Dear Ms. McGuire,

My name is Denise Joffe, I live on the north end of MI right behind the park and ride. The JCC is a place that means a lot to me and countless others on our island.

I visit several times a week for fitness and classes. It's not just a place for Jews; it's a welcoming space for everyone, serving the diverse needs of our community from preschooler to seniors. The J cares about the community and subsidizes those who can least afford the membership fees.

However, the facility is old, outdated, not up to code and no longer able to safely serve our community. It's not uncommon to see pails catching water from leaks in the ceilings. The hallways and bathrooms smell old and dingy. The place is falling apart and bandaids and duct tape are holding it together. Very importantly, in these challenging times with antisemitism on the rise, providing optimal security is compromised by the outdated infrastructure. It's so bad that we have armed officers standing out in the rain and cold to protect the building.

I've heard and read complaints mostly on Next Door from a minority of Islanders who worry about the increased traffic, an increase in membership, the scale of the proposed structure, the comparatively large membership numbers in contrast to other clubs, and the perceived unequal advantage granted to the JCC if rezoning is approved, yet most of these concerns are speculation. The 400 families of the FAS will no longer create morning and afternoon traffic, the building proposal is a 12% increase which is hardly gargantuan, the height of the building may only be blocking peoples view of the 90 highway, which seems like less of an eye sore. The membership at each club is calculated differently so those concerned with numbers are comparing apples to oranges, a comparison that is meaningless. Further, there's concern about an influx of new members but is this warranted? Where would they come from? Although, given the mission of the J, serving more members is a community service. Finally, rezoning seems like it would correct the present land use a wrong that happened years ago but at the time didn't warrant the financial commitment to change.

I urge the City Council to support the J's rezone request. They cannot remodel the building. It's time for a tear down and rebuild. They are asking nothing more than the ability to serve members on MI with a modern building.

Thank you,

Denise Joffe

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