

My name is Chris Campbell and I represent the Berea Community. I live in Indian Hills which is a subdivision in Berea. My family moved to Berea in 1956 and I have lived there for most of my life. We have seen Berea change from farm land to the collection of neighborhoods and business's it is today. Some that fit and many that do not.

I would like to recognize the members of the Berea Community who have come today to ask the County Council to vote no for the re-zoning of 104 Farris Bridge Rd that has been home to a Berea School for almost 100 years. I'd like to discuss some reasons why this application should be denied.

The zoning change would allow more stores to be built in an area that has an abundance of empty buildings. Businesses and developers have deserted Berea, leaving behind empty buildings and vacant parking lots that are eyesores. These empty spaces have become host to pop up yard sales and roaming vendors that leave behind debris. The community of Berea does not need a developer to come into the area, and after 3-5 years realize they can't sustain their estimated sales projections and close, leaving behind more empty buildings.

The developer wants to destroy a Berea landmark and build an Advance Auto Parts store. We are overwhelmed with auto related businesses in Berea. For example, the proposed store will be within sight of two existing auto parts retailers. O'rielly Auto Parts and Auto Zone are both on Farris Bridge Rd. Our Community does not need a third auto parts store in the same area. Allowing a new one will hurt the existing businesses that have supported our community through hard times. If a new auto parts store opens, one of the other will surely close leaving more empty buildings in Berea.

The developer also proposes a fast-food restaurant. Berea does not need another national fast-food chain with no ties to the community. It will take revenue away from our locally owned restaurants like The Big Clock of Berea, Riverside Family Restaurant, Dave's of Berea, Celebrity's Hot Dogs and a new Clock that is refurbishing a vacated restaurant. These family owned businesses have a real stake in the future of Berea and deserve our loyalty and support. In addition, according to findings in a study by LiveWell Greenville, Berea currently has inadequate access to healthy food choices.* Adding another fast-food chain to the area would aggravate this problem.

In 2011 the Greenville County Planning Department started Direction NorthWest, that focused on the Berea Community. We appreciate the efforts of this program to help clean up our Berea Community. The old school, and area around it, were identified as the heart of Berea during community meetings. Many residents hoped that the old school could be used as a community center and the land turned into a park. In 2012 these findings were presented back to the community during a final Direction NorthWest meeting about creating an identity for the Berea Community.** These ideas, an many others, were put into a plan for the future of Berea that was presented to County Council. We are still awaiting approval of the plan for Berea Community.

In conclusion, we, the Berea Community, request denial of the proposed OD-Office to C1 of the 104 Farris Bridge Rd school property. We appreciate the efforts of the developer to bring something new into our beloved Berea, but we have reservations as to the logistics. Also, we do not want the last remaining history of Berea torn down to create more retail buildings in the middle of so many empty buildings. We ask that the land, that has been in public service for almost 100 years, continue to serve the Berea Community.

Senator Mike Fair would like Councilman Meadows to read a letter from him.

* LiveWell Greenville: Barriers and Strategies to Promoting Healthy Food
Access Among Low Income Residents

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** Creating and Identity for the Berea Community Available at bereacommunity.org