Hello, my name is Parker Pence, I live in Windsor Acres, just like many of the other people here tonight, and I am here to speak in *support* of the Big Bend development. The Not-in-My-Backyard sentiment and superficial concerns present in many of the comments tonight, I fear, seems to boil down to pure, unbridled, rent seeking behavior. It is an attitude of “I have mine and mine’s worth a lot more if we build fewer of—them. And If *you* can’t afford to buy a home here, tough luck.”

But we need to look around us. The small homes in Kirkwood are disappearing. It’s happening fast. And it’s not all bad or wrong. The market is at work. But the market only works so long as we allow supply to balance out and meet demand.

People want to live in Kirkwood. They want to send their kids to good schools, they want their family to be safer, maybe they just want to drive a little less.

And many of you have turned out tonight to say no. To say that an apartment building, *on Big Bend*, sandwiched between a gas station and a community college does not fit the character of the neighborhood, to say that zoning matters when exclusionary zoning has so often been used as a tool to keep “undesirable” people out, and to say that traffic is already bad when so much of that traffic originates from the students, faculty, and staff of Meramec that might hope to live in the units here proposed. Finally, not everyone can afford to buy a two story colonial. Some people rent. Especially young people. I’m sure the vast majority of the people in this room have rented at some point in their lives. It doesn’t make renters bad or scary, and it doesn’t make these apartments shanty houses for squatters. It just makes them renters.

I support the project not because I think it is perfect. I support it in the hopes that we will be able to address concerns with the proposal rather than just scrapping the whole thing out of hand. I’m sure there are things that need to be pushed back on, amendments that need to be made, and concessions to be had.

The maximization of Savoy’s profit is *not* our concern. But the maximization of the health, diversity and opportunity that Kirkwood has to offer, is. Some people love Kirkwood and the idea of living in Kirkwood, and they find the cost of doing so increasingly prohibitive. We have the power to change that. Density is good for us. It is what sets us apart from Chesterfield and Ballwin and Des Peres. Our sense of community largely comes from it.

Let’s not lose sight of that. We have ours. It’s time we grow the pie.

Thank You.