

**MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD OF THE
TOWN OF STALLINGS, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Planning Board of the Town of Stallings met for its regularly scheduled meeting via Zoom on December 15, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Those present were: Chairman Jack Hudson, Vice Chairman Rocky Crenshaw; Planning Board Members Robert Koehler, Allen Taylor, David Barnes, Misti Craver, Jacqueline Wilson, Shawna Steele, and Laurie Wojtowicz

Staff present were: Planning and Zoning Administrator Lynne Hair and Planning Technician Matthew West

Call to order and recognition of quorum

Vice Chairman Crenshaw recognizes a quorum and calls the meeting to order. Chairman Hudson is attempting to join, but is having technical issues. Ms. Hair notes that if Chairman Hudson is not able to attend, the first alternate Planning Board Member would be allowed to vote; in this case that alternate would be Ms. Steele. Ms. Hair states that there will be a public comment section, and that the procedure will be to leave the name of the commenter in the Zoom chat and Mr. West will call in order that names are received. The meeting was commenced at 7:10 p.m.

1. Agenda and Minutes Approval

Vice Chairman Crenshaw entertains a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. The motion to approve was made by Mr. Koehler, seconded by Ms. Steele, and approved unanimously.

Ms. Craver asked if minutes would also be approved. Ms. Hair responded that because the minutes were not included in the packet, they cannot be approved until the next meeting, when they would be included.

2. DA19.01.06/DA19.11.02

- a. Development Agreement for the Stinson Farms Development; a 72.8 acre mixed use development that includes 384 Multi Family units, 121 Townhomes 32 Single Family houses, and 13.3 acres of commercial use on property located on the northeast corner of Idlewild Road and I-485.

Ms. Hair begins by presenting information on the project. She emphasizes that there are two Development Agreements (DAs) under consideration, but that they must be approved or denied together. She continues by describing the history of the subcommittee's initial review of the development. With each subcommittee review, densities of the project were lowered, and the subcommittee emphasized that they would like to see better integration between the commercial and residential aspects of the project. Ms. Hair concludes her

presentation by summarizing the highlights of the final DA that was voted by the subcommittee to be moved to the Planning Board with NO RECOMMENDATION.

At this point Chairman Hudson is able to connect, and Vice Chairman Crenshaw makes a motion that Chairman Hudson preside over the remainder of the meeting. The vote is unanimous.

Chairman Hudson invites the applicant to make their presentation on the proposed development.

John Carmichael with D.R. Horton begins the applicant's presentation by emphasizing that D.R. Horton will be responsible for the whole project, for both DAs under consideration.

Elam Hall with D.R. Horton adds the history of D.R. Horton, including information such as they are the largest builder in the country and have several projects in the Charlotte, NC area.

Mr. Carmichael takes over the presentation again, now describing the history of the land and the project. He reiterates all the information that Ms. Hair had presented. He does make special note that all uses in the project are by-right and satisfy the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), and that in the view of D.R. Horton, these are the regulations they are required to meet. He then summarizes the voluntary revisions that they have made based on staff and subcommittee recommendations:

100' buffer along Shannamara, down to 70' in places with a fence

Replaced townhomes next to Shannamara with Single Family Residential

Reduced apartment density

Added lighting notes and details

Limited the commercial uses

No more than 1 convenience store with gas pumps and 3 fast food businesses

Added commercial component to all any by-right use

Landscape buffer added between the proposed Single Family Detached homes and the commercial use

Added amenities for the Single Family Detached and Single Family Attached homes

Added a knee wall along the Idlewild Road street frontage of the commercial component

Nick Bushan with Design Resource Group now takes over the presentation of the engineering history. He notes that a wetland consultant was brought in early in the process, who identified an intermittent stream. Mr. Bushan emphasizes that they have worked around this environmental feature by including the stream buffer into their proposed Tree Save area. He continues by explaining the coordination with the North Carolina

Department of Transportation (NCDOT) on the improvements to Idlewild Road that are required in the DAs. He also describes the interior road network features of the site, including the multi-use greenway and sidewalk network, and traffic calming features such as a landmark roundabout and speed table within the residential areas. Next he addressed parking. He emphasizes that parking will be all surface parking that includes parallel on-street parking, angled on-street parking, parking lots for the apartments, and alleyways for the townhomes. He continues by explaining that there is significant landscaping proposed, including numerous pocket parks connected by sidewalks. There is a clubhouse with a pool to be included. To reduce the impacts of the development to the adjacent Shannamara neighborhood, the maximum possible trees will be preserved on the border.

