



OVERVIEW

Prior to submittal of a formal development application, all major development proposals are required to be reviewed while they are still at a "conceptual" stage. In particular, it is the intent of the "Concept Plan" review process that citizens and members of the Community Design Commission have an opportunity to review a site analysis and a conceptual plan in order to evaluate the impact of a major development proposal on the character of the area in which it is proposed to be located. This process is intended to take into consideration the general form of the land before and after development as well as the spatial relationships of the proposed structures, open spaces, landscaped areas, and general access and circulation patterns as they relate to the proposed development and the surrounding area.

BACKGROUND

The Community Design Commission conducted a Concept Plan Review for this potential development on Wednesday, November 20, 2002. The Concept Plan Review was for a proposal to subdivide an existing 0.14-acre lot into two separate lots. The site is presently occupied by a single-family home. The applicant, EmPowerment, Inc., proposes to demolish the existing house and replace it with two new affordable homes on the new lots.

The site is located in the Residential-3 (R-3) zoning district. The site is located in Orange County and is identified as Chapel Hill Township Tax Map 93, Block L, Lot 1. This proposal would require Town Council approval of a Zoning Atlas Amendment and a Special Use Permit.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON CONCEPT PLAN

One citizen spoke on this Concept Plan at the meeting. The issues raised by this citizen at the meeting are as follows:

- The citizen expressed a belief that the lot was not big enough for two different houses.
- The citizen noted that if you look at the setbacks for other homes on Graham Street, this proposal is inconsistent with the rest of the street. Furthermore, the citizen noted a belief that the scale of the proposed homes is inconsistent with the rest of the neighborhood.

- The citizen expressed a belief that this was an example of illegal spot zoning.
- The citizen questioned what type of buyer would want to buy one of these proposed houses, in the middle of a drug zone. The citizen was particularly concerned that the proposed homes would not be suitable for a family with young children.
- The citizen concluded by expressing the belief that this proposal would not preserve and protect the character of the existing neighborhood.

CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW

The Community Design Commission reviewed the conceptual development plan submittal and discussed the following topics:

1. Several Commission members contemplated whether or not this would be an example of illegal spot zoning.
2. Several Commission members noted that this property has frontage on three different streets; and therefore, the proposed homes should be architecturally designed to look attractive on all facades.
3. A Commission member encouraged the applicant to consider using windows and building materials that relate to other homes in the neighborhood.
4. One Commission member commented that it was difficult to understand the context of this proposal, and that an area map showing the location and footprints of other neighborhood homes would be helpful.
5. A Commission member expressed concern that the proposed floorplans would not be suitable for individuals with disabilities.
6. One Commission member noted that the unique location of the lot would make it difficult for homeowners to dry their laundry outside.
7. One Commission member inquired as to whether or not others may suffer because redevelopment of this site pushes drug activities to other locations in Town.

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