



TOWN OF CARRBORO

PLANNING BOARD

301 West Main Street, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2008

MEMBERS	Guests	STAFF
Matthew Barton	Phil Post	Patricia McGuire
Rich Bell	Omar Zinn	Thelma Paylor
James Carnahan	Aldermen Lavelle, Coleman	Marty Roupe
David Clinton	Haven-O'Donnell and Gist	Adena Messinger
Sharon Cook	Mortimer Alzona, George Daniel	James Thomas
Debra Fritz	Michael Fenton, Michael Krasnov	Randy Dodd
Heidi Paulsen	Greg Liebe, Vivian Olkin	
Susan Poulton	Mari Weiss, Russ Werner	
Rose Warner	Imran Shah, Frank Strohle	
	Ron Weber	

Absent/Excused: Damon Seils

I. JOINT REVIEW ITEMS

A) Claremont II AIS Conditional Use Permit Application (AC, PB, TAB, EAB, ESC); James Thomas, Planner/Zoning Development Specialist summarized the project as follows: Tract size = R-20 zoning district (24.79 acres); R-15 zoning district (13.35 acres). Ninety-six dwelling units (69 single-family residences) and 27 townhomes in four buildings, 16 of which are to be affordable, are proposed. The maximum permissible density allowed is 113 units. The development includes a connection to Colfax Drive (Wexford, Phase VI) and stub-outs to the property to the east and west, per Section 15-214 of the LUO. The applicant is wishing not to build a stubout to the UNC property at this location. Thomas described the street network and greenway improvements, including the proposed pedestrian walkway beneath the Homestead Road bridge over Bolin Creek. Thomas described impacts to specimen trees, screening and shading, noting that the parking spaces behind the townhouses includes 88 percent shading (the LUO requires 20 percent).

Open space will total 39.92% of the site, a slight reduction due to affordable units that are provided. Recreation amenities from Phase I, II, and III of Claremont are being used to meet the recreation requirements for these two phases, as well as a playfield is being provided beneath the existing Duke Power easement. Thomas summarized the site plan's stormwater management components and highlighted recommendations #11 and 12, which are outstanding comments from the town engineer, Sungate. Staff is recommending that these two outstanding conditions be dealt with at the construction plan approval stage. Thomas noted that the applicant was present and either could respond to questions (Owner Omar Zinn and Engineer Phil Post).

Carnahan invited advisory board members to ask questions of staff and the applicant and noted for citizens in attendance who are not members of advisory boards that they would have a chance to offer comments, subject to a time limit of 3 minutes per speaker. Questions and responses are summarized

below: Where grading is proposed along the streets, especially along 17, 16, 15, 14, and the opposite side, is the street set down about 4 or 5 ft from the lots on the other side? (Yes.) And their driveways are going to come up on those properties? (That is true.) Is it the intent of the developer to take away that bank when they are developing for the house? (Where the drive way cut, you can see where the curb cuts are from the driveways; but when you are nearing the driveway curb cut, you have to take away more soil to get the driveway in.) Suppose a kid is on a little bicycle and goes riding down into the street, you are not going to see him going down to the street. (There is a little bit of cut and they are 3:1 slopes; which are eminently mobile and considered to be a little of a steep front yard, but not excessively steep. The driveway will be a little flatter and there is a little extra grading for the drive that doesn't show up here. This is simply the 3:1 slopes that come off the street. They try to keep the driveways around 15% and it is a little flatter than 3:1. The Town Ordinance and the Town engineer states that the streets can be no steeper than 8 per cent; so if the land is 10 per cent or 11 per cent, you have to do this kind of grading to maintain the street at 8 per cent. Three changes to the site plan were offered: 1) change the grade on switchback or eliminate the switchback and make it a smooth ramp; 2) widen space underneath bridge so that it is a useable 10 ft width minimum, and 3) the width of the greenway easement is currently depicted on the plan as 15 ft and should be 30 ft easement to accommodate appropriate clearing and drainage associated with a 10-ft trail. In relation to the alternative design standards referenced in Attachment C, does the project meet the town's street standards? (Yes, per the LUO/text amendment approved in 2007). Are there any advantages/disadvantages to the town? (Grading requirement is less when the NCDOT sight distance method is used.) Is there an issue with maintenance, cost, et cetera? (No, the effect is related to sight distance, not maintenance, cost, grading). Per the traffic estimate of 58 trips on Colfax, which only addresses trips from these 96 units, where will the cars from the rest of the town north of this development go? (This study only estimates the traffic from the new development).

Post offered additional information, noted that the site development was limiting impacts to land clearing of existing trees to about 39 specimen trees. Post offered a few comments, explaining applicant's interest in avoiding street stub outs to the Carolina North property, communications with UNC; describing that tree saves result from leaving the street stub outs as they are; agreeing that the recommended conditions about storm water is administrative – related to delineation of easements for access/maintenance. Finally, Post offered that some changes under the bridge would be needed to make the trail wider, and explained the slopes on the point where the trail ties in to the existing trail at Claremont. There is an OWASA easement and "DOT" control, etc. going on in that area.

