-use and zoning guidelines for decades. These are recognized non-structural flood controls, and have been cited as such in past engineering studies commissioned by the County. That said, the comprehensive planning process has proven an unreliable safeguard with respect to flood concerns. When land-use and zoning changes are approved, a community is completely dependent on the permitting process and water management review. Today, this is wholly inadequate and simply produces a permit for an applicant, showing they have achieved minimum design standards, which provide little to no mitigation for the issues some of these areas experience. Limitations of current processes:

- Watershed models are infrequently updated and are incomplete, as substantial elements of systems are considered private. Controls are engineered off outdated information. This alone justifies the design contingencies in these proposals
- FIRM illustrations may be similarly outdated.
- Boundary limited engineering studies focus on drainage and neglect to accurately model the impact of a project on the surrounding system
- The extreme flood risks many communities face are not driven by drainage from any given property, risks come from the overflow conditions experienced in the basin.

It is critical that the County adopt increased standards for identified stressed basins. Similarly, it is essential that any development in one of these areas model a major storm event, and demonstrate the impact on surrounding properties after the development activity. Routinely, Itchepackesassa Creek produces extreme overflow conditions. Billions of gallons of flood-water will push "upstream" into

surrounding drainage systems and thousands of acres of overlapping floodplains. Any proposal in an environment like this must model this event and thoroughly demonstrate how the design will ensure there are no adverse impacts on surrounding properties. There is simply no margin for error in an environment like this, so any engineering controls must require a significant contingency factor in retention volumes, drainage calculations, and modelling the impact of topography changes across the system. Likewise, these low lying communities cannot afford small shortcomings in the controls from every upland project in the watershed managing runoff. Flood maps expand in our area in every watershed study. This is attributed to the aggregated impact of upland development activities in the watershed, and will continue unless contingency is built into the design requirements by code.

I appreciate Polk's Leadership treating this issue seriously. Hillsborough County has announced the creation of a special task force to engage a consultancy and understand why they experienced the flood impacts they did during Milton. Polk County did not need a special consultancy effort, and clearly understood the challenges it has dealt with for decades and has proposed reasonable efforts to improve construction standards. If Polk County implements these changes, it will potentially be the gold standard for this region with its land development code and stormwater efforts.

After years of pleading with elected officials, floodplain managers, consulting firms, county engineering, etc it is shocking and satisfying to see tangible proposals on the table. I hope Polk enacts these changes, and encourages neighbors which share some of these stressed basin's to follow its example.

Brian Holbrook, MBA, MS

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Valerie Michaels <vmichaels620@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 4:39 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Idcpal-2024-137

 You don't often get email from vmichaels620@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning,

I am emailing you today in reference to the above subjected matter. I highly oppose this rezoning of this area due to the following facts;

- (1) this is a flood zone and it would exasperate our flooding problems
- (2) we only have one way in and out of our area, this change would be horrendous for us to be able to get out of the area, and lastly
- (3) having to drive past warehouses to get to our property would probably decrease the value of our homes.

I purchased my home a little less than two years ago because of the area and the country feeling, not to have someone come in and build to make it a commercial area.

Thank you in advance for not allowing this change to be done.

Valerie Michaels
5045 Alderman rd
Lakeland, Fl 33810
(863) 347-9366

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)