Mr. Carmichael takes over the presentation at this point again. He indicates that they will provide roughly five (5) percent more open space and tree save area than is required by the Stallings UDO. He once again emphasizes that they are meeting all UDO requirements. He presents Article 9 of the UDO that references architectural standards.

Mr. Bushan presents street level renderings of the site, and describes how it meets the UDO requirements. He states that the developer understands that the site is a gateway to Stallings, and have designed the commercial frontage to not only meet the UDO requirements, but to provide extra features to provide a suitable landmark for the town.

Andrew Wiley with DR Horton further emphasizes the goal of a walkable community that will serve as a “crown jewel” for Stallings.

David McCord with D.R. Horton now takes over presentation, and discusses the architectural standards for the project. He emphasizes that their design is based on UDO requirements and similar projects in Stallings that have already been approved.

Mr. Hall then adds that their main goal with the architectural style is to create one cohesive community. He describes the interior design as well.

Mr. Carmichael completes the presentation by indicating that they will make improvements to Idlewild Road ahead of the NCDOT project that is proposed, but it is unclear when the NCDOT project will even happen. He finishes by stating that they feel their project meets the intent and definition of the UDO, and that the Idlewild Small Area Plan and the Mixed Use 2 districts both concede that the area is auto-dependent.

At this point, Chairman Hudson opens for questions from the board. He noted that the questions should first be focused to the applicant and would allow questions of staff once all questions to the applicant are satisfied.

Mr. Taylor asks what the price point for the units will be.

Mac McCarly steps in to caution that price is not a land use issue, and that it is not the planning board’s business to ask.

Chairman Hudson then asks what the square footage of each units will be.

Mr. McCord answers that the townhomes will be between 1600-1700 square feet; the single family homes will be 2400-3600 square feet on 8000 square foot lots

Chairman Hudson asks what the apartment square footage will be.

Mr. Hall answers that on average the apartments will be 1000 square feet. The square footage depends on the configuration of the apartment, ranging from 1 to 3 bedroom apartments.

Mr. Taylor inquires about the quality of construction.

Mr. Hall answers that the apartments will have stainless steel appliances, granite counters, painted wood cabinets, and a vinyl flooring that has the appearance of wood. He adds that every unit would have a walk-in closet.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks for the applicant to describe the improvements proposed to Idlewild Road.

Mr. Carmichael answers that the improvements will need to be made due to the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) that was done.

Wade Robinson with the developer states that there will need to be significant improvements on Idlewild Road.

Ms. Wojtowicz expresses concerns about the gas station and fast food uses. She states that the subcommittee had asked for the commercial uses to be incorporated into the site, which she takes to mean office space and less "hard" commercial uses. She is concerned that there appears to be room for 7 stores, which seems like a lot of space to her. She is concerned that the site is too densely developed. She asks where do residents in the apartments park.

Mr. Carmichael responds that there is surface parking.

Mr. Bushan adds that they have calculated 1.7-1.8 parking spots for the apartments, divided between parallel on-street parking, angled on-street parking, and dedicated parking lots.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks if this is shown on the concept plans.

Mr. Bushan shows on the concept plans where each of the parking types are located.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks if they referenced the UDO for the parking requirements.

Mr. Bushan confirms that they meet the UDO requirements.

Ms. Wojtowicz continues to express concern that this development does not appear to meet the definition of an activity center. She says that pocket parks do not count as places of activity. She notes that there is a clubhouse and pool, but that these features are not big enough to count.

Mr. Carmichael responds by reminding of the greenway that is integrated into the site. He also states that the activity center wording is from the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).

Ms. Wojtowicz reiterates that this site does not meet the definition of an activity center to her.

