

Testimony Regarding PC 22-08: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – H- Hospital Zoning District

My name is Jim Ritter. For 33 years, my wife, Anna and I have lived at 601 Wenonah Ave., just across the street from the Rush Oak Park Hospital campus. We have seen the hospital crowd further and further into the neighborhood, bulldozing homes on Maple, Wisconsin and Wenonah avenues to make way for asphalt parking lots and a five-story medical office building. In contrast to West Suburban Hospital, there is little or no buffer space between Oak Park Hospital's campus and surrounding homes.

Most recently, the Village Board approved a 713-space, 64-foot-high parking garage on the 500 block of Wenonah that would further encroach into our neighborhood and tower above the single-family homes. (I understand the hospital has shelved this monstrosity, at least for now, due to insufficient funding.)

The Village approved each of these expansions over the objections of neighbors worried about the negative effects on traffic, shadows, property values and the residential character of the neighborhood.

I believe the proposed zoning changes will restore a proper balance, allowing the hospital to meet its development needs while also protecting the neighborhood.

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