

CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES  
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2006, 7:00 P.M.

Chairperson Jonathan Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commission members present were Mark Broadwell, Mary Margaret Carroll, Gretchen MacNair, Laura King Moore, Amy Ryan, and Robin Whitsell. Staff members present were Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein and Administrative Clerk Renee Zimmermann.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

**Rebecca Board, Downing Creek Owners Association Board Member**

1. provided a handout to the Commission and spoke in favor of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian trails and improvements to ingress/ egress onto Hwy. 54. She also approved of the improvement to the appearance of the proposed development from Barbee Chapel Road and Stancell Drive that in her opinion would be more visually pleasing than the existing appearance.

2. She was not concerned that the applicant was not proposing commercial/retail space. She did hope that the service building proposed along Barbee Chapel Road would contain a pediatrician's office.

*Developer's Comment: Although it would be premature to stipulate the exact classification of tenant in the office buildings at Woodmont, we anticipate that there will be a number of service-type office tenants in the smaller office buildings. These might include doctors, dentists, attorneys, insurance agencies, etc.*

3. Traffic was a concern but the proposed phasing of a master plan was believed to help disperse the traffic.

*Developer's Comment: Agree. The Traffic Impact Analysis prepared for the Town and submitted with this application supports this assessment.*

**Jeff Tillman ,owner, Moondance Gallery in Meadowmont Village**

4. distributed two handouts from the President and Manager of the Meadowmont Community Association. He stated that the project addressed the Meadowmont Villages' merchants concerns, providing a shuttle from the proposed development to Meadowmont Village in order to support and not compete with them.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

**Commissioner Robin Whitsell**

1. appreciated the changes from the last Concept Plan review of the project and that the neighbors and Commissioners concerns were addressed.

2. She approved of the connectivity and underground parking.

3. She thinks that traffic will be the biggest challenge. She was not convinced that not providing commercial space was appropriate.

*Developer's Comment: The Traffic Impact Analysis prepared for the Town and*

accompanying this application indicates that Woodmont will not have a significant impact on the studied intersections. Woodmont will bring resources and the ability to work with the Town, (including public transit), with DOT, and with the nearby residents to help manage and mitigate the traffic picture in this area.

4. She asked how tall the buildings were proposed to be. **(The applicant replied that they are proposed to be 3 stories along Hwy. 54, 5 stories in the middle of the site, and down to 3 stories at the edges of the property. At the driveway onto Barbee Chapel Road the building is proposed to be 2 stories.)** Commissioner Whitsell noted that the tallest buildings were proposed at the high point of the property.

**Commissioner Amy Ryan**

5. asked what the finished floor was of the buildings along Hwy. 54. **(The applicant replied that the highway is lower than the buildings.)**

6. She noted that the applicant is proposing: more floor area than is currently allowed under the existing zoning, a rezoning, a Master Plan, and a Special Use Permit for the first phase of the project.

7. She approved of the buildings stepping up in height from Hwy. 54.

8. She did not approve of the 5-story buildings on top of the site. She stated that they appeared to loom down on Hwy. 54 and felt that there was too much building at the center of the site. She felt that the floor area should be scaled back.

*Developer's Comment: The closest 5-story structure ( Building "G" on the Master Land Use Plan Drawings) is approximately 800 feet from the southern edge of NC 54. This distance, along with the natural topography of the site, will place this building well out of any negative visual or looming effect from NC 54. We will include North-South cross sectional views of the site in our future presentations to illustrate for the CDC that this will not be a concern.*

9. She believed that traffic is the ultimate problem.

*Developer's Comment: (See comment to Commissioner Whitsell Item 3. above).*

10. She recommended larger buffers adjacent to the residential areas, especially the section adjacent to Barbee Chapel Road.

*Developer's Comment: We have included extremely deep buffer zones for the majority of the site perimeter where it abuts single family residential property. All buffer requirements of the UDO will be met or exceeded. In addition, we will work with the Town and the neighbors to provide screening plantings as necessary to ensure the best practical buffering is achieved. This will benefit both Woodmont and the neighboring properties.*

11. She approved of extending the greenway and thought that the shuttle to Meadowmont was an interesting idea, especially since she believes that people will not walk to

