

10805 W. Barr Rd.
Peotone, IL 60468
January 28, 2008

Mr. Steve Lazzara
Will County Land Use Department
58 E. Clinton
Suite 500
Joliet, IL 60432

Dear Mr. Lazzara:

As a Will County Farmer, I feel that I must comment on your proposed agriculture easements for subdivisions as they relate to the new Will County Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, I offer the following suggestions:

You must consider the shape of the land you are going to set aside for farmland. The land set aside should be square or rectangular in shape as odd shaped pieces (triangles etc) are almost impossible to farm with today's large machinery.

You must consider the size (acres) of the land that will be set a side for farmland. I suggest an area of no less than 10 acres as anything smaller is simply to hard to farm with today's large machinery.

You must consider where you are going to have the farmland in the subdivision. I suggest that the farmland be placed on the edge on the subdivision so it is easily accessible by the farmer and his or her machinery. This would also allow for the least amount of interference with the home owners of the subdivision.

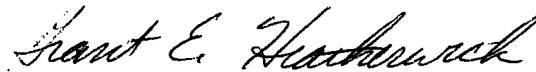
You must consider the quality of the land to be set aside for farmland. While I understand that the main purpose of a subdivision is homes, you must preserve land that is of good quality. I would not set aside a steep hill that will erode heavily or a slough that is under water 9 months out of the year. Also, the land set aside should not be land that has had the topsoil skinned off and used elsewhere as land of this caliber is of use to no one.

You must seek out a way to make long term lease agreements with the farmer who is going to rent an easement from a subdivision. If you have only a year to year lease, you are only going to encourage poor stewardship of the land. Many times, a farmer who has a short lease is not going to maintain a farm as they have no guarantee that they will be farming for many years. Consequently, they will only think of the short term gains that they can achieve, and will not worry about properly maintaining the farm for future generations. I feel that your lease agreements should be, at minimum, 5-7 years with the option for renewal at the end of that time period.

You must make residents of these subdivisions with agriculture easements aware through either posted notices, legislation, or some other means, of the inconveniences that come with rural living and having a farm as part of a subdivision. These inconveniences can include, but are not limited to, dust, noise that will frequently be after dark, and the use of herbicides and pesticides that are necessary to ensure a bountiful harvest. It will be impossible to maintain any farmer on these easements if the farmer is constantly bombarded with nuisance complaints and grievances from the subdivision residents.

Above all, I am very concerned that your agriculture easements in subdivisions be actually what you promise it to be, farmland that is set aside to be farmed by a farmer, and not just open space that is left to grow up in weeds or turned over to be managed by the Forest Preserve District. I, in no way support the establishment of more subdivisions in my County as they are robbing our county of too much prime farmland. To me, it would be more prudent to buy development rights from the existing farms so they may stay intact and provide some of the county's open space. Remember, if we continue to push the remaining farmers out of Will County, there will be no one left to farm these agriculture easements. I too, am concerned with the future of Will County, and therefore can only hope you take my suggestions seriously. If you need any clarifications I may be reached by telephone at 708-258-6031.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grant E. Heatherwick".

Grant E. Heatherwick