

I am Dr. Karen Leith, a board member of the Hudson League of Women Voters. I am here representing the three Leagues of Women Voters in Summit County: Hudson, Tallmadge and Akron Area. **We are asking for a no vote** regarding the Prestige Homes application for a zoning map amendment Of Parcel No. 3009586 from District 6 Western Hudson Gateway (office/industrial) to District 3 Outer Village Residential Neighborhood (residential). Good government is about elected and appointed officials looking after the good of all the members of the community. It is a matter of civil responsibility as a balance to a focus on civil rights.

Rezoning is not only a matter of complying with the letter of existing law in regard to a land owner, but also understanding the underlying concerns and conditions as well as the bigger picture in the impact it has on water quality now and in the future for a much larger community. My remarks, and our position, are based on LWV positions that have been adopted after careful study concerning water, natural resources, watersheds, and land use.

In a time when we are seeing the results of run-off, algae growth and other environmental concerns, we need to acknowledge that Hudson is part of three watersheds, all of which eventually drain into the Cuyahoga River and eventually Lake Erie. These are the Tinkers Creek Watershed, not part of this particular property, the Brandywine Watershed, of which Hudson is to be congratulated on becoming partner in the Balanced Growth Plan, and the Mud Brook Watershed. I bring these up since 1. This property has a Category 3 wetland as well as other wetlands, and 2. Protecting drinking water includes and goes beyond the question of our own city well head to the larger watershed issue. Editorials by the Akron Beacon Journal of both Monday, August 4th, and Sunday, August 10th, call us to heed the warnings of the Toledo situation.

Points we have considered in coming to our position:

1. The definition of a category 3 wetland from the EPA. *Wetlands that are assigned to Category 3 have "...superior habitat, or superior hydrological or recreational functions."* (full definition attached)
2. EPA recommendations not to develop a Category 3 wetland unless absolutely necessary. Recommendation attached.
3. The matter of watershed contamination. Science tells us that 1. We as individuals must do our part to stop excess use of fertilizers and maintain good septic systems; 2. Industry and farms must control their runoff into our watersheds; 3. Restore natural habitats where possible or protect those in existence since balanced habitats naturally filter water. Wetlands are a large part of the natural habitats.

4. The situation with residential runoff concerns causing nutrient enriched and algae problems in lakes and ponds. Silver Lake Homeowners Association has had a study done of their lake and are now monitoring monthly while they educate homeowners. Canterbury on the Lakes is having meetings.
5. Protection of Lake Erie through watersheds is a concern for all of us. Senator Rob Portman introduced the *Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2013* which was just signed into law. Portman stated, “For the first time, we will prioritize the protection of Ohio’s fresh bodies of water, which is critical for our tourism and fishing industries.”

Based on the quantity and sensitivity of the wetlands in this area, our support of the Brandywine Balanced Growth Plan and our LWV positions protecting water and watersheds, we have all taken the position to oppose this rezoning.

Specifically, in support of our position we have attached:

- **Statements from our positions that we applied to this situation.**
- **Full LWV positions.**
- **Points from our letter to City Council supporting joining the Brandywine Balanced Growth Plan**

We commend Prestige Homes for the adherence in their Phase I to conservation guidelines. But, we seriously question the necessity of an additional rezoning of an area that contains a Category 3 wetland. Watershed damage is enhanced by lawn fertilizers and other residential runoff. There is a need to minimize the impact of the Phase I runoff and not add to it. EPA guidelines for Category 3 wetlands recommend protection .

Having read the arguments of Prestige Homes and the supporting data, **the choice is not between industrial use and residential use, but between leaving a “natural habitat” or a developed residential use.** Prestige makes note that there is no acreage within the parcel large enough for industrial use, especially with the required set-backs.

The proximity of this property to the Hudson well field as well as its position in the Mud Brook and Brandywine Watersheds would move toward protection. Here is where the EPA’s call for avoiding impact where Category 3 wetlands are concerned comes to play. LWV positions support our raising these concerns. There are serious questions of destroying the balance in the ecosystem that would have long term consequences. We call on this City Council to apply the EPA standards and the goals of the Brandywine Balanced Growth Plan to all of this property, especially that of the Mud Brook Watershed.

References:

Ohio Rapid Assessment Method for Wetlands v. 5.0, User's Manual and Scoring Forms
February 1, 2001, State of Ohio 401/Wetland Ecology Unit, Environmental Protection Agency Division of Surface Water

Harmful Algal Blooms: A Research Plan Submitted to the United States Congress, September 2001
National Sea Grant College Program, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

LWV: Impact on Issues, Agenda for Action