

PINE KNOLLS NCD RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF INITIATIVE

The Pine Knolls Neighborhood Conservation District Initiative was initiated by a petition to the Town Council requesting the development of a neighborhood district that would address the unique challenges that the neighborhood is facing, such as new development that is out of character with the original moderately sized homes found in the neighborhood and increasing non-resident ownership. The Pine Knolls neighborhood engaged in three neighborhood meetings at Lincoln Center as part of the Neighborhood Conservation District Initiative. The three meetings were well attended, with approximately 25-50 participants at each meeting. The Pine Knolls Community Center Board of Directors assisted with organizing the initial kickoff meeting and provided guidance and assistance throughout the initiative. Residents have provided feedback on the key neighborhood issues, preliminary and final recommendations, and have contacted Clarion frequently to ask questions throughout this process.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES RAISED BY THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Residents provided input on the key issues to be addressed through this initiative at the initial kickoff meeting and through subsequent correspondence. The 1st *Neighborhood News* report provided several lists of information compiled from neighborhood feedback. A list of "Issues to be Addressed" was included in that report, and has guided the development of the recommendations for the Pine Knolls Neighborhood Conservation District. Items on the list include:

- Encouraging new development to be compatible with the neighborhood;
- Respecting the cultural history of the neighborhood and the diversity of community residents;
- Encouraging owner-occupied use within the neighborhood;
- Ensuring lower density uses throughout the neighborhood;
- Addressing the poor quality of newly constructed residential units;
- Need for proper maintenance of existing housing units; and
- Retaining natural landscapes and tree cover in the neighborhood.

RECOMMENDED NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Throughout this initiative, there has been an ongoing discussion of the boundary for the neighborhood that would define where new Neighborhood Conservation District regulations would be applied. The proposed boundary includes all Chapel Hill properties south of Cameron Avenue and west of the Historic McCauley neighborhood to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro border. There was some discussion regarding whether or not to include Manley Estates within the neighborhood boundary. Some residents of Pine Knolls have expressed concern that Manley Estates should not be considered part of the Pine Knolls neighborhood. Because Manley Estates is a new development of a kind that does not exist anywhere else in the neighborhood, and because the new rules that are likely to be considered would likely not be applicable to this existing multi-family development, it is recommended that Manley Estates not be included within the neighborhood district.

Participants at the 3rd meeting discussed whether or not to include Lincoln Center as part of the neighborhood conservation district. Residents attending the meeting heard that there could be future plans for expanding the facility, and that new regulations may limit the manner that this expansion could occur. In particular, the height of buildings would be limited to 35 feet if the regulations were adopted as recommended, and School District representatives expressed concern about this possible constraint.

SUMMARY TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Feedback on the recommended regulations presented at the 3rd meeting was generally positive. No revisions have been made to the recommendations that were presented at the 3rd meeting. Our final recommendations are listed here in the following summary table. Following the table are descriptions for each of the recommendations, responses to the recommendations and any dissenting opinions that have been expressed.

Land Use Regulations	Recommended Standards for Pine Knolls
Duplexes (Dwelling, Two-family – Duplex)	Not Permitted
Maximum Floor Area Ratio for Single-Family Dwelling (or Single-Family with Accessory Apartment)	0.25
Maximum Size for Single-Family Dwelling (or Single-Family Dwelling with Accessory Apartment)	2,500 square feet
Maximum Secondary Building Height	35 feet
Bathroom to Bedroom Ratio	A dwelling with more than 2 bedrooms and a bathroom to bedroom ratio of 1.0 or greater, shall be classified as a Rooming House unless the dwelling is occupied by persons related by blood, adoption, marriage or domestic partnership, with not more than two unrelated persons.
Maximum Percent of Front Yard Used for Parking	30%
Zoning Compliance Permit Notification	Adjacent property owners must be notified through the Town if an increase in floor area or garages are proposed, with a 10-day waiting period to follow notification.

ANNOTATED LIST OF FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONSES & DISSENTING OPINIONS

1. Duplexes

Recommendation: Development of new duplexes not permitted.