Meadowmont from the site.
<i>Developer's Comment: Agree.</i>
<b>Commissioner Laura Moore</b>
12. recommended that the buildings in the center of the site should be located on the downhill side of the slope. That way the parking for the eastern building is in a dip.
<i>Developer's Comment: This is generally the case. We will illustrate this with East-West cross sectional views during the CDC hearing presentations associated with this application.</i>
13. She asked how the phasing for the construction would affect Hwy. 54 traffic. <b>(The applicant replied that they did not know what the current Hwy.54 study would show. The entire Hwy. 54 corridor is being studied.)</b>
<i>Developer's Comment: (See comment to Commissioner Whitsell Item 3. above). (Note: We did not intend to state or imply that there was a comprehensive study of NC 54 ongoing at the time of this CDC Concept Plan hearing. The Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street study with ties to NC 54 was ongoing at this time . Also at this time, DOT (Jim Dunlop, Congestion Management Section) was evaluating significant NC 54 lane layout changes at the NC 54 and I-40 intersection area. These lane layout changes have since been implemented and have improved the ramping of traffic from eastbound NC 54 onto I-40 East. Finally, we were preparing to initiate, via the Town's process, the Traffic Impact Analysis for Woodmont, which has since been performed, and does evaluate a large section of NC 54 from US 15/501 to I-40. )</i>
<b>Commissioner Mary Margaret Carroll</b>
14. noted that the development was not attractive to families with children. Commissioner Carroll suggested that at least one area contain green space where children could safely play.
<i>Developer's Comment: There is an ample area of green space in the area of the residential buildings at Woodmont located just to the east of Building "B". We are open to working with CDC and Town Staff to consider whether this area should include any developed features or remain purely green open space. We do not expect that the ownership profile for these condominiums will include any significant element of families with young children.</i>
<b>Commissioner Mark Broadwell</b>
15. believes that there is too much density.
<i>Developer's Comment: The proposed density on this 33 acre site is well within FAR guidelines for the mixed use zoning being requested. The proposed Woodmont density is approximately 17,400 square feet of building space per acre. This can be compared with the recently approved University Village (Chapel Hill East) site plan which has a density of approximately 45,700 square feet of building space per acre. Woodmont's proposed density will support many of the Town's Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, as noted in other sections of this application package. The primary benefit of density in a mixed use setting is to allow a significant number of people to live, work, and shop in the</i>

same area. Woodmont's plan supports this primary mixed use benefit. Developing Woodmont with the proposed moderate office density will also reduce pressure for suburban sprawl.

16. He stated that when he sees applications requesting floor area in excess of what the zoning allows, he expects to see traffic thoroughly addressed.

*Developer's Comment: The accompanying TIA prepared for the Town evaluates 15 intersections in the NC 54 corridor over a long term period, and concludes that Woodmont will not have a significant impact on these intersections.*

17. He believes that the applicant should go further to minimize traffic.

*Developer's Comment: We will continue to work with the Town, the Chapel Hill Transit Authority, and DOT to evaluate and address all traffic related issues. At the Mayor's suggestion, we are currently working with the Town to determine a formula for making significant payments to the Transit Authority to help it aggressively promote expansion of its services. Woodmont will be directly served by Transit Authority buses, with appropriate bus stop(s) along its spine road. Woodmont also lies within 1/2 mile of the future light rail station at Meadowmont. We believe that the Town, the Transit Authority, and DOT will be well served to have Woodmont working in partnership with them on transportation solutions for the NC 54 corridor.*

18. At the entrance off of Hwy 54 he would like to see public art that continues and supports the natural landscape rather than have something that resembles a landscape and sculpture more appropriate to Research Triangle Park.

*Developer's Comment: Agree. We are working with the Public Arts Commission to evaluate the location and the type of art most appropriate for this NC 54 east entryway area.*

**Commissioner Jonathan Whitney**

19. asked if the applicant has talked with NCDOT. **(The applicant replied that they had and that a superstreet along Hwy 54 could be a suggestion in the Corridor Plan. He indicated that if that is a recommendation, the developers would participate. He further explained that Phase 1 of the proposed Master Plan will have minimal impact on traffic as the connection to Barbee Chapel Road will not be constructed.)**

*Developer's Comment: The TIA submitted with this application provides some additional insights into the NC 54 future infrastructure picture. We will continue working with the Town and DOT during each phase of the Woodmont development to address transportation issues as they relate to proposed Woodmont development.*

asked why they were proposing 3 different Special Use Permits. **(The applicant replied because they do not know how traffic impacts will be addressed in the future. The first part of their application will be for approval of a Master Plan. Phase 1 will be submitted following the Master Plan application.)**