

Dear Planning Environmental Committee,

My name is Mark Fantegrossi and my family and I, as well as all our neighbours in our subdivision, would like to voice our concerns over a proposed walkway on our street. We have a signed petition from 41 people, all of whom are close to this proposed walkway and are against it being constructed. We live on a street named Clayton Walk in the southwest corner of the city. We spoke with the Clerk's office at the City of London and were advised that we may be able to discuss this further at your next meeting in August.

Just some background information with respect to our problem. My next door neighbour, Mike Chahbar and I have been trying for a few months to contact anyone who is willing to help and no one has offered any true assistance. The developer of the subdivision, Dennis Oliver does not believe this walkway is a good idea or necessary and has tried to have it removed from the plans; however, he also wants the subdivision assumed and we are running out of time to eliminate it.

In terms of the walkway that is scheduled to be placed between 7051 and 7055 Clayton Walk, I would like to voice a few of our many concerns. This "walkway" is planned to be built with a gate at the front and back and locked. This concerns us on many levels.

First and foremost, safety is a major concern in this subdivision and it is the main reason we are insisting on the elimination of this walkway. If you were to come onto this street on a school morning at 8:30, you will see dozens of elementary school children getting ready to leave for the day. There are many young families that live here. A gated pathway such as this is going to be very enticing for children. They are most definitely going to use it as a hang out place; however, what is more concerning, is that they are going to see a gate and want to go over it to explore. A wetland like this does not need attention drawn to it. If the walkway is eliminated and a fence simply finished at the back of our property, there will not be an access point for children to get into the wetlands and possibly get themselves into trouble. All this being said in terms of safety you may think is hypothetical; however, recently proved otherwise. My neighbour called the London Police and had to file a report because of an incident. Two teenage boys decided to ride their bikes across our grass where this walkway is planned to go and entered the wetlands through the entrance in the fence that is inexcusably there. They went across the wetlands and broke into the barn that is there. They then proceeded to sit on the hayloft door at the top of the barn. They are extremely lucky that the police were called. Without intervention, these kids, or other kids in the future that are going to try the same thing, could get hurt, or worse and more likely, killed falling from such a height. We refuse to sit back and let this entrance point be built when our subdivision is full of young children that have absolutely no business going into this area.

Secondly, we are very concerned about vandalism. In the past my wife and I lived in another subdivision in the northwest of the city where one of these walkways existed. It was truly a mess after a few years of it being inserted. The home-owners put up cedar hedges on either side for privacy and that allowed individuals and groups to hide out in these areas and cause trouble. The walkway near us had spray paint vandalism everywhere, also smelled like urine, and cigarette butts and condoms were frequently found on the concrete. I see no reason why this will be any different in a few years. It will inevitably be an area frequented by kids on Friday and Saturday nights.

We are also concerned about maintenance. Who is going to be taking care of an area this big? It is approximately 200 feet deep and 10 feet wide. Is it going to be regularly plowed after every snowfall in the winter? What about in the fall with all the leaves that always accumulate up against fences. Are they going to be removed? Lastly, what about garbage? Although leaves tend to pile up along fences, garbage really does. Can we expect someone to be here on a regular basis to remove all the garbage, such as Tim Hortons cups, newspapers, mail inserts, etc and etc. I believe, although maybe you can tell me differently, that the answers to all these questions is that no one will be here to maintain it. Walkways are usually not maintained and we are most definitely not alright with this.

Lastly, we would like someone to be able to rationally explain to this subdivision what the point of this walkway is? We have been told that access to the wetland is needed. However, access is not needed. There is a planned street south of Clayton Walk (I unfortunately do not know the name of it, but I assume that is easy for you to find out) with houses only on the south side of the street. The whole north side of the street will border the wetlands and there will be an entire street of access. It can be accessed anywhere along that street if ever needed.

Mike and I have had discussions with many neighbours with respect to this walkway and every single individual, without hesitation, is against this walkway (see our petition). People are concerned about safety and maintenance as I have mentioned, but also about the impact it will have on this neighbourhood. This is a family street with many young kids. No one wants an area like this where people can go to secretly hang out. Neighbours are also troubled with how this will change our street even from an appearance standpoint. We do not want it to detract from the overall impression of our neighborhood.

At the very least, we would like to opportunity to sit down with this committee and try to come up with some alternatives. We know there is going to be a big expense to move the Rogers and Bell boxes that are right in the middle of the walkway, so we were thinking that maybe the walkway could simply end at our houses, with it not continuing to the street, so it looks less enticing for little children. We definitely prefer to have this eliminated, but we can be flexible. We would just like the opportunity to have a proper discussion about this.

I would like to take this time to thank you for listening to our concerns. My family and the families of everyone on our street would appreciate your timely help with respect to this matter.

Thank you again,


Mark Fantagrossi