

RESOLUTION 7-D-15

A RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING AND CLARIFYING THE TOWN'S 2010 OLD BLACKSBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

WHEREAS, in December of 2010 the Town Council prepared and sent to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors the attached Development Principles for consideration in the redevelopment of the Old Blacksburg Middle School site;

WHEREAS, the Town Council would like to re-iterate both its commitment to these fundamental principles of good design and its willingness to work with the County and potential developers of the site.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Blacksburg:

That the 2010 Old Blacksburg Middle School Development Principles are hereby re-affirmed and clarified as follows:

(a) The 2010 principles state that the parties should “work together on a master plan for the 20 acre site that is consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan with key project elements identified.” A Master Plan was completed in 2011. The Town remains committed to working with the County, potential purchasers and developers on planning for this site. Given the passage of time, revisions to the Master Plan in keeping with the design principles are now appropriate.

(b) The 20 acre + property should not be developed as one single mega-block. The parcel should have a grid network of street connections that provide interconnections to the existing Town street system and result in development with walkable block lengths. The connections should take into account the importance of the T-intersections at Clay Street within the Town’s Historic Sixteen Squares and the topography limitations along the rear of the parcel.

(c) Parking for uses within the proposed development should not consist solely of surface parking. As noted in the 2010 principles and the completed Master Plan, structured parking should be considered and the Town remains willing to consider options for participating in the construction of a parking garage.

(d) The 2010 principles provide that any development should “include open space and connection to greenways and trails.” This item remains important and development should take into account the work of the Town’s Bikeway/Sidewalk/Greenway Corridor Committee regarding connectivity options through the OBMS site

that would benefit pedestrians and bicyclists and connect to sidewalks and trails in the Town, including the Huckleberry Trail.

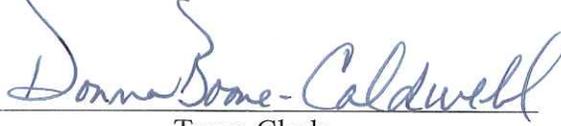
(e) The 2010 principles state that the redevelopment should “orient more intense project components toward Main Street and Clay Street.” For clarification, the portion of Clay Street intended is that portion adjacent to the Clay Court development and not the rear portion within the residential neighborhood.

(f) The 2010 principles contained the following regarding housing: “Have a residential component and work with the Town, using local and regional affordable housing programs, to see if there is an opportunity to provide affordable housing in the project in addition to market rate housing. Housing, in general, would be best if designed to serve young professionals and/or retirees whose housing needs are currently unmet in the Town. Housing should not be targeted toward the high occupancy student market.” With the rezoning and tax credit funding of the Fieldstone affordable housing project the Town is not likely to have the resources to participate in affordable housing on the OBMS site. Housing that meets a diversity of needs is still an important principle even if Town sponsored affordable housing in not a project component. The results of the recently completed downtown housing study may be helpful in guiding developers to consider viable non-student housing options.



Mayor

ATTEST:



Town Clerk

Date of Adoption: July 14, 2015



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Old Blacksburg Middle School

Background

The Town of Blacksburg has prepared the following discussion on the nature of “mixed use” as it applies to the anticipated redevelopment of the Old Blacksburg Middle School property. The 20 acre parcel is located in the heart of Downtown Blacksburg and the redevelopment of this parcel is of great community interest and would have significant community impact. It is unusual to have a parcel of this size available for redevelopment in a downtown location. The ownership by the County and the land use process through the Town allow both entities to have substantial input in the evolution of a redevelopment project on the site. The outcome of redevelopment on this parcel will shape Downtown Blacksburg for years to come and will likely be viewed as a legacy project for the decision makers involved.

The Old Blacksburg Middle School area is identified in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan as “Mixed Use Area D” with an underlying land use designation of “Civic.” The property is currently zoned R-4 for Low Density, Single Family Residential development and rezoning of the property for mixed use is anticipated. The description of Mixed Use Area D was written in 2006 and much of the text is still pertinent today. Excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan, along with relevant excerpts from the 2001 Downtown Master Plan, are summarized in Attachments A and B. The elements that should be included in a mixed use development are listed below in bullet form drawing from the Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Master Plan, and input from community meetings held in 2008. A mixed use development in this area should include both residential and non-residential uses. The non-residential uses should include office and commercial with some aspect of retail commercial space to generate foot traffic in the area. A civic component in the project is also needed. In order to develop ideas on how a mixed use project could be developed on this parcel a design competition was originally proposed. In lieu of the design competition, coordinated master planning is needed to ensure the redevelopment meets the needs of all stakeholders.

To assist in moving forward with a coordinated approach to redevelopment of the site, the Town offers a set of development principles based on the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, Town Council discussions and previous public meetings about the property. The Town would also consider entering in a public/private partnership, and/or utilizing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, special tax district or Community Development Authority (CDA), to help achieve the desired type of development. The Town is committed to working with the County, the Economic Development Authority and the community on a viable project that will be an asset to the Town of Blacksburg and Montgomery County.

Old Blacksburg Middle School Development Principles:

- Work together on a master plan for the 20 acre site that is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan with key project elements identified.
- Work together to make the rezoning process successful with a thoughtful and detailed rezoning application reflecting a sound master plan.
- Expect a high quality design with strong architectural elements, street presence, downtown streetscape components, and unique sense of place.
- Involve the community.
- Be an urban infill project that makes use of valuable urban land that is served by transit and is walkable to employment and services.
- Add to the economic base of the County and the Town.
- Involve a genuine mixing of use types as opposed to separate components with no integration. Vertical integration is preferred but with a parcel of this size integration could be achieved through other means.
- Be sensitive in the transition to the abutting single family neighborhoods.
- Include open space and connections to greenways and trails.
- Orient more intense project components toward Main Street and Clay Street.
- Have a residential component and work with the Town, using local and regional affordable housing programs, to see if there is an opportunity to provide affordable housing in the project in addition to market rate housing. Housing, in general, would be best if designed to serve young professionals and/or retirees whose housing needs are currently unmet in the Town. Housing should not be targeted toward the high occupancy student market.
- Have a civic component. This could be achieved in any number of ways.
- Include some ground floor retail space to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Be encouraged to use low impact design principles, including the daylighting of creeks where feasible, and green building techniques.
- Honor the property's historic aspects, including the original African-American school, the history of the high school and the interface with the original 16 Squares of Blacksburg.

12/7/10