Discussion of Recommendation: The community is interested in preserving the existing character of the neighborhood, and in particular the modest single-family style of housing found in Pine Knolls. The development of duplex units in the neighborhood has been pervasive in recent years, and several neighborhood residents were in favor of prohibiting future development of duplexes because they have altered the character of the neighborhood. Under this recommendation, all existing duplex units would be allowed to be maintained as they currently exist according to the Town's nonconforming use ordinance.

Dissenting Opinions: Several residents and property owners expressed concern for private property rights and the ability of property owners to benefit financially from future redevelopment of their lands. A few property owners were opposed to limiting the type of development allowed in the neighborhood because it would affect their plans for utilizing their properties.

2. Maximum Floor Area Ratio for Single-Family Dwelling

Recommendation: 0.25

Discussion of Recommendation: Many residents are concerned about the size of new houses developed recently in the neighborhood. Some recently constructed houses are large and out of scale with older existing houses, and typically provide lodging for multiple persons, sometimes containing up to five bedrooms in one unit. Some persons also mentioned that with some of the newer developed homes, there is not enough space between houses. Limiting the floor area ratio of houses in the neighborhood limits the size of the house to the size of the lot, and can ensure that new development is developed at a scale that is compatible to both to its lot and to neighboring properties.

Dissenting Opinions: In general, participants of the meeting were supportive of this recommendation. Some residents wanted clarification of how this regulation would affect future redevelopment of their property.

3. Maximum Size for Single-Family Dwelling

Recommendation: 2,500 square feet

Discussion of Recommendation: Along with limiting the floor area ratio of the house, some residents were also in favor of putting a cap on the maximum size house that could be built in the neighborhood. A few residents reported that they felt that a 3,000 square foot home was too large in comparison to the sizes of original houses built in the neighborhood. Several persons identified several new houses on Creel Street that are quite large in comparison to other homes on Creel and are out of scale with most of the other homes in the neighborhood.

Because the majority of houses are roughly 1,300 square feet in size, it was suggested that future dwellings be limited to 2,500 square feet. This cap allows for the expansion of units within the neighborhood, while also maintaining the original character of the neighborhood that is defined by modest size homes.

Dissenting Opinions: Some residents expressed that they were concerned about the affect of this regulation on their ability to expand or redevelopment on their property. It was noted that all existing houses that are larger than 2,500 square feet could be maintained at their current size should the regulation be enacted.

4. Maximum Secondary Building Height

Recommendation: 35 feet

Discussion of Recommendation: The current R-3 zoning allows structures to be built up to a 60 foot secondary building height. Many residents were concerned that this height was significantly larger than the height of most houses found in the neighborhood, which are typically single story homes. The recommendation is to lower the secondary building height to 35 feet. This height would allow for two stories in all circumstances, and possibly three stories in some circumstances. This provision would allow room for expansion on most homes in the neighborhood.

Dissenting Opinions: A representative of Lincoln Center noted that there are potential plans to expand the Lincoln Center, which could include the addition of one or more stories onto the existing building. There was concern that the 35 foot height limit could restrict moving forward with future plans should Lincoln Center be included within the neighborhood boundary.

5. Bathroom to Bedroom Ratio

Recommendation: A dwelling with more than 2 bedrooms and a bathroom to bedroom ratio of 1.0 or greater, shall be classified as a Rooming House unless the dwelling is occupied by persons related by blood, adoption, marriage or domestic partnership, with not more than two unrelated persons.

Discussion of Recommendation: Many residents expressed their concern about the increasing proportion of rental properties in the neighborhood, and specifically rental properties that were designed for habitation by multiple non-related persons. The concern is that larger rental houses are out of character with the neighborhood, and impact the neighborhood in negative ways, such as generating more noise, trash and on-street parking. The bathroom-to-bedroom ratio was recommended to prohibit the development of larger rental properties that are intended to serve multiple related persons.

