

# The Woods Association

Post Office Box 1770

Williamsburg, Virginia 23187

T. Montgomery Mason  
General Assembly Building  
Room 806  
P.O. Box 406  
Richmond, VA 23218

August 26, 2016

Dear Delegate Mason

**RE: Surprise attempt by Gateway Homes of Chesterfield, VA to turn a single family residence in the City of Williamsburg into a home for the mentally disabled with no advance notice to either the Home Owners Association or the City of Williamsburg and with no consideration of the close proximity of two schools.**

Last week our residents awoke to approximately 15 cars parked outside of 101 Woodmere Drive, Williamsburg. A training session was going on run by Gateway Homes of Chesterfield, Virginia. This group runs transient facilities for mentally challenged individuals. We discovered that state law supersedes our City of Williamsburg Rules and Regulations as well as those of our Home Owners' Association.

Further investigation turned up the fact that the home was rented in early May of this year with no advice to residents, the local Homeowners Association(s) nor the City of Williamsburg itself. Clearly Gateway Homes was trying to present us with a fait accompli. We have spoken to the Middleburg Trust Company which has managed the affairs of the home's owner for the last few years through its local Vice President, Martha Madeira. All she would say was that they had rented it legally. She was unwilling to give any further information.

The City of Williamsburg also has serious concerns and has been trying to contact the State Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) in this regard. Rather than me going into detail I attach a letter from the City of Williamsburg to DBHDS which outlines its concerns and requests that DBHDS not issue the pending license until these concerns have been fully addressed.

The schools I mention are Walsingham Academy with approximately 700 students from preschool to high school seniors one block away and a further block away is the Walnut Hill Baptist Church preschool. As we are unaware at this point whether the proposed facility will contain sex offenders we are highly concerned for the safety of the children at these schools.

The state law which overrides our city ordinances and Home Owners Association rules does not delineate between populations on a scale of who might be a danger to the community. This is not a long term residential home where the residents would become

neighbors. As we understand it, this is a for profit business which has a constant turnover of occupants. While as a community we acknowledge the need for accommodating such residents, the choice of a location for this particular type of facility seems totally incompatible with the immediate area.

Our home owner association and those of our neighbors, Yorkshire, Holly Hills, Walnut Hill and the Woodlands are all concerned with these goings on and we would request that your office intervene and stop Gateway from opening this facility as well as addressing the apparent lack of rules as to how close to a school such a facility may or should be.

Cordially,

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