

**The Civic League for New Castle County
Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred
The Kennett Pike Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 3592
Greenville, DE 19807**

August 27, 2008

The Honorable Paul G. Clark
Council President
New Castle County Council
City/County Building
800 North French Street, 8th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

Re: Northern New Castle County Development Onslaught

Dear County Council President Clark:

As leaders of numerous civic organizations in Northern New Castle County representing thousands of residents, the undersigned are well aware of the many challenges facing County Council. However, nothing so ominously threatens the future of our communities as the wave of development proposals recently placed into motion by the Stoltz organization. The combined effect of these projects in terms of traffic and aesthetics will have an irreversible, devastating effect on the economic prosperity and existing character of Northern New Castle County.

1. Barley Mill Plaza/Greenville Center/Montchanin Road. The so-called "mixed-use" plan for Barley Mill Plaza would result in the largest development of its kind in Delaware containing more square footage of leaseable space than the combined King of Prussia Malls, with a regionally oriented strip shopping center and surface parking lot facing Route 141, buildings of up to 11 stories towering over adjoining residential communities, and traffic intensive uses such as a high-rise hotel and theatre complex. Yet it would not be adjacent to an interstate highway, such as the Christiana Mall, which is one third the size. Concurrently, the Stoltz organization has proposed to increase the Greenville Center with construction of additional office space, a 12 story condominium and a 7 story parking garage. It also proposes to construct a new multi-story office building at edge of the 40 foot wide right-of-way for Montchanin Road that conflicts with the deed restrictions created when the Columbia Gas site was approved for development years ago.

Since these proposed increases in use are merely pending rather than approved and therefore are not deemed "committed" for traffic purposes, we are concerned that the Stoltz organization plans to seek their concurrent approval without the effect of each one

being factored collectively into the impact that they will have on our community. And, since the Delaware Department of Transportation will apparently base its recommendations on traffic level "E" rather than "D" if requested by the County, we are concerned that the relaxed LOS will be sought by the Stoltz organization to facilitate imprinting its stamp of urban commercialism on this area. Our gratitude towards the Land Use Department and DelDOT for the careful manner in which they each have proceeded in evaluating these proposals to date is immense. The developer has chosen not to involve the community in shaping its response to the Department's initial expressions of disapproval. By making you and other members of County Council aware of our concerns, we hope to be assured that each County agency that reviews the plans for these proposals will know of your expectation that all decisions be rendered with the utmost care and restraint, and that Level of Service D will continue to apply, so that the adverse impact on Northern New Castle County will be as contained as lawfully possible.

2. Concord Pike at Beaver Valley Road. This proposal originally envisioned a "mixed use" development half the size of the existing Concord Mall called "The Shops at Brandywine Valley." The community was informed that the Stoltz organization was confident of obtaining the required rezoning based on its promise to engage union labor to construct the project, reportedly because a majority of council members outside this area are beholden to the construction unions. While appreciating the role that unions can play in supplying trained and disciplined forces, we do not believe that any one interest – builders, labor or area residents – should unilaterally be able to dictate development decisions in New Castle County. Those decisions require input and balancing from all stakeholders in the application of existing land use regulations to achieve their intended purpose.

With the intersection of Route 202 at Naamans Road on the north and Beaver Valley Road on the south already failing, the developer proposed a bizarre pattern of jughandles for The Shops at Brandywine Valley that the Land Use Department and DelDOT properly rejected, to the community's great relief. As a result, the matter has not yet proceeded to County Council for a vote and, for the first time, the Stoltz organization has begun to interface with the community to make adjustments that the community might find less objectionable. These adjustments include the possible availability of land for construction of a much needed medical facility, and increased residential housing to achieve more nearly the objectives of a mixed use development. We urge you and the other members of County Council to insist that such collaboration continue here and be implemented in good faith on all of the Stoltz organization proposals elsewhere.

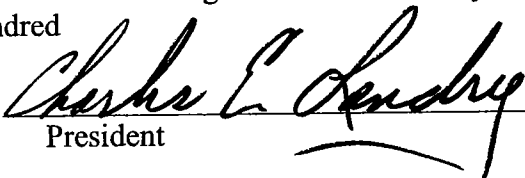
Unfortunately, DelDOT's characterization of Thompson's Bridge Road as a collector road, as reflected on the record proposed plan for The Shops at Brandywine Valley, threatens to be the first step in eliminating the unique character of the Brandywine Valley between Route 52 and Route 202 from Talleyville out to the State

line. This area contains Hagley Museum, Winterthur Museum, the Museum of Natural History, provides a gateway to Longwood Gardens, the Brandywine River Museum and the historic Chadds Ford area, and is an important tourist destination. A similar threat is posed by the Barley Mill Plaza project for the Red Clay Valley between Lancaster Pike and the Kennett Pike from Route 141 out to Hockessin. The back roads in these areas are not amenable to increased size to handle regional traffic. To avoid gridlock on Route 141, Route 41/48, Route 52, The Tyler McConnell Bridge, Route 202 and interconnecting roads, we believe that the County should request, and that DeIDOT should undertake, a regional traffic study of the sort already performed along Route 40 and for the Southern New Castle County central region. A copy of our letter to Governor Minner in this regard is enclosed. We trust that we can count on your support, and the support of every other member of County Council, for such a study and to emphasize meanwhile with all County agencies the continued need for a careful and conservative response to the Route 202/Beaver Valley Road proposal and other Stoltz organization proposals so that the developer will understand the importance of working with the community in the formulation of plans that will dramatically impact area residents and businesses.

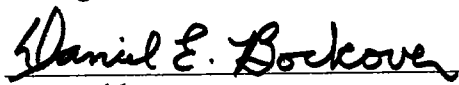
Since this letter can only summarize concerns and thus omits many important details and strategies, we very much hope to meet with you at your soonest possible convenience in the next few days to address these matters. Please let us know as soon as possible what dates would be available for such a meeting. Thank you for your anticipated leadership in addressing these matters which, if allowed to proceed unchecked while you hold office, will forever change the character of Northern New Castle County.

Respectfully,

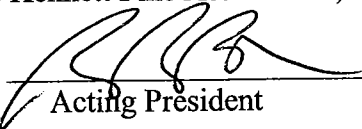
Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine
Hundred

By: 
President

Civic League For New Castle County

By: 
President

The Kennett Pike Association, Inc.

By: 
Acting President

Enclosure

cc: [all with enclosure]
The Honorable Christopher A. Coons, New Castle County Executive
The Honorable John J. Cartier, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable William Tansey, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Robert S. Weiner, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Joseph Reda, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Penrose Hollins, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Stephanie McClellan, Council Member,
New Castle County Council
The Honorable William Powers, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable George Smiley, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Timothy Sheldon, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Jea P. Street, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable David Tackett, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Bill Bell, Council Member, New Castle County Council
The Honorable Carolann P. Wicks, Secretary of Transportation
Mr. George Haggerty, Manager, Land Use Department
Mr. James Smith, Manager, Land Use Department