Mr. Carmichael responds that the CLUP does not specify what an activity needs to be. He argues that the commercial uses could be considered a type of activity, but that Lynne would have a better answer.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks if the subcommittee who reviewed this plan asked for the commercial to be in the interior, rather than just out front.

Ms. Wilson adds that the committee did state that they wanted the commercial more integrated, including considering apartments above the commercial. She stated that it appears that the proposal is just straight commercial.

Ms. Wojtowicz again states that she has many issues with the project. She then asks for the Single Family Detached acreage size.

Mr. Bushan responds that the lots will be sixty (60) feet wide, with an area of 6000 square feet.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks if the house sizes will be smaller on such small lots.

Chairman Hudson recalls that the applicants had indicated the houses would be 2400-3600 square feet.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks if the outdoor eating area mentioned would be intended for residents, or anyone coming from outside the community.

Mr. Hall answers that they intend it for both. They hope to have interactions between residents and those coming to the commercial areas from outside the community in the outdoor eating area. He adds that this was a suggestion from town staff for them to add.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks again about the improvements to Idlewild. She expressed concern that simply widening the road does not seem like much of an improvement if the light still exists.

Mr. Carmichael responds that the light will be adjusted in some fashion. He added that turn lanes will be added to mitigate extra traffic per the TIA that has been reviewed by town staff and NCDOT.

Mr. Hall adds that the light would be improved.

Ms. Wojtowicz indicates that NCDOT will likely not make their improvements until 2025. She asks when the improvements to the road will happen in relation to the construction of the buildings.

Mr. Hall answers that the Idlewild Road improvements will happen in line with the construction of the entire site. He states that the traffic improvements are tied to the TIA, so will need to be done before their project adds any new traffic.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks for further clarification on the timeline.

Mr. Hall responds that the road improvements will happen at the same time as onsite construction.

Ms. Wojtowicz states that this should be written in the DA.

Mr. Carmichael adds that the TIA is mentioned in the DA.

Ms. Wojtowicz reiterates that if the road improvements are to be done simultaneously, that should be written in the DA.

Ms. Craver asks if D.R. Horton has developed any other projects that have Single Family Detached homes facing townhomes.

Mr. McCord responds by saying that this is not an uncommon configuration.

Ms. Craver adds that she wonders about the desirability of this layout.

Mr. McCord states that because the architectural styles are integrated between the different uses, the desirability is not lowered by the configuration.

Ms. Craver asks if the single family detached homes will be slab built.

Mr. McCord responds by stating that there is no requirement for the houses not to be. He adds that the stone veneer wrap required in the DA on the bottom of the houses simulates a slab.

Ms. Craver adds that she believes this requirement is written in the UDO.

Ms. Hair confirms that it is written in the UDO that new homes must have elevated slabs to emulate crawlspace, and that the slab must be elevated two (2) feet above the sidewalk. She adds that the brick veneer wrap is conditioned on the ordinance.

Mr. McCord states that they intend to follow those UDO requirements.

Mr. Bushan confirms that they will meet the UDO requirements.

Ms. Craver asks if apartments were considered over any retail commercial to create a more integrated plan.

Mr. Robinson responds that they spent a long time with the subcommittee on that request. He informs that they have developed projects like that in the past, but that in this case it is impractical. He adds that they also considered pulling retail commercial off of the Idlewild Road frontage, but that it was also not feasible. He finishes by stating that the plan they are presenting complies with UDO requirements.

Ms. Wilson inquired as to the type of commercial uses envisioned.

Mr. Wiley answered that the uses could range from office space or retail to day cares. He emphasizes that they have not begun dialing in on what uses they would want to come because the commercial climate is currently so volatile. He states that they will begin seriously planning for the commercial types once the plans have been approved.

Mr. Robinson adds that any commercial use will comply with the UDO.

Ms. Steele adds that they have made similar compromises when discussing the Atrium Hospital project.

Vice Chairman Crenshaw thanks the subcommittee for their due diligence in reviewing this project. He asks to confirm that the improvements to Idlewild Road include a road widening to 4 lanes.

Chairman Hudson confirms that this was what the applicants have claimed.

Ms. Craver states that she is concerned that there is not enough information provided on the commercial out-parcels, and that they are not integrated enough.

