

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Paul Patterson, Zoning Administrator

Date: September 13, 2019

Subject: RNZ19-0006/ORD #1907 - Request to rezone 0.94 acre at 1401 Giles Road (Tax Map Number 197-3 1) from Planned Residential-PR to Planned Residential-PR by Steve Semones of Balzer and Associates, LLC (applicant) for Justin Boyle of J3 Properties, LLC (owner).

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Property Location	1401 Giles Road
Tax Parcel Numbers	197-3 1
Parcel(s) Size	0.94 acre
Present Zoning District	PR Planned Residential
Present Use	Parcel vacant; part of mixed-commercial development
Adjacent Zoning District	North: GC General Commercial
	East: R-4 Low Density Residential (across Giles Road)
	South: R-5 Transitional Residential
	West: GC General Commercial
Adjacent Uses	North: Mixed commercial
	East: Civic (Blacksburg First Wesleyan Church across Giles Road)
	South: Single family residential
	West: Mixed commercial
Adopted Future Land Use	High Impact Commercial
Proposed Use	Multifamily Residential
Proposed District Standards	
Maximum Height	65 feet
Minimum Setbacks	Front along Giles Road: 10'
	Side: 0'
	Rear: 0'
Maximum lot coverage	80% impervious
Floor Area Ratio	1.00
Proposed Maximum Density	68 bedrooms per acre (64 total bedrooms)
Proposed Maximum Density	28 dwelling units per acre (28 total units)
Proposed Parking	58 parking spaces (0.90 spaces per bedroom)
Proposed Bike Parking	Spaces for 38 bikes (0.59 spaces per bedroom)

REZONING REQUEST

Justin Boyle, of J3 Properties, has applied to rezone approximately 0.94 acres at 1401 Giles Road. This is an amendment to the previously approved Planned Residential (PR) Zoning District from 2018. The property is a part of a mixed-commercial/residential development extending from North Main Street to Giles Road. The request is to double the approved residential density with a significant increase in building scale and mass as well as additional parking to support the residential units. The approved 2018 rezoning to Planned Residential allowed for a residential building with 2 stories above parking (14 apartments with a total of 32 bedrooms). This proposed amendment is a request to double the density with 4 stories above parking (28 apartments with a total of 64 bedrooms).

BACKGROUND ON EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND SITE PLANS

The larger mixed-commercial development called Uptown has been under development as a part of a site plan that was originally approved in 2014. The site plan has had several amendments, the most recent of which was in 2017, but remains largely the same as the original approval in 2014. The site plan for Uptown reflected a total of 5 commercial lots and 5 buildings. Currently, three of the buildings have been constructed, including a building that was existing prior to the filing of the site plan in 2014. The buildings currently house the In Balance Yoga studio, North Main Veterinary Clinic, and a mixed use building with the office of Green Valley Builders, retailer Kibbles on Main, Tea Shop and additional tenant space.

The two remaining buildings that have not yet been constructed will be a commercial building with frontage on Main Street, located between the mixed use building and the yoga studio; and the proposed residential building that is the subject of this rezoning. On the approved 2014 site plan, the proposed residential building was shown with commercial on the ground floor and residential above, and therefore was compliant with the standards of the General Commercial zoning district and was approved.

In 2018, a rezoning from General Commercial to Planned Residential for the 0.94 acre lot was approved. The applicant now proposes to amend the PR rezoning to allow the construction of a four-story residential building with parking below, rather than the previously approved two-story residential building with parking below. No changes to the other existing commercial components of the overall Uptown development are proposed.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

There are a number of analysis points for evaluation of a request to rezone a property within Town. The policies and maps in the Comprehensive Plan lend guidance to the Town's vision of growth in the future, while specific codes and requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and the Town Code ensure that the development meets all applicable regulations. Specifically, the Zoning Ordinance calls out the criteria for evaluation of a rezoning request, as found below:

Section 1151 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the Commission to study all rezoning requests to determine:

