

To The Editor
The Chatham Courier
17-19 Morristown Road
Bernardsville, NJ 07924

January 13, 2016

Dear Sir,

This past December the leadership of Stanley Congregational Church on Fairmount Avenue announced that they had entered into a contract to sell most of their Fairmount Avenue land between Oliver Street and Orchard Road to a developer. They and the developer unveiled a plan for the construction of a twelve unit condominium complex on the site, pending re-zoning and approval by the Board of Zoning and Adjustment and the receipt of an assortment of necessary variances.

Not surprisingly the residents in the area almost to a person have expressed strong opposition to any such proposal. Over 140 families and individuals have joined in a unified and determined effort to stop this plan. This number grows daily as citizens throughout Chatham who cherish its unique historic character and that of iconic Fairmount Avenue join the effort. The attached letter was sent to the Church by 67 families in mid December. Among the reasons given for our opposition are the following:

- The proposal violates both the letter and the spirit of the town's Master Plan whose purpose is to preserve the town's historic heritage;
- It violates the single family home zoning of the site and the entire surrounding area, which again exists to preserve its existing historic low density nature;
- It would destroy the iconic streetscape of Fairmount Avenue which is currently the site of numerous historic homes, many constructed in the Victorian style;
- It will seriously decrease the property values of the proximate properties which gain much of their value from the attractiveness of the surrounding area;
- It would set a dangerous precedent for spot-zoning throughout Chatham to replace single family properties with multi-unit structures;
- It would exacerbate the already difficult and dangerous traffic flow in the Fairmount Avenue, Oliver Street and Orchard Road area;
- The loss of the church parking lot and the addition dense housing will intensify the current parking difficulties in the area;
- The excessive surface coverage of the proposed structure will seriously increase the current serious water runoff down the hill along Fairmount Avenue.

We urge the early withdrawal of this proposal so the Church membership can develop an alternative that will respect the current zoning regulations and will preserve and even enhance the unique historic character of Fairmount Avenue.

Sincerely,
Kay and John Kaiser