

(171)

ATTACHMENT 8

Gene Poveromo

From: Doug Schworer [dschworer@nc.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 13, 2004 3:35 PM
To: Gene Poveromo
Subject: Sunrise Road CDC Comments

Gene:

Please include these verbatim excerpts with the council package.

Thanks,

Doug Schworer

Public Comments of Community Design Commissioners concerning the Habitat Sunrise Ridge Concept Plan: VERBATIM EXCERPTS

Leaders of the Sunrise Coalition have carefully reviewed a videotape of the September 22, 2004 CDC meeting at which Commissioners commented on Habitat's Sunrise Road Concept Plan.

We thank the Commissioners for their thorough attention to the details of this Plan and to the many concerns expressed by Coalition members during the public comment portion of the proceedings. We wish that all members of the Town Council could have an opportunity to review the full body of the Commissioners' comments, which largely validate the objections our group has been raising all along. It is one thing to hear these concerns expressed by neighbors with a personal interest in the outcome of the Project, it is another thing for these same conclusions to be voiced by a group of impartial, highly qualified community planners--all of whom are strong promoters of the need for more affordable housing in Chapel Hill. Since a full review is probably not feasible, we wish to highlight a number of notable statements by various commissioners, transcribed verbatim from the videotape.

1) Re. The desirability of single family homes:

"I believe that the conflict you're feeling as a development is this concept that uses the Meadowmont [model]. It works well when there is economic sustainability. What Habitat is doing here is giving a "hand up" to people economically disadvantaged. They don't have that wherewithal momentum to make the concept go on its own. The American Dream is to have the single family home, and I think that's what they'd best relate to in the "hand up". It's a contrast of lifestyles--this on-the-street parking and the tight packing of people--and it's going to be a philosophical problem for you, I think".

"...part of the pride of ownership and livability is how well this is going to be maintained. When you have a single family style home everyone knows exactly what their responsibilities are. This is really different with the multi-family style".

2) Re. Density & neighborhood character:

"When we've looked at other neighborhoods that tried to put cluster housing development into an area that had an acre, three acres, many people on the Board felt like it is important to retain that character to a certain extent. It's not an ironclad rule. So I'm thinking that the neighbors have a somewhat valid point

10/14/2004

172

saying that, with the current character of the area, to change it drastically I think is not good policy for the Town as a whole. I'm inclined to say 50-it seems like too many to me. Especially since some of those are going to be in those multi-family units"

3) Stewardship:

"Stewardship in this project is very important. I don't agree with [the previous speaker] who said "Let the buyer beware!". I think the people who will live in these Habitat homes deserve an extra measure of stewardship. I'm concerned about the noise, the water-I don't know about the density, it does seem to be pretty dense to me."

4) Highway noise:

"I think people are going to look carefully at what the noise impact will be to the community itself-the Habitat community. People who are engineers will look at that carefully. I think more important is the noise issue to the adjoining neighborhood. I think whatever this does it cannot increase the noise level to the adjoining neighborhoods."

"I'm concerned that the Town has no noise abatement program under study for the areas along I-40-not just for this project but for any project".

5) Transit:

"I'm concerned with whether there's going to be adequate transit facilities-and I sit on the Transportation Board-but I'm not sure how readily we're going to be able to bring busses in there, and it's about a half mile walk to the nearest facility and probably a mile, mile-and-a-half [actual figure is 2 miles] to the nearest grocery store. So this is going to be a neighborhood that requires cars for transit."

6) Maintenance of common areas:

"In the current design that you've got, I think that you're going to have a big problem with maintenance of the outdoor areas. Now, I love to see open space, and I like that you tried to do that. I think that the way you're doing it, though, is going to be creating a Maintenance Nightmare. I think there's two ways [to go] in a place like this. You can have a management company-as you would in a townhouse unit-that is responsible for these and has the financing to take care of them. If you're counting on the residents to take care of them I think there's going to be problems."

"I'm concerned that Habitat may not have the staff to build, to maintain, and to support neighborhood associations and a 17-acre 50-dwelling facility that has recreation and other amenities...It's not an easy thing to do".

7) Inclusion of neighbors in the planning:

[note: The following comment was made by the Chairwoman after ascertaining that nobody on the Habitat Board or planning committees resides in the Sunrise Road neighborhood] "This is a very important project, not just for Chapel Hill but all over the country. My first concern refers to the Mayor's Committee Guidelines issue about inclusion with adjacent communities. Either because of the size of this project-or the perception of the size-or the methods used to develop the plan, I don't feel that you've been inclusive. I don't think you can have this quality and quantity of citizen comment and complaint and feel that you really have been inclusive. And I certainly think some of these comments merit much closer scrutiny and response, not just by Habitat and by us, but also by the Council."