

**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY MINUTES
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2006, 7:30 P.M.**

Chairperson Jonathan Whitney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissions attending the meeting were Mark Broadwell, Chris Culbreth, Gretchen MacNair, Laura King Moore, Eleanor Howe, Charlotte Newby, Glenn Parks, and Amy Ryan. Staff members present were Senior Planner Kay Pearlstein and Planning Technician Kay Tapp.

**THE RESIDENCES AT GROVE PARK (AKA TOWN HOUSE APARTMENTS)
(File No. 9788-49-1706)**

The Town has received a request for a Concept Plan Review proposal to redevelop a site located at 425 Hillsborough Street. The site, located between Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Hillsborough Street is currently occupied by the 111 unit Town House Apartments. The proposed development includes the demolition of the Town House Apartment complex and construction of 390 multi-family units. A total of 688 parking spaces are proposed, including parking areas under some buildings. Existing and proposed access to the site is from Hillsborough Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. The 15.6-acre site is located in the Residential4(R-4) zoning district and the Resource Conservation District. The site is identified as Chapel Hill Township, Tax Map 81, Block B, Lots 5, 7, 8, and 15, PIN 9788-49-1706

CONCEPT PLAN PRESENTATION

A presentation for a Concept Plan for redevelopment to the existing site of the Town House Apartments was presented that includes three options, A, B, and C. The options were based on the land that could be assembled for the development. All three options propose demolition of the existing Town House Apartments. Option B, the preferred option, includes two additional lots on Hillsborough Street proposing 3-story townhouses. Four 6-story buildings are proposed on the current site. A rezoning of the property to a Transit Overlay Development is proposed. Ram Development, Ballentine and Associates, and Cline Design comprise the design team attending the meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

1. A Hillsborough Street neighbor is concerned about the increase in traffic proposed with the development. Dwelling unit increases will place additional vehicles onto Hillsborough Street, already heavily traveled.
2. An adjacent neighbor in the Franklin Rosemary Historic District on Hillsborough Street is concerned about the effect on the character of the historic district and the ingress/egress from Hillsborough Street. She wants the major access from Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd and not from Hillsborough Street and suggested that the adjacent property to the north also under consideration for development (MLKB project) should consider a shared driveway.

(11)

She felt that urban density increases pedestrian traffic and should not increase vehicular traffic. She further stated that shopping on downtown Franklin Street would require lugging shopping bags up and down the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. hill and most residents would opt for shopping with their cars at stores with easy parking.

She also thought that 688 parking spaces was too much parking and car traffic would be unnecessarily increased.

3. Another neighbor on Hillsborough Street in the Franklin Rosemary Historic District wanted the applicant to reconsider the 6-story building height. She suggested using "story poles" to convey the future height of the buildings.

COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. All Commissioners expressed concerned about the potential for negative impacts to traffic patterns in the area. They recommended that the driveway onto Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd be stressed and the driveway onto Hillsborough Street should be minimized. Two members recommended no access onto Hillsborough Street.
2. Most Commissioners believed that the parking proposed was too much. They all supported the underground parking but because the project is proposed as a walkable development, the vehicle parking is in excess of what it should be. They pointed out that the applicant is stressing pedestrian circulation and yet parking for 688 cars is proposed. If so much pedestrian access, why so much parking? Recommendations were made to work with the Town to improve access onto Hillsborough Street and two Commissioners wanted to close off the access all together.
3. One Commissioner wanted to know what the applicant is proposing as an amenity for the Town. Where is the recreation area?
4. Two Commissioners made the recommendation to create less of an "island"- type development and build closer to Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. instead of the private core area proposed. They recognized constraints posed by the RCD but recommended to minimize RCD encroachments by joining with the adjacent proposed development (MLKB project) to have a joint driveway.
5. Two Commissioners suggested additional buffering around the perimeter of the site.
6. One Commissioner recommended that the height of the buildings not exceed five stories, especially with the mechanical equipment proposed on the roof.

Another Commissioner was concerned about the density and size of buildings proposed and that it is not in keeping with the context of Chapel Hill. The 60-foot elevation of the centrally located buildings is difficult to blend into the context of the adjacent historic district. Commissioners urged the applicant to work with the neighbors.

Three Commissioners supported the 3-story townhouses proposed on the Hillsborough Street frontage.

Generally, Commissioners were concerned about the pressure placed on the site by the proposed development.

7. Commissioners supported owner-occupied units rather than rental units. They recommended that the square footage of the units include a mix of sizes including those in the 700 to 800 square foot size be designed to glorify home and not buying units for their kids.

One Commissioner suggested including smaller efficiency units for older adults along with the larger units for families.

Another Commissioner regretted the loss of discount student housing close to campus and wondered where replacement of the loss in student rentals would go.

8. A recommendation was made for improvements and creating prominence to the existing bus stop on Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd.
9. Another Commissioner saw this as a wonderful opportunity for redevelopment with sixteen acres close to campus.
10. Another Commissioner supported the addition to the tax base without any Town investment.
11. One Commissioner asked about how stormwater would be handled on the site. The applicant replied much of the site would have underground drainage and infiltration into the RCD. Since most of the parking is underground, not much runoff is anticipated.

Prepared for: Jonathan Whitney, Chair *KP*
Prepared by: Kay Pearlstein, Staff *for JW*