Dear Town of Lansing Board Members,

I think all of us would value an attractive and functional Town Center, and all would agree that a sewer is required for such a Center. For the kind of Center we would want to emerge from the development a sewer will allow, I think all of us would also agree that the Town needs to have effective control over the development process. My concern, and reason for writing, is that the needed groundwork for this control has not yet been established. I am especially concerned because to be effective the groundwork must be established before the sewer is approved, or land sales that assume it will be approved, are made.

At the last Board meeting Jonathan Kanter stated that “the Town needs to know what it wants to do and have control over the style and nature of the development.” This can be done using the zoning that is in place, but only if there is a roadmap that provides a basis for deciding which additional sewer districts will be approved and a statement that this roadmap will be consulted in the application of zoning rules (PDA approvals etc.) for development within each approved sewer district. The Town needs to have documents that describe the style, density, and character of development the Town desires. Otherwise, how can the Town prevent a general, sprawling development carpeting all of South Lansing within which any Town Center will be unremarkable and almost unnoticeable? The Town needs a roadmap for focusing development so a Town Center emerges in order to legally explain and justify (so as to avoid lawsuits) why one sewer proposal or development request might be treated differently than another.

All would be happy if the Town of Lansing developed, in European style, with a charming Village surrounded by farmland and trails. Few would be happy if the southern portion of the Town of Lansing developed as an uninterrupted Los Angeles style sprawl of shops, houses, gas stations and roads. The difference between these two outcomes depends on the Board responsibly establishing a roadmap and control strategy before approving the proposed sewer.

The attached document elaborates this perspective further.

Respectively yours,

Lawrence Cathles