

Memorandum

Date: 9/27/2007
To: Rogers Road Task Force
Cc: Chapel Hill Planning Board
From: James Stroud, Planning Board Liaison
RE: Proposed Habitat Special Use Permit - Purefoy/ Rogers Road

One of the Chapel Hill Planning Board members, a professional engineer that handles storm water management, has raised the following concerns about this project:

1. The Habitat site has a fairly steep slope, over 5% in some areas that drain in the direction of Rogers and Purefoy Roads. Residents residing in these areas already report problems with minor flooding.
2. The Habitat site will take a large amount of acreage from nearly 100% pervious, large forested, to high percentage impervious area. Loss of impervious area will decrease absorption of storm water on the Habitat site and, if not properly designed and constructed, send significantly more storm water to existing homes.
3. Requiring storm water calculations and design of drainage and Best Management Practices will likely reveal that the proposed rain gardens mentioned by the developer's engineer will not be appropriate for the large volume of water draining from the site. Construction of the more likely storm water detention ponds will create safety issues with children in the Habitat homes if the ponds are not fenced. Fencing is not typically required in Chapel Hill so it's important to see the entire plan prior to approving something that could create other unintended consequences.
4. Final review of the Jordan Lake watershed pollution rules has just closed. In the near future, all new storm water BMPs will be required to treat not just suspended solids, but nitrogen and phosphorus also to reduce pollutants to the nutrient sensitive Jordan Lake waters. Existing storm water BMPs will be required to redesign or retrofit their systems to meet these new rules. It seems an unfair financial burden on low income habitat homeowners to require their homeowner association to ante up the money for storm water retrofits when the developer can reasonably foresee requirements and design for the Jordan Lake rules during initial construction.
5. The lowest elevation area of the Habitat site is bisected by Duke Power transmission lines. Prior to the approval of storm water BMPs which would collect drainage from adjacent or nearby Duke Power lines, the developer should be required to determine if Duke is still spraying herbicide on their power line right of way and, if so, what is used. It seems environmentally irresponsible to site storm water catchments adjacent to areas receiving herbicide unless more stringent water quality treatment is required.

Relocating

See memo 10/02/07
fr. Culpeper to Planning Board
p4 #4

1) Moving the school bus stops does not appropriately resolve the problem of Purefoy Drive being the sole road in and out of the community. Having our children march where? down Homestead Road to catch their school buses puts our children at risk. Moving the bus stop resolves nothing. I urge this task force to reject that idea altogether.

I don't understand why this developer should be allowed to build 50+ houses in this community and not be required to construct a road to come in and out of the community. I don't understand why a new road should hinge on other future developments that may or may not occur in this community. Aren't developers normally expected to construct roads when they develop an area? Why is this different?

2) I strongly urge this task force to require the Habitat to construct one new road that leads in and out of the community; we should not have to depend on Purefoy Drive as the sole road in and out of the community.

I don't know how Mr. Neal determined which type of stormwater management system would appropriately contain the run-off from the new Habitat Subdivision without some idea of how much water will drain from this area, which is what worries me.

Memo 9/27/07 from James Stroud has submitted notes that addresses these issues

Unfortunately, this application does not require these calculations, which also worries me. However, since I'm not an engineer, I can only assume that since Mr. Neal has in fact named the system—a bioretention basin, or rain garden, as he describes it—that he must already know that a bioretention basin will in fact do the job of appropriately managing the stormwater that will be drained to the northwest end of Edgar from the east side of Edgar.

3) So, having said this, I would strongly urge that this task force require Mr. Neal to put in writing that he will be installing a bioretention system, a rain garden, on the northwest side of Edgar Street to manage the stormwater run-off. Otherwise, his statement of intention is not binding, and this community could end up with a wet pond or a dry detention basin, something unsightly, something hazardous to pets, to small children. A wet pond, like the one over at Southern Human Services, would not enhance contiguous property; a dry basin like the one at Rusch Hollow would be unsightly and those of us who live north of Edgar Street would have to drive by it everyday while the majority of those who live in their new subdivision could actually by-pass it.

I would like to state that using the northwest end of Edgar Street area for this size and kind of stormwater system strikes me as a poor use of the property, keeping in mind that once this system is in place, the land can never be used for anything else. It seems odd that this much land must be ruined in this way, trees cut down, simply to drain 20% of a subdivision that could just as easily, if not more easily, be drained to the northeast side—where the water already is. It just seems odd that meeting the town's ordinance for stormwater management should be carried out this way.

Neloa Jones

Rogers Road Community Resident
Rogers Road Small Area Task Force