- 1) *Whether the proposed amendment conforms to the general guidelines and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.*
- 2) *The relationship of the proposed amendment to the purposes of the general planning program of the Town, with appropriate consideration as to whether the change will further the purposes of [the Zoning Ordinance] and the general welfare of the entire community.*
- 3) *The need and justification for the change.*
- 4) *When pertaining to a change in the district classification of the property, the effect of the change, if any, on the property, surrounding property, and on public services and facilities. In addition, the Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the property for the proposed change as related to the purposes set forth at the beginning of each district classification.*

Section 1162 of the Zoning Ordinance states that proposals for rezoning to a planned zoning district constitute an application for conditional zoning. Section 1160 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the owner of the land may proffer conditions, which may be accepted by the Town if they meet the following standards:

- 1) *The rezoning itself must give rise for the need for the conditions*
- 2) *The conditions shall have a reasonable relation to the rezoning*
- 3) *The conditions shall be in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan*
- 4) *The conditions must be clearly understood and enforceable*
- 5) *The conditions must not require or allow a design or standard that is less restrictive than the general provisions of this ordinance.*

An exception to the Use and Design Standard for multi-family residential and shall be evaluated per the criteria below:

Section 1112(c) Criteria. The Town Council may grant a complete exception from the standard, or it may modify the standard based on the particularities of the site. Any modification of the standard shall be considered a special exception. In determining to grant a special exception, the Town Council shall be guided by the following general considerations: (1) The unusual shape or topography of a lot or an adjoining lot; (2) The location of existing structures; and (3) Whether mature trees can be preserved through the exception.

(d) For exceptions to requirements for parking in front of a building line, the primary considerations should be the shape or topography of a lot, the location of existing structures and preserving mature trees. However, the considerations may also include the degree of exception requested, the impact on the relationship of the building to the street, internal/external connectivity, safety concerns and consistency with existing development patterns. When an exception is granted, it should be conditioned on buffering the parking with landscaping, including natural plant materials, shrubs and trees.”

EVALUATION OF APPLICATION IN STAFF REPORT

Similar to last year, the staff report is divided into topical areas of evaluation. Many of the overarching principles in the Comprehensive Plan, and the Zoning Ordinance overlap into key topical focus areas. To aid in review of the staff report each topic or focus area is covered only once. The analysis is contained in the staff report. The pertinent text sections from the Comprehensive Plan, and the Zoning Ordinance have been included as an appendix to this report.

Neighborhood Area and Existing Conditions

The property is located within the Uptown commercial development near the intersection of Giles Road and North Main Street. It is the one of the northernmost commercial developments in town along North Main Street. There are three existing buildings in the development containing a mix of commercial uses. The northern end of Giles Road contains a mix of uses including single-family, two-family, and multifamily uses, as well as a church. The nearby area on North Main Street is also a mix of single-family, multi-family, commercial, and industrial uses. The rezone site currently contains a shared stormwater detention basin for the entire Uptown development. The applicant proposes to underground the stormwater facility and locate a new parking lot above the stormwater facility. No other changes to the commercial development are proposed.

RELATIONSHIP OF PLANNED RESIDENTIAL REZONING TO THE UPTOWN DEVELOPMENT

The request entails amending the PR rezoning of a single parcel within a coordinated commercial development to increase the density over what was previously approved. While not desirable, the rezoning of a small portion of larger commercial development to the Planned Residential zoning district was approved in 2018. The Town’s zoning ordinance regarding residential components in mixed-use commercial developments has changed since

the 2018 rezoning adding criteria and providing the option to have a wholly residential building within the GC district through the CUP process. *However, the evaluation of the rezoning should be over the existing approval of a small PR district as part of a larger GC development.*