Zinn summarized that this project follows from approval of the Claremont Phase I project about three years ago. He grew up in Calvander and he passes this property every day. It has been a journey to get here and having been married to the Town of Carrboro for some time, the Ordinance does dictate where they have come to. Everything in Carrboro is done on the front end, making it difficult and costly to continue to change and modify the plans. The applicant is sticking to the ordinance, is not utilizing the maximum density, though 16 affordable units are provided at a cost of about \$110,000 per unit. It has been 2.5 years to get to this point and he is very pleased to finally get here and he feels they have a wonderful project.

Advisory board questions continued. Why is the walkway proposed under the bridge? (Post noted trail will be designed to accept high water - they recognize it and it is in the flood plain. Staff and DOT encouraged them to not have a trail across the road. High use is not expected during storm events that will result in high water. This will meet up with trails that are built to the north.) What is being done about including business activities – coffee shop that will provide business taxes? (The tract is zoned residential and not commercial.) What is being done about additional traffic on already congested

Homestead Road? (What would you suggest?) Purchasing land along Homestead Road and increasing r/w. (This is not economically sustainable. Monthly land-holding costs total \$10,000; current expense has been ongoing for about 30 months). Who will pay for maintenance of bio-retention areas? (Homeowners will pay \$225.00/per homeowner per quarter and they cover bio-retention and other activities for joint areas of development. Affordable homeowners pay the same amount.) How has the PB concept plan comment for the incorporation of high performance buildings and strategies been addressed? (Zinn noted that comments were received previous week. All homes in this project (as in Claremont Phase I) will meet GBI standards and Energy Star, and other high performance standards). Are townhouses or condos proposed? (Townhomes). Two part question: How will kids walk over to the high school? (Applicant has offered to make a payment in lieu of building trail along west side of Bolin Creek down to the Carolina North site, so that funds can be used to build a bridge across the creek that would link up with a trail on the east side of the creek. The Town appears to be receptive to this idea. UNC's plan is to bring a major road over on the east side of the creek.) What kind of pedestrian amenities are planned for that Claremont intersection at Homestead Road because it is critical to our goals of walkability/bikeability? (Sidewalks are planned along Homestead and within the development. Applicant has met with DOT at Town Hall and the NCDOT has indicated that they don't want marked crosswalks or signage or anything at present, but sees those as improvements that might be brought on line in the future.)

Citizens also offered comments, including: Michael Fenton: lives in Wexford at edge of connection to Colfax. New street will result in high-speed connection from Homestead to the neighborhoods and folks will see a lot of traffic, unless make this a bikeway and path like Cobblestone. Suggest bike/walkway instead of through connection for traffic. Michael Krasnov: resident of Wexford: Echoes previous speaker. Also, homeowners association conducted survey – 87 percent are against connection unless limited/constrained like Cobblestone or Autumn Drive. Suggested alternative design for southern portion of Claremont; concerned about lack of buffer, headlights from traffic on road behind townhomes. Questions: Why a road can be located closer to a house than a house can be located to a street (street is approximately 27 feet from his home. Frank Strohle: likes keeping green area rather than a street, just north of connection to Wexford. Traffic will exceed that estimated. People will come from two neighborhoods away to use this connection. Concerned about safety for children and suggests connection like Autumn Drive. (Wexford resident) expressed concern about connector. Recalls that earlier plan called for connection all the way through, feels will direct traffic through windy roads as a shortcut to downtown Carrboro. Mortimer Alzona: echoes previous speakers. Biggest concern is connecting road. Came from Chicago and loves the weather in North Carolina. People, kids are outside in February, March playing outside. Putting the connector risks the safety of children in the neighborhood, Cates Farm, Cobblestone, and Williams Woods. Russ Weiner: concerned with level of safety after streets are opened up and traffic is redirected from Homestead; believes eliminating the connection for vehicles and making a connection for bikes/walking would result in a superior plan. The Claremont discussion ended at 8:30 PM.

B) Veridia Pre-CUP Submittal, Concept Plan Review (AC, PB, TAB, EAB, ESC) – Giles Blunden described the concept for this project, which involves redeveloping an existing trailer park, incorporating an adjacent lot to meet the required open space. The project includes a number of existing non-conformities, including density of units and replacement/some upgrading of the units is possible so long as they don't increase the non-conformities. Town staff suggested going through the CUP process to redevelop the property. Tripp Overholt has been involved in sustainable building and the proposal is for each house to have underground cisterns to provide water for toilet flushing. OWASA water use is expected to reduce by approximately 40%. The plan calls for 39 (1,350 sq. ft, three bedroom

