



June 9, 2024

Cobb County Board of Commissioners
100 Cherokee Street
Marietta, GA 30090

Re:

Z-9 Aquas Vivas Centro Familiar de Adoracion, Inc – Settlement of Litigation

Dear Ms. Chairwoman and Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Mableton Improvement Coalition Zoning Committee as you consider this settlement of litigation to ask that you reflect on the impact that approval of this settlement will have on the surrounding residential community. As you delve into these impacts, we believe that the limitations of your current ordinance that allows a special exception for churches, chapels, temples, synagogues and other places of worship will become clear. We ask that you task your staff with a review of this ordinance with the goal of more clearly and practically defining the conditions in which such uses are permitted in residential areas in order to protect the quality of life for those residential neighbors.

We understand and agree that houses of worship and the like tend to provide valuable services that enhance the quality of life in a community. However, these same services often make them unsuitable for residential areas. Amenities like schools, day care, recreational activities and even the services themselves are high intensity uses of the land on which they are conducted. The traffic, light and sound pollution, and general disruption to the tranquility that residents of established suburban residential areas expect are almost impossible to isolate to the special exception property.

At the time of a zoning hearing, applicants may say they will adhere to a few services per week or that disturbances will not become an issue but there are no guarantee things will not change. There is also no guarantee that a particular congregation will remain at a special exception property in perpetuity. Growth is at the very ethos of a religious institution's mission. Congregations grow, and needs and services expand. With that growth comes additional disturbances to existing neighbors. The reality is churches also fail to thrive, on occasion. Upkeep becomes too costly to maintain, large buildings fall into

disrepair and sometimes houses of worship are shuttered all together. In this event, these commercial style buildings (typically too costly to retrofit to another special exception use) with large parking lots are left lying vacant in residential areas with no use until another religious institution comes along. The same is true in the event a congregation outgrows the property and relocates.

We recognize it may be too late to defeat this application. We sympathize with the surrounding neighbors who will see the quality of their lives and property values diminish as a result. We respectfully ask the Board of Commissioners to review the ordinance that permits this special exception and restrict religious institution construction to areas appropriately designated for high intensity usage.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the public comment process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 678-592-4274.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Robin Meyer
Zoning Committee Chair

Cc: Cobb County Board of Commissioners
John Pederson, Cobb County Zoning Division Manager
Robin Stone, Deputy County Clerk
Kevin Moore
MIC Board of Directors and Zoning Committee