For comparison, staff would note that the increase in density now proposed is beyond what would be allowed by-right in the General Commercial district portion of the Uptown Development. The existing approved PR density is within the same density limits as the GC district. The approved 2018 rezoning to Planned Residential allowed for a residential building with 14 apartments with a total of 32 bedrooms which is less than 48 bedrooms per acre in the GC district. The proposed amended PR rezoning request doubles the density with 4 stories above parking (28 apartments with a total of 64 bedrooms) or 68 bedrooms per acre. The recent Zoning Ordinance amendment regarding mixed-use in GC included criteria for residential development but did not include a density bonus above 48 bedrooms per acre. The GC criteria are suggestive of issues to be considered for a residential component of a mixed-use project including parking behind the front building line, screening of parking, and street orientation. The PR district allows an applicant to proposed a maximum density and justify the density requested as part of the application. *This was evaluated in the original PR rezoning and should be evaluated again with the requested density increase.*

COMPEHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive Plan Map Series Evaluation of Application

In evaluating whether the proposed use conforms to the general guidelines and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan, all applicable sections of the Plan should be included in the review of the application. The Comprehensive plan offers a wide range of guiding principles for the future of development within Town. The following text identifies the designation of the proposed rezoning property on the maps in the Future Land Use map series.

Future Land Use Designation

In evaluating whether the proposed planned residential development conforms to the general guidelines and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use designation of the subject property shall be considered. The subject property is designated High Impact Commercial on the Future Land Use map, and is defined as:

Small or large commercial developments with a need for high visibility and have a high impact on the surrounding environment, including but not limited to factors such as lighting, noise, parking, traffic, and hours of operation. Examples include large retail establishments, restaurants, hotels/motels, and auto-related uses. Typical implementing zoning district[s include] Downtown Commercial (DC), General Commercial (GC), Planned Commercial (PC), and Mixed Use (MXD).

Planned Residential Development is not an implementing district for the High Impact Commercial designation. The PR rezoning was approved because the residential development was part of larger commercial development. While residential as an accessory component is desired to create a mixed-use development, the residential component should be limited in scale and created as part of the overall commercial development. The scale of the residential was evaluated in relation to the scale of the commercial development. The same should be considered in this rezoning.

The leased area of the 28 apartment units within the residential building, not including hallways and the podium parking on the ground floor, is approximately 32,540 square feet in size (twenty 2-bedroom units at 1,033 SF + eight 3-bedroom units at 1,485 SF). At a Floor Area Ratio of 1.0, the total floor area of the residential development including the podium parking would be approximately 41,000 Square Feet (0.9418 acre x 43,560

SF/acre). The leased area of the four combined existing and proposed commercial buildings are approximately 21,000 square feet in size. **The square footage of the residential development as proposed in this amended rezoning application (41,000 SF) is nearly twice the total square footage of the proposed commercial development of Uptown Mixed-use Development (21,000 SF).**

Mixed Use Areas

This property is located within Mixed Use Area “H” as designated on the Future Land Use map. Mixed Use Areas are intended to serve as focal points for commercial and residential growth in town. However, the designation of a mixed use area does not prevent developments outside these areas, nor obligate the Town to approve rezoning or conditional use permit applications within a mixed use area. The designation of a mixed use area does not affect underlying zoning, nor does it mandate a specific type of development.

Neighborhood, Employment and Service Areas Map

The subject parcel is located within the “Commercial Areas” designation. Characteristics of Commercial Areas include an acknowledgement of activity that generates traffic and congestion, with potential solutions such as mass or alternate transportation options. Additionally, it is recognized that economic vitality is important to the growing town, and the expectation of a high quality of life.

ZONING ORDINANCE EVALUATION OF APPLICATION

Intent of Districts

There is a statement of purpose for each district in the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planned Residential District the Zoning Ordinance states:

Planned Residential §3110

The purpose of this district is to provide for the development of planned residential communities that incorporate a variety of housing options as well as certain limited commercial and office uses designed to serve the inhabitants of the district. This district is intended to allow greater flexibility than is generally possible under conventional zoning district regulations by encouraging ingenuity, imagination and high quality design to create a superior living environment for the residents of the planned community. The PR district is particularly appropriate for parcels which contain a number of constraints to conventional development. In addition to an improved quality of design, the PR district creates an opportunity to reflect changes in the technology of land development, provide opportunities for new approaches to home ownership, and provide for an efficient use of land which can result in reduced development costs.