Chairman Hudson calls for questions for staff.

Ms. Wilson asks about the status of a project across the street from the one under consideration.

Ms. Hair responds that the apartment project is moving forward, but other projects in the area are delayed due to sewer capacity, and that it will likely be 18 months until they are started.

Ms. Wilson states that she is concerned that the stoplight will be overwhelmed. She is also concerned that there is commercial space elsewhere in the town, and that this project may take years to fill out. She also reflected other board member's concerns that the commercial is not integrated enough with the site.

Ms. Wojtowicz adds that it is not urban enough for an urban center.

Ms. Steele inquires about the superstreet concept that NCDOT was planning to implement on Idlewild. She understands that the town has approved the project, but that it is her understanding that NCDOT does not have the funding for the project.

Ms. Hair indicates that the focus of this project was on signaling and access to the site. She recalls that Stevens Mill Road will become a superstreet. She thinks the interstate [I-485] may get changed, but is not up to date on that project because the interstate is not even in Union County, let alone Stallings.

Ms. Steele mentions a round-a-bout that is in Matthews. She expresses concern that the super street concept would be a business killer, while the developer's proposal would prevent this fate. The project would also add population to the area with the residential

development to help businesses. She was initially against the commercial in the front, but upon further consideration, thinks that it will limit traffic into the residential component of the project. She also expresses concern that the buffer along the Shannamara neighborhood border is larger than any other approved in the Town, and inquires as to what the justification was for the larger buffer.

Ms. Hair responds that the intensity of the development next to the existing Single Family Detached neighborhood necessitated a larger buffer. Additionally, the Idlewild Small Area Plan had the express goal of protecting existing residential areas.

Ms. Steele continues to express concern that it does not seem fair that this community has a larger buffer than other communities, and that the buffer requirement should be equal throughout the town.

Vice Chairman Crenshaw echoes this sentiment.

Ms. Wilson adds she has a smaller buffer at her home, and she can see through it to townhomes, and that she would personally prefer a larger buffer.

Ms. Craver asks if this larger buffer could become the new town standard.

Ms. Wilson states that she would like it to be considered.

Ms. Steele is unsatisfied, because then older neighborhoods might be seen as inferior with small buffers. She also expresses a desire to prevent NCDOT from implementing the superstreet concept in Stallings.

Ms. Wojtowicz asks why the subcommittee passed on the development with no recommendation.

Ms. Hair states as an opinion that the subcommittee did not agree to the density or the commercial on the front.

Ms. Wojtowicz states that she would like to hear more specifics.

John Martin, one of the council members on the subcommittee, states that the subcommittee felt there were too many controversial elements that the public would be opposed to. He says that he personally did not want to stop the developer while they still have a chance to negotiate. The no recommendation was to keep the conversation going.

Chairman Hudson then opens the meeting to public comments.

There were no requests for public comments left in the Zoom chat.

Chairman Hudson calls for any public comments. There are no other public comments requested.

Chairman Hudson entertains motions to either approve or deny DA19.01.06 and DA19.11.02. He reiterates that the DAs must be voted on together.

Ms. Craver makes a motion to deny the application

The motion is seconded by Mr. Koehler

Chairman Hudson calls for a vote:

Vice Chairman Crenshaw: Accept

Ms. Wilson: Accept

Ms. Craver: Accept

Mr. Koehler: Accept

Mr. Taylor: Accept

Mr. Barnes: Abstain

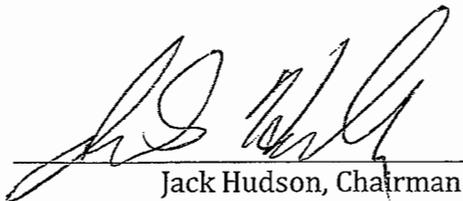
Chairman Hudson recognizes that a majority have accepted the motion to deny DA19.01.06 and DA19.11.02.

Chairman Hudson asks if there is any more business to attend tonight.

Ms. Hair indicates there is nothing more on the agenda.

Chairman Hudson entertains motions to adjourn.

Ms. Wilson makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Craver, and adjourned unanimously at 9:00 p.m.



Jack Hudson, Chairman



Matthew West, Planning Technician