



**Harding Avenue Development Community Meeting
June 5, 2008 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Harding Avenue Elementary**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Community Housing Partners (CHP) staff
Town of Blacksburg Housing and Neighborhood Services staff
Montgomery County Planning Department
John Neel, Gay and Neel, Inc.
30-40 community members

NOTES FROM JUNE 5th COMMUNITY MEETING:

COMMUNITY COMMENTS / CONCERNS

1) Sewer Connection

- The pumping station in Windsor Hills that flows to Patrick Henry is already overloaded. Sewer pump is high maintenance/high cost and not green.

2) Traffic/Road Concerns/Safety

- Development will cause an increase in traffic near existing neighborhoods
- Road is not safe. More homes/people will make this worse.
- No bike lanes, lots of blind spots, no sidewalks
- Concern about housing types, facilities (daycare) and how that would change neighborhood character, traffic, safety, speed, blind spots.
- People do not walk in this area; therefore the walkability of the neighborhood will not decrease the potential for more traffic.
- Safety/health goes further than environmental sustainability concerns. Safety of roads/pedestrians and crossing Harding.
- Need to address safety during the planning phase, do not wait too long.
- Traffic Study was conducted a few weeks ago, current data supports existing roads.
- Concern that Traffic study needs to be done when students are here to accurately reflect traffic patterns.

3) Expansion of development further into County

- What prevents more development from occurring? Why/How far is the expansion?
- What will happen to nearby area in 5 years, 10 years, and 15 years? Will it be a domino effect? (ex. Maple Ridge)
- This would be a Voluntary Boundary Adjustment – not annexation. This adjustment is not more than this project. There are no specific plans to expand further than the project site.
- There is no aggressive plan to expand by the town
- Urban expansion areas exist, but are not committed
- Nothing happens without all parties and community involvement
- # of Units will be proffered upfront. No expansion into green spaces on-site. Construction done in phases.

4) Impact on Harding Avenue Elementary



- Neighborhood Housing Services has been in conversations with the county
- Current enrollment is 239, school has a capacity of 300.

5) Capacity of Blacksburg Transit

- Would require and extension of the Windsor Hills bus line, which is not running at full capacity. Has capacity to meet needs of 133-185 units.
- Neighborhood Housing Services will be in conversations with Traffic Department throughout process and design.
- Blacksburg Transit needs a place to turn around at end of bus line and Harding Ave development could offer this.

6) Preventing Conversion to Student Housing/Preserving Affordability

- For Rental Units: IRS regulations (Section 42) prohibit students from occupying low-income tax credit housing. Exceptions are made for a) students receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), b) students enrolled in a job training program, c) full-time students who are single parents or d) full-time students who are married and file a joint return.
- For Ownership Units:
 - Targeting homes to the workforce and not for rental conversion.
 - Create deed restrictions – liens on homes that recapture subsidy if sold.
 - CHP has first right of refusal, therefore CHP can preserve housing for low-income by purchase and resale. Example – Roanoke and Lee recent purchase and resale to low-income eligible homeowners.
 - Also looking into Shared Equity financing structures
 - Restrictions will make it owner-occupied housing – no student/parent situation.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

1) Q: Why this site? Why not Givens site?

A:

- CHP conducted an extensive search for available sites within the Town limits.
- Clayton Estates, on Givens Lane, was identified and placed under contract and eventually determined to be infeasible due to extensive relocation cost requirements.

2) Q: Why should taxpayer dollars go into this?

A:

- Purpose of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) / HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) is to serve the housing needs of income eligible citizens in Montgomery County. CDBG funds can only be used in Blacksburg.
- HOME Program is strictly for housing related projects.
- This site is desirable because it supports both the County's and Town's Comprehensive Plans and prevents urban sprawl
- Not a lot of land in town for infill development
- Transit was desirable; site will have access to bus line, walkways, bikeways, and greenways.

3) Q: Does Blacksburg need Affordable Housing?

A:

- A market study is almost complete. CHP is confident there is a market for affordable housing because it manages a waiting list of low-income people looking for housing.

4) Q: How do subsidized housing programs work? Are there downpayments? Do they pay taxes?

A:

- Monthly mortgage payments include insurance and taxes.
- A downpayment is required.



- CHP utilizes agencies such as the Virginia Housing and Department Authority (VHDA) for mortgage financing at below market rates.
- 0% interest public subsidies are due on sale.

5) Q: What kind of entity will subdivision be? What on-going involvement would the town have?

A:

- Homeowners will own the for-sale units. Covenants and restrictions for community (fences, paints, etc) accomplished either by 1) Establishing an HOA that would take care of maintenance of common space. 2) Making common space in community be owned and therefore managed/maintained by the Town. This would be a Town decision.
- Rental units and surrounding property would be managed and maintained by CHP.
- Town codes regulate standards. Enforcement is pro-active in town.

6) Q: What stage in the development are you? Will we have a meeting with all committed parties?

A:

- CHP has option on land (until November) and purchase is contingent on boundary adjustment and zoning.
- Very preliminary stages. Will continue community meetings throughout process.
- Purpose of meeting was to present in concept and garner community concerns, desires, etc. to inform design/development.
- As for other developments and town policy, the Town comprehensive plan meeting is the forum to discuss future developments.

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS/ REQUESTS/ WISHES

- Use flat roofs instead of Gabled Roofs because they will decrease run-off and increase space in the home
- Get Serious – This meeting is sloganeering, based on methods that have been discredited (Model Cities Program, LEED)
- Appreciate the accessibility of the neighborhood to existing infrastructure and walkways.
- Would like entrance to be closer to or through Windsor Hills.
- Post power point (from this meeting) on website
- Post description and dates of future meetings on website.
- Have questions publicly accessible. Post on website.
- You may contact Blacksburg Town Council to voice your concerns: towncouncil@blacksburg.gov