It is the burden of the applicant to prove that the design submitted meets the intent of the Planned Residential District. Specifically, developments should meet the intent of the district by utilizing and taking advantage of the flexibility allowed to showcase ingenuity and imagination for the creation of a high quality intentional development that would otherwise be limited by conventional zoning district standards. In some cases, a development application for a PR district provides the Town with a housing model or type that is not found elsewhere in town, such as the Shadowlake Village Co-Housing Community PR district. In other instances, the PR district allows an applicant to put forward housing for an underserved population such as the Grissom Lane Senior Housing development or the recently approved Habitat for Humanity townhomes. In approving the rezoning to the PR district in 2018 these standards were presumed to be met. *However, the same criteria apply when evaluating the proposed changes.*

The lack of justification by the applicant on why the PR zoning should be amended at a double density of the prior approval without any amenities, creativity of concept or using the flexibility in development standards to create a viable project to house underserved populations is of concern to staff.

Development Standards

The characteristics of physical site development are regulated by the Zoning District standards. In a Planned Residential Zoning District, the applicant may propose most of the individual standards for the proposed development. The layout and standards of the development, if approved, are binding. Since the applicant proposes the standards in the PRD, the evaluation of the proposed standards is different. The evaluation should be based on how well the proposed standards, when applied, fit into the existing character of the surrounding area. The Planning Commission and Town Council evaluate each Planned Residential development on its own merit. There is a great deal of flexibility in proposing the development’s standards, but the standards should not be so out of scale or character, or different from the various surrounding districts as to create an incompatibility in use or physical layout.

Setbacks

Setbacks or required yards provide areas on a property that are to remain free from structures. This allows for both landscaping and open space around buildings for light and air circulation, but it also generally provides areas where public utilities may be installed. In many cases, public utility easements are established around the interior of lot lines, within the setbacks to allow for both Town public utilities, but also for private utilities such as telecommunications, gas, and power. Consistent setbacks in a neighborhood can help maintain a sense of regular rhythm and uniformity while also allowing for landscaping and open space.

The applicant is proposing a 10’ setback on Giles Road and 0’ side and rear setbacks. The setbacks are the same as proposed and approved in the 2018 rezoning. However, the building scale and massing is significantly larger than the approved rezoning.

Site and Layout



View from Main Street parking lot



View from Giles Road

Building Design, Scale and Massing, Site Layout

The parcel is oddly shaped and is 0.94 acre in size or 41,024 SF. The applicant proposes the construction of a single building with five stories, containing surface parking and podium parking (ground-level parking under additional habitable space) and 28 residential apartment units.

This 4-5 story residential building is described in the application as being a transitional space between the commercial and the adjacent single-family residences, but in reality is more intense in terms of height and mass than the surrounding residential area. The proposed building is also at a much larger scale and mass than the existing one and one-half story commercial buildings on the site. The maximum height proposed is 65' from Giles Road and 52' from North Main Street. This represents a significant intensification of use to the residential homes in the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed FAR of 1.0 is higher than most recent PR districts reviewed. However, most PR district requests are not this small in size or part of an existing commercial development. The 2018 rezoning approval has a 0.85 floor to area ratio.

The first story of the building, at grade on Giles Road, will be partially underground from the Main Street side, and will contain the podium parking. Additionally, there will be a surface lot adjacent to the building on the Giles Road side, not visible from North Main Street but highly visible from Giles Road. Above the podium parking level will be four floors of residential dwellings. The residences are proposed to be a mix of 2-bedroom/2-bath units (20 apartments of 1,033 Square Feet) and 3-bedroom/2-bath units (8 apartments of 1,485 Square Feet.) The buildings are a mix of cementitious siding and EFIS with concrete foundation and split face concrete masonry units visible along the Giles Road side. The application states the owners are engaged in sustainability practices but there are no specific proffers to address specific sustainability commitments.