condominiums) built to Energy Star with LEED standards; 18 homes will have solar hot water. A 100 KW grid tied photovoltaic array mounted atop carports will generate enough electricity to offset most of the electrical demand of the 39 homes. The site is located within walking distance of Carrboro Plaza, the McDougle schools, Carrboro Library; a CHT bus stop is located on the west side of Old Fayetteville Road at the project entrance. Questions from the audience were offered: What is the price range? (The price range is expected to be \$289,000; research on average home prices in the vicinity found 3,200 square feet of living space and \$700,000). Is the property currently vacant? (Functional trailer park. Tripp has owned the park for two years with a 75 percent turnover rate and residents/tenants leave on their own volition every two years. There are about eight people that stay there for whatever reason, who will need to relocate. They will all get about six months notice). Will there be any connectivity to the east or along the back of the neighborhood to the school site? (DOT is proposing a sidewalk along Old Fayetteville Road. Trip has not spoken with adjacent property owners, but will look into other walkable access). Has NC DOT approved two openings onto Old Fayetteville Road? (They have not, but there are two lots and two driveways would be expected to serve those two lots). What is big building in the front? (An existing house that will be redeveloped as a Common Area House). Who is paying for the sidewalk and how is it being put in? (Messinger replied that it is a TIP project, it is in the state TIP already; but not fully funded. They are in the planning stage right now, but funding for construction has not been programmed). Joint Review ended at 9:09 PM.

II. INTRODUCTIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA. There were none.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. November 21, 2008 – Carnahan noted three corrections. Clinton moved and Poulton seconded to approve the minutes, subject to changes from further review of discussion of bylaws and text amendment on limits for board chairs. Ayes (8) Barton, Bell, Carnahan, Clinton, Cook, Fritz, Poulton and Warner; NOES (0); Absent/Excused (1) Seils; Abstentions (1) Paulsen (due to absence).

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A) Recommendation on Colleton Crossing CUP Application – Carnahan invited speakers to make their comments.

Imran Shah noted that he lived at 8405 Sterling Bridge Road in the Highlands Neighborhood; which is a wonderful family development. He mentioned specific concerns about the density of the development, environmental impact (loss of pristine habit and conservation area, water quality degradation); traffic increase from Colleton and diversion of trips from Fox Meadow, streets in Highlands not meeting town standards, safety to children walking to/from bus stops, other pedestrians in neighborhood. Alternatives – reduce density of development; connect via greenway/bike and pedestrian paths.

Mari Weiss, resident of the Highlands, submitted a two page document and summarized her letter and showed slides illustrating her comments. Vivian Olkin, resident of the Highlands, noted that she bought her house in 1984. Developers of community still live there. Ms. Olkin noted that there weren't any long range plans to connect the neighborhood; though no community house or a swimming pool, a great community. Neighborhood annexed and there was 100 percent opposition; she implores folks to listen to concerns. Likes to walk and likes not having to think about cars. Alena Callimanis stated that there are issues with traffic in both neighborhoods to which Colleton will connect and that neither can support additional traffic. Callimanis showed video of walking through from Highlands, noted the topography/steepness. There is no safe place to put a road without infrastructure improvement; which is a real safety issue to build connector roads.

Ron Weber – one of the original developers of the Highlands and resident of the Highlands. When designed, it was a country neighborhood and did not envision such an explosion of growth; knows there are environmental challenges. Carolina Commons will probably come into fold into the Highlands and the additional traffic can probably be managed; understands connectivity for foot and bike traffic. Opening up the Highlands to the flow of people living in Fox Meadow, they are all jockeying not to get this extra traffic. The people from the back end will jump in with Colleton and be pouring through our neighborhood. Pictures are an accurate depiction to show how people in the Highlands really live, meandering through the neighborhood. Maybe they can't have that forever, feels it is a safety risk to funnel traffic through the narrow street. It will be detrimental - allowing the Colleton traffic to come through is an accommodation of the developer, not the common good, not public safety.

Clarifying questions: Is all the development proposed for the west side of Bolin Creek in the Carolina Commons project? No. Lots are proposed in the northeastern corner. The Board discussed the schedule for making its recommendation, requested copies of the flood study and traffic study, and letters that have been received. Matthew moved for a 12/18 meeting and Warner seconded.

Ayes (8) Barton, Bell, Carnahan, Cook, Fritz, Poulton, Paulsen and Warner; NOES (0); Absent/Excused (1) Seils; Abstentions (1) Clinton

The topic of the meeting will be to complete recommendations on the Colleton Crossing CUP application. Staff is to provide background information on street connectivity for next meeting. The Planning Board will discuss the start time and agenda for the January meeting on December 18th.

B) January Joint Review Meeting – The third Thursday of the month is January 15, 2009 and there is a possible Joint Review item. Recommendations on Claremont must be in to the Board of Aldermen by **January 27th**. Colleton comments should be in to the Board of Aldermen by **January 27th** as well. The Zinns will not be in town on January 15th.

V. **ADJOURNMENT** – Clinton moved for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:03 PM.