

**SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION
AND CITIZEN CONCEPT PLAN COMMENTS**

Subject: Sunrise Road Subdivision

Meeting Dates: August 18, 2004 and September 22, 2004

Recommendation: That the comments of citizens and the Community Design Commission shall be forwarded to the applicant and the Town Council.

Vote: Unanimous to forward comments by members present: Mark Broadwell, George Cianciolo, Chris Culbert, Thatcher Freund, Laura King Moore, Charlotte Newby (chair), Scott Nilsen, Scott Radway, Amy Ryan, and Jonathan Whitney.

Comments from Citizens

1. A citizen read a statement and expressed a concern with the impact of noise from Interstate 40. In addition to the statement the citizen presented the Commission with several noise data spreadsheets.
2. A citizen read a statement and expressed three concerns: 1) That the Concept Plan does not have the support of the neighbors and needs more work; 2) That there is a misconception that the Sunrise Coalition is opposed to affordable housing; and 3) That the success of the Habitat project appears to be driven by profitability and not community interests.
3. Another citizen read a statement and stated that the proposal is too dense and recommended that the applicant redesign the Concept Plan and resubmit with a smaller, less dense community.
4. A citizen read a statement and spoke about concerns related to environmental impact of the proposed development, with specific reference to site drainage, vegetation, soils and wetlands on the eastern end of the property.
5. A citizen expressed a concern with the proposed access onto Sunrise Road. In particular the citizen noted that previous projects approved by the Town Council (Carol Woods's expansion December 2002) required adjustments to access along Sunrise Road. The citizen also informed the Commission that the high school track team commonly runs along the roadway and interrupts traffic flow.
6. A citizen read a statement and expressed concern with density and parking. With respect to density, the citizen recommended that the applicant revise the plan and create a larger landscape buffer area along the project's south and east boundaries. Another option would be to move the dwelling units toward the center of the property. The concern with parking focused on the absence of off-street parking and the potential danger to children crossing and playing in the street.
7. Another citizen read a statement and noted several issues involving development density: a) Correlation between population density and increased crime rate; b) Habitat's inexperience with multi-family dwellings; c) Density not in character with surrounding neighborhoods; d) Density conflicts with Town Comprehensive Plan guideline to *"Seek designs that will promote interaction between this proposed development and surrounding area; avoid designs that would serve to isolate residents of this proposed development."*
8. One citizen hoped that the proposed development would extend public water and sewer service to several nearby residential lots (along Ginger and Sunrise Roads).

9. A citizen reading a statement recommended that the Commission require Habitat to work with the surrounding neighborhood and return with a plan that the nearby residents can support.
10. Another citizen stated that they disagree with text in the application stating that the proposed Concept Plan is in compliance with the Town of Chapel Hill Design Guidelines. The citizen recommended that an independent group review the proposed project and determine if it complies with the Design Guidelines.
11. One citizen stated that the charette process with Habitat has been a fraud

Comments from Commission Members

General Comments

12. One Commissioner stated that there appears to be a basic difference between one group's attempt to provide affordable housing and another group's desire to protect neighborhood character.
13. A Commissioner stated that affordable housing is necessary and difficult to provide in Chapel Hill. The Commission also stated that Habitat has done a good job in providing this housing.
14. Another Commissioner did not believe that the proposed development is "connected" to the Chandlers Green neighborhood and that the project's impact on that neighborhood is negligible.
15. In referencing a goal of the Mayor's Committee, one Commissioner stated that the applicant did not appear to successfully achieve inclusion of the adjacent community. Because of the quality and amount of citizen complaints expressed by the immediate neighbors, the Commissioner suggested that the applicant consider future workshops and attempt to dialogue together with the neighbors.
16. One Commission member stated that because the proposed development site was purchased with tax dollars, stewardship of the property extends beyond future homeowners or the Habitat organization.

