



[Bedford Watch](#)

An open letter to Jon Whitman in response to your paid advertisement in Bedford Now on November 29, 2008:

We know that you will never address the real issues concerning the sale of your property such as our property values decreasing, an unbearable toll on our roads, documented increases in crime and no tax benefits of a big box store. That is why we have taken the time to address and study the real issues for the residents of Bedford Township.

Why have we done this? Because we think Bedford Township is a great place to live.

[Bedfordwatch members](#) have literally spent hundreds of hours of their time researching the sale of your property to a big box store and we have always felt that it would be in the best interest of this community to share the factual information with them. In fact, Judy Frankowski took an entire week off work in 2007, just so she could attend your trial in Monroe County.

There is not one improvement to Bedford Township that will come from a big box store at the corner of Lewis and Sterns. During a previous township board meeting a few years ago, you claimed, "I have a file cabinet full of offers from prospective buyers," yet you never proposed any other potential multiple uses for your land. Instead, you have repeatedly requested rezoning changes to better serve your needs, not ours.

[The westernmost parcel of your land](#) has always remained R2-A residential for over 35 years and the largest subdivision in Bedford Township that borders your property has been there for over 50 years. When your father purchased the property in 1973, it was R2-A. In the previous lawsuit that Bedford Township won, [Judge Costello wrote](#): "Since the very beginning the western-most portion of the property was zoned residential. The township has remained *consistent* in maintaining this classification."

Meijer, if you remember correctly wanted to build a store at the corner of Secor and Smith nearby. It never happened because it was just too close to the residential neighborhoods that surround this property. Now Bedford Township has an asset in their community not a liability with the [Summerlyn](#) properties.

Anyone that has studied this issue like we have for 7 years will always come up with the same answers and when we witness the few people expressing their opinions to support a big box, they never bring up pertinent or important facts.

Here are the facts:

You criticized Judy Frankowski for her statement of "for me, it means losing the security and safety I now enjoy in my neighborhood." She made that statement because she is 100% correct in her assessment.

[We have documented over 741 crimes](#) at the Wal Mart on Central Avenue in Toledo in the past 5 years. We have also recently documented another 60 serious crimes that took place in the parking lot of Wal Mart.

It doesn't matter to us what crimes take place inside or in the parking lot of a big box store, it still takes a police officer an average 2-6 hours to process *any* crime. That means less protection on the neighborhood streets from our police force. Less protection if someone tries to break into our homes or commit a serious crime in our neighborhoods.

A 15 million dollar big box store [will only contribute \\$3,000 a year to our police department](#), that is the equivalent of adding one police officer for 75 man hours per year- or one police officer for less that 2 weeks on patrol in the township. We would much rather have one of our 10 police officers patrolling the Bedford Township neighborhoods than having it parked in front of a Wal Mart responding to any crime.

If [76,000 more cars and trucks enter our township on a weekly basis](#), then at least 76,000 more people will enter our township on a weekly basis. That means ten police officers now have to police over 108,000 shoppers and residents on a weekly basis instead of 32,000 residents. Who will pay to increase the size of our police department? The Bedford township residents will.

Three of the four roads leading into Lewis and Sterns are 2 lane roads. If you put 76,000 more cars and trucks on our township roads on a weekly basis, it will inevitably ruin our surrounding neighborhood roads. A big box store on your property will not contribute one penny to help repair these roads as all of Michigan road funds are derived solely from fuel and other highway taxes. Who will pay the millions of dollars to fix the roads? The Bedford township residents will.

Concerning Steinman's statement about where his son's company office is, we are not concerned about having a small business in a residentially zoned area, unless that small business is going to attract 76,000 more cars to Bedford Township on a weekly basis. According to Tim Steinman, his small business is run exactly the same way the other thousands of small businesses are run out of their homes in Bedford Township.

We do not know *who* the Whitman lawyer is referring to when he makes statements like "we did everything that *you* asked," but we do know that the Monroe County Township Zoning review dated October 1, 2008 notes, "staff's main concern regarding this request is the difficulty in predicting the type and intensity of development which could occur on the 29 acres of contiguous commercially zoned property, and if a 200' wide 'transitional' district is a sufficient buffer."

We also know that On September 10, 2008 Dennis Steinman from the Bedford Planning Commission noticed the same exact thing. He said, "I have no idea what kind of large store could come in on this property. If we set this up like this, we've got problems; some large store could come in here. I can't see bringing something large that would suck business away from our people," Mr. Steinman said. These are the important things that matter to us.

According to the book called ["How Wal Mart Is Destroying America."](#) There are only three things that Wal Marts needs to destroy small towns, "zoning, zoning and zoning." We do not know who has been paid off- if anyone, or why certain people changed their statements from the trial testimony, but it is confusing.

After checking with [the clerk of courts in Monroe County](#), we discovered that George Welling, the former Republican candidate for the Bedford Township Clerk, received \$500.00 from you for his recent primary election. This amount is the largest political contribution permissible by law. We also know that you changed the date that this proposed rezoning would go before the board and that you wanted to go before [the new board](#) for your rezoning request.

We know that you will never take the time to watch the movie ["Wal Mart- The High Cost of Low Prices,"](#) or the [60 Minutes](#) story on Wal Mart, so we watched them for you. Some residents including the current BBA president think that a Wal Mart would be great for this community and they couldn't be more wrong. According to 60 Minutes, facts show that when a Wal Mart comes to town, "it causes over 100 local stores to close." "Wal Mart- The High Cost of Low Prices," further documents that "when a Wal Mart opens, [they knock the commercial property values down](#) in the area because sooner or later there is going to be a bunch of empty buildings and none of them are going to be able to sell."

This is not to say that we are against [BBA](#) or the stores in Bedford Township. In fact-it is directly opposite. All of the members of Bedford Watch "Buy Bedford" and spend thousands of dollars in Bedford Township on a yearly basis and we have the receipts to prove it.

Some residents are under the impression that a big box store would boost our local economy and tax base. The facts from the township treasurer [Sherri C. Meyer](#) show that it would only generate [\\$21,072 in yearly property taxes](#). The total benefit to the township would be 65 cents for each resident of the community on a 15 million dollar big box store. This is a miniscule amount of revenue compared to the damage that it would do to the infrastructure of our township and devaluation of the homes nearby.

Other residents are under the impression that it would bring jobs to the area. What kind of jobs will it bring? [According to the movie](#), Wal Mart employees rarely work full-time or overtime and some have been forced to work off the clock. Some do not even get proper breaks. Some are asked to go on welfare since they cannot afford the insurance that Wal Mart provides.

If you are under the impression that Wal Mart is good for America or the Michigan economy, read the book- ["How Wal Mart Is Destroying America."](#) The book explains in explicit detail that Wal Mart is a major force in driving manufacturers and jobs overseas. According to the PBS movie: ["Is Wal Mart Good For America,"](#) 70% of the items that Wal Mart sells are produced in China.

You own [just 5 parcels in Bedford Township](#); we own the other 14,000 parcels in this township. You no longer live in this township, we do. We have to protect what is ours.

We do not believe this rezoning request is consistent with the Bedford Township [Master Plan](#) and further assert the request is clearly not in the best interest of this township or its approximately 32,000 residents.

BedfordWatch.com members.