June 13, 2019
Second Neighborhood Meeting Minutes for
Searstone Rezoning Case 19-REZ-05
Wednesday, June 13, 2019
6:30 PM: Searstone Ballroom

Introduction by Tucker McKenzie (TM) with WithersRavenel:
  • Second meeting of the rezoning process; presented the concept that was submitted to the town for review;
  • Since the first meeting, Lot 37 has been incorporated into the request;
  • Maintaining the same building heights and number of units that have been approved previously; only changing the configuration of the buildings
  • Reason for rezoning is because the previous zoning was too restrictive to meet the needs of the project
  • Explained that the layout is better functioning and safer; removing one existing road that serves primarily as service access between the healthcare building and Winston
  • The central building will be a single story but the façade will appear to be two stories high

Introduced team:
  • Tucker McKenzie, WithersRavenel
  • Tony Teague, Greenbrier
  • John Cooke, Council for the applicant
  • Rose Tanksley, WithersRavenel

Questions

NEIGHBOR: What will the new building become? Why remove the Conservatory?
Applicant Response: New building will be integrated as part of the CCRC community. No additional units will be added. Conservatory was part of the original vision but does not fit the current development model.

NEIGHBOR: What was Mr. Sears reaction to the proposed removal of the conservatory?
Applicant Response: The conservatory was not financially feasible; that type of financial responsibility is usually spent on the front end of projects.

NEIGHBOR: We live behind Searstone; knew Bill Sears for 16 years; everything that has been told to us has been changed; promised upscale development around us; everything we were promised has gone away; Dean and Deluca, high end bookstore, doctor’s offices; ended up with Goodyear, fast-food restaurants, etc.
Applicant Response - TONY TEAGUE (TT): Samaritan [Housing Foundation, Inc.] only has control over what is shown; we do not have any control what happens on the outparcels/north of the pond; In 6 years the development was 100% full; design parameters have changed; trying to meet the market demands; our residents want connectivity so the
new building has been designed to connect apartments to the mix of amenities at the center; we're not increasing the quantity of units, only the arrangement of the buildings.

TM: We’ve heard comments that commitments have not been kept; we are working on keeping commitments by preserving the greenspace that was previously provided, but in a different location.

NEIGHBOR: We bought into it 17 years ago. We didn't fight it. It's changed and it's not right.

DEBRA GRANNAN (ToC): Zoning conditions cannot specify a business name. A verbal promise is not enforceable. It is important the town emphasize the legal process with a rezoning. Early version of the conservatory plan may have cost millions of dollars to construct. The Conservatory was also described by Mr. Sears to be something that would have a regional draw which may have presented traffic and parking concerns. Staff wanted the plan to provide residents with amenities that served their community.

Resident of Searstone: Resident since 2016, stated that he was a friend of Mr. Sears and was familiar with his dream. Phase 1 was scaled back because funding was not available; Healthcare and retail sold off because of funding needs; residents would prefer different retail too. Residents do not want conservatory; Davis Drive has bad traffic; the development is not set up to be a regional draw; wants to see the concept suited to the needs of the residents who live there; will be more attractive for them and the neighbors.

NEIGHBOR: We get an incredible amount of runoff; show me the parking; channel of water - basically a river between the properties; have asked to redo the berm.

Applicant Response TM: All impervious is going to stormwater devices; surface drainage is piped to the SCMs; we're not changing the drainage patterns at the duplexes/cottages; meeting and exceeding the stormwater requirement above the standard; design intent is to slow the flow, not to treat, but current regulations are to upgrade and treat; dry ponds are notorious for mosquitoes; during rainfall events the water turns over in wet ponds and therefore fewer mosquito problems.

NEIGHBOR: We should hope for more stormwater events. How does [the resident] feel about mosquitoes when he's out for a stroll? I'm sure he's concerned.

Applicants Response RH: architects and engineers have been working intensively; looked at this and explained the arrangement.

NEIGHBOR: Is the center building two stories?
Response:

• TM: The structure may appear to be two stories tall, but is only a single floor with a high ceiling.
• TT: Making the architecture a signature piece / add character to make the central common space nice; will look like three buildings rather than a single building; central space lower than the units to the sides to articulate the architecture; from the front of the building, you can see the trees behind.

NEIGHBOR: Are you affecting the grades that will force water off of the property?
Response TM: Walker Stone Drive elevation is not changing near the northeast end; all storm will be directed to the ponds.
NEIGHBOR: Is all stormwater is directed to the back [of the property]?
Response: We're not changing the drainage patterns of what has already been developed.

NEIGHBOR: This was something that was supposed to be good for us.
Applicant Response TM: We've heard these concerns and are working to honor commitments; have been on this project since 2011.

NEIGHBOR: We were told it would be built out in 3-4 years; bothers [me] because the town is allowing the buffer to be removed; concerned this will increase the mosquito breeding area; could re-ditch it; BS showed up with his tractor and dug it out; the appearance is up to you guys.

NEIGHBOR: Surprised more people didn’t show up; Neighbors might be exhausted.
Debra Grannan: I’ve spoken with one of the adjacent property owners who has expressed concerns about runoff and that the cottages were built at a higher elevation than anticipated. Our staff has visited the site.

NEIGHBOR: Are ponds flowing into the creek? Will it affect the creek?
Response: Yes, the pond will use the same outlet it uses now; most events will be attenuated; more water will be released in larger stormwater events.

NEIGHBOR: Washing away yards; backyard is sand because of runoff;

NEIGHBOR: You're not changing the buffers?
Response TM: No, the site work is all internal; Walker Stone Drive is already cleared. The buffers will remain.

NEIGHBOR: When are you submitting?
Response: Tomorrow, we wanted to listen to community feedback first.

NEIGHBOR: I do not see how this will have any negative effect on property values; wet pond is less susceptible to mosquitos; will meet 25-year stormwater requirements.
Response: Development must meet town standards and zoning conditions.

NEIGHBOR: What about fountains?
Response TM: Not a good idea in ponds less than 7’ deep; when they are too shallow they pull sediment up from the bottom.

End of meeting