Density

17. One Commissioner stated that the proposed 50 units do not seem to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.
18. Another Commissioner stated that they did not have a concern with the proposed density. The Commission member stated that as the amount of land available for development in Town decreases, the need for higher residential density increases.
19. A Commission member stated that high density developments are best located where associated services and facilities, (i.e. shopping center, mass transit facilities) are nearby. In particular the member expressed a concern with the lack of transit and bus service to this area of Town.
20. One Commissioner asked the applicant if a multi-family development was a departure from the type of residential projects typically undertaken by Habitat.

Access and Circulation

21. Several Commissioners expressed concern with children running across the southern loop street between dwelling units and the recreation area. It was suggested that the applicant consider converting the street segment to one-way east bound. It was also suggested that the applicant consider putting the roadway on the south side of the single family homes and have the homes directly front the recreation area.

22. Several Commission members also expressed concern with the applicant's proposal for on-street parking. One Commissioner stated that the proposed 2.2 parking spaces per dwelling unit is unrealistic. Commission members suggested that the applicant needs to provide well defined areas for parking and consider off-street double loaded parking and residential parking permits for on-street parking.
23. One Commissioner stated that if the applicant continues with on-street parking, they should consider a design what includes alleys behind the homes, similar to Southern Village.
24. A Commissioner recommended that the proposed development included traffic calming features at two locations; at street connections between adjacent neighbors and at the west end of the proposed main street near Sunrise Road.
25. One Commissioner stated that the proposed project needs pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjacent neighborhoods.
26. In response to concerns expressed by neighboring property owners, a Commissioner suggested that the applicant address how the proposed development will prohibit pedestrian walking along the Duke Power Company easement and into adjacent neighborhoods. Another Commissioner also noted the proposed internal trail system is an invitation for pedestrians to leave the formal trail and walk along the utility easement.
27. One Commissioner asked the applicant if they considered how and when the Chapel Hill bus system might provide service to this area.
28. Another Commissioner asked the applicant if Habitat is considering future development on the adjacent property to the north.

Noise

29. Referencing the noise data presented during the August 18, 2004 meeting, one Commissioner stated that it appears the proposed development may increase noise to adjacent neighborhoods. The Commissioner suggested that the applicant do what is necessary to protect the neighborhood and recommend that the proposal included a 30-foot buffer to help reduce noise.
30. Another Commissioner noted that at this time the Town of Chapel Hill is not undertaking any type of formal noise abatement plan or noise study.
31. One Commissioner stated that some of the existing homes in Chandler Green likely experience noise levels similar to those anticipated in the proposed development.

Wetlands

32. A Commissioner expressed a concern with potential clearing and land disturbance around or within the wetland areas.

Soils

33. Concerned that portions of the site may not contain soils suitable for construction, one Commissioner suggested that the Town Council recommend that the applicant submit a soil study with Special Use Permit application.

Landscaping and Buffers

34. A Commissioner recommended that the applicant enlarge the proposed 15-foot wide buffer on the southeast corner to a 30-foot wide buffer.

Utilities

35. In light of the fact that the proposed project requires the installation of a waste water pump station, one Commissioner recommend that the applicant strive to efficiently spend utility infrastructure funds.

Stormwater

36. One Commissioner member recommended that the applicant address the stormwater concerns that were expressed by some of the citizen speakers.

Maintenance of Common Areas

37. Several Commissioners expressed concerns about how the applicant plans to maintain common areas and open space. One Commissioner asked the applicant if Habitat has adequate staff to maintain a 50 unit development. Another Commissioner stated that maintenance of open areas, particularly the recreation area, landscaping and stormwater facilities could be a problem.

38. In order to address concerns with landscaping, Commissioners suggested that the applicant consider focusing on a landscaping plan that incorporates street trees and dense buffer planting. One Commission member suggested that some open space areas could be left in natural vegetation with minimum maintenance requirements. It was also suggested that cluster type housing with central common courtyards would be preferred if the applicant was interested in directly involving residents in management of common areas.

39. Another Commissioner suggested that the applicant consider a grounds maintenance company to manage the open space and common areas.

Prepared by:

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