Dissenting Opinions: Some landowners expressed concerns about the Town being able to effectively enforce this recommended regulation. Moreover, a few persons expressed that they felt that it was too heavy handed for the town to decide how many unrelated persons could reside in a house, and that this would have a negative impact on their ability to rent their properties.

6. Maximum Percent of Front Yard Used for Parking

Recommendation: 30%

Discussion of Recommendation: Several residents expressed concerns about the image of the neighborhood being impacted by persons parking their vehicles on the lawn of their front yard, and that they would like to restrict the amount of parking allowed in front yards. Similarly, they expressed that often this occurred at homes where multiple persons resided, and where the paved driveway was inadequate for accommodating all of the residents' cars. The recommendation would decrease the percentage of a lot's front yard that could be used for parking from 40% to 30%. Many residents were in support of this recommendation.

Dissenting Opinions: A few persons were concerned about existing parking areas that may be larger than 30% of their front yard. It was noted at the third meeting that all existing parking areas/driveways on private lots can be maintained as they currently exist.

7. Zoning Compliance Permit Notification

Recommendation: Adjacent property owners must be notified through the Town if an increase in floor area or garages are proposed, with a 10-day waiting period to follow notification.

Discussion of Recommendation: Many of the concerns discussed throughout the Neighborhood Conservation District planning process were driven by the fact that there is a lack of communication between landowners and neighbors regarding new development. Many participants at the third meeting were in favor of requiring property owners to notify their neighbors before they receive a permit to begin construction or expansion on their property. This "good neighbor" policy would not prohibit a property owner from proceeding with their plans, but it would ensure that there is better communication between landowners and residents.

Dissenting Opinions: No dissenting comments were received on this recommendation.

8. Design Guidelines

Recommendation: Develop Neighborhood Design Guidelines to provide guidance to future developers of lots in the neighborhood.

Discussion of Recommendation: Currently, there are no design guidelines that could provide developers within the neighborhood with a sense of the type of construction and design that is most appropriate and in keeping with the neighborhood. The implementation of this recommendation would result in a design guideline manual that would provide suggestions and recommendations for how new development should be designed, houses should be oriented, and other suggestions such as fencing styles, landscaping, etc.

Dissenting Opinions: No dissenting comments were received on this recommendation.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY OTHER MEANS

During the course of this neighborhood initiative, residents raised several issues that cannot be directly addressed through the development of zoning regulations as part of a neighborhood conservation district. These issues include:

- Dealing with the need to provide more and conserve existing affordable housing in the neighborhood;
- Dealing with the increased traffic and speed of commuters driving on Merritt Mill and Crest Roads, and the noise and safety impacts on the neighborhood;
- Improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, possibly through the addition of sidewalks, street lights and traffic calming measures;
- Dealing with the increase in on-street parking;
- Addressing the noise pollution from both the UNC Cogeneration Facility and the Ready Mix Concrete Company;
- Addressing particulate pollution from the Ready Mix Concrete Company;
- Improving community amenities, including enhancements to the Pines Community Center;
- Addressing the increase in crime and drug activity in the neighborhood; and
- Addressing the increase in property taxes.

The neighborhood was provided with preliminary recommendations for addressing these issues through means other than zoning regulations. The preliminary recommendations are listed below.

1. Invite Engineering Department representative to a neighborhood meeting to discuss:
 - Safety and Access of Neighborhood and Collector Roads
 - Increases in on-street parking
2. Prepare written statement to Town Council asking for attention to:
 - Need for more affordable housing
 - Increases in property taxes
 - Communication with the Town of Carrboro regarding impacts from the Ready Mix Concrete Plant
 - Additional public improvements in Pine Knolls
3. Invite Chapel Hill Police Department representative to a neighborhood meeting to discuss:
 - Crime and drug activity in the neighborhood

NEXT STEPS

This report and its recommendations are hereby submitted to the Town of Chapel Hill for additional consideration. We expect that next steps will include review by Town Staff and the Planning Board, with recommendations to go forward to a Town Council Public Hearing.