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Neighbors of the Willow Grove Avenue location of the yet-to-open Good Food Market say the market will harm their quality of life. (Photo by Joel Hoffmann)

A serious and sizable opposition movement has formed since Chestnut Hill resident Jennifer Zoga told the Local earlier this month that she planned to open an upscale convenience store at 12 W. Willow Grove Ave. by mid-summer.

In a petition to Zoga, 72 neighbors of the property who oppose the Good Food Market expressed fears that the market would "negatively affect the quality of our lives, the value of our homes and even jeopardize our safety."

Among the neighbors' chief concerns are increased traffic on "an already saturated residential street," a lack of "assigned

parking" for the store and increased noise, as well as potential problems with litter and "unpleasant odors."

"This is just a nightmare scenario," said Ali Souli, who lives opposite the market on W. Willow Grove Ave. "It's not like it's short-term construction. We would have to deal with the problem day-in and day-out for years."

The Good Food Market's opponents would prefer a business at 12 W. Willow Grove that minimizes the strain on their lives, Souli said, and imagining the truck fumes, traffic congestion and clatter of machinery is already causing anxiety levels to rise.

Zoga's landlord, Andrew Eisenstein of Iron Stone Management, could not be reached for comment because of a family emergency. But office manager Dianne Thompson responded to the neighbors' petition with a brief statement that she hoped would suffice until Eisenstein was available.

"We are looking forward to working with the community to resolve any concerns regarding the parking and some of the issues raised on the petition," Thompson told the Local.

Zoga struck a similar chord when the Local reached her for comment on Tuesday morning. She said she wanted the market to be a "friendly neighborhood store," and that she would be willing to listen to neighbors' concerns on an individual basis.

Still, Zoga was surprised to hear that so many neighbors opposed the market. She read the

neighbors' petition for the first time on Tuesday morning and only saw it because the Local submitted a copy for comment.

Nonetheless, the neighbors could have some leverage with Zoga and Iron Stone if the Good Food Market team were to proceed with their plans for a food-delivery service, which would require a zoning variance.

But because the property is commercially zoned (C-1), Zoga and Iron Stone could open the market as a traditional convenience store if they chose, according to Joyce Lenhardt, an architect who co-chairs the Chestnut Hill Community Association's Land Use, Planning and Zoning Committee.

"We're not in a position of total strength where we can tell them to go home," she said. "But maybe we can get them to make some concessions."

Zoga and Iron Stone were invited to the CHCA's Development Review Committee meeting on June 16, but, according to Lenhardt, they have declined to meet with the DRC until they receive a letter of refusal from the city Zoning Board of Adjustment regarding the delivery variance.

"We'd rather have the refusal so we know what issues we're dealing with," Lenhardt said.