Parking and Circulation

The southeastern portion of the site currently contains a dry swale stormwater management facility that treats runoff for the entire Uptown commercial development and is proposed to be placed underground to accommodate surface parking to support the additional units requested. Additional podium ground floor parking is also provided with access from an entrance on Giles Road. Podium parking is not uncommon and can take advantage of grade changes over a site. The podium parking is laid out in such a way there may be conflicts with a number of the parking spaces. It is difficult to maneuver vehicles in a podium parking lot where there is little space to accommodate turning movements. Several of the parking spaces are immediately parallel to walls/structures, or adjacent parking spaces. *Dimensions for parking spaces and drive aisles have not been*

provided, and will need to be included to gauge the compliance with the Zoning Ordinance as well as the true functionality of the space.

The elevations provided in conjunction with the plan show that the parking structure is not enclosed like a typical parking garage, but rather more like a surface parking lot under the cover of the residential floors above. All of the lower parking areas appear to be visible from Giles Road, including the podium parking located under the structure. The applicant has not provided information on any screening for the parking areas. This was an item of discussion at the Planning Commission during consideration of the previous PR rezoning.

The parking lot area located above the stormwater management area appears that it will also be used by a future tenant in the lower floor of the commercial building next door and includes ADA accessible parking spaces for this tenant space. The parking spaces located on the Main Street side appear to be accessible to the adjacent commercial businesses.

The applicant should provide additional information on how the parking will function and be clearly designated by use. The proposed amount of parking within the Uptown development may restrict the future tenant types and space allotment for Building B. It should also be noted that some of the proposed lower surface parking and retaining wall is shown on the Lot 3 of the Uptown Development but is not included in the rezoning request. The applicant should also provide dimensions of this retaining wall to better assess the impacts on the adjacent single-family residence.

Parking is part of the supporting infrastructure for a development and can be impacted by unit occupancy. The goal for parking is “right-sizing” the parking. The typical 1.1 space per bedroom may be excessive in some locations or types of development. Trends are also showing that with student occupancy, not all students are bringing a car. There are concerns for multi-family development especially when occupied by students and in locations where overflow parking may spill into adjacent neighborhoods. Having an understanding of the maximum number of occupants is part of evaluating the parking ratio when there is not a limit on the number of persons per bedroom.

The applicant is proposing a parking ratio of 0.90 spaces per bedroom totaling 58 parking spaces for the residential component. The application states a maximum occupancy of a family plus 2 persons unrelated to the family, or no more than 4 unrelated persons per dwelling unit which is the standard for the PR district. Often applicant proposing projects that may be occupied by students include a provision to limit occupancy to one person per bedroom when the unit is occupied by unrelated individuals, as opposed to a family. With multiple occupants per bedroom possible the impacts of the development could be greater than anticipated. While the proposal is for 2 and 3 bedrooms units, the units could be occupied by up to 4 unrelated persons. The maximum occupancy at the upper end for this development could be up 112 persons (28 apartments x 4 persons). The maximum occupancy level per dwelling unit for a Planned Residential District can be limited by the applicant to address consequences of leasing beyond the ability of the supporting infrastructure. While the commercial portion of the Uptown project may be affected by a miscalculation in parking demand, there is also the potential that overflow parking will spill into the adjacent neighborhoods. This is already a problem faced by the neighborhoods along Giles Road.

The site and layout for this project is unusual and determining the front of the development is challenging. The Use and Design Standards for Multi-family Residential require that parking be located behind the front building line. Determining the front building line is particularly challenging as the building does not address Giles Road but rather faces North Main Street. *The applicant should provide information as to the interface with Giles Road with respect to visibility and screening of the parking areas.*

Density & Occupancy, Lifestyle Conflicts

Not only does the physical development of the property affect the neighborhood compatibility, but also the lifestyle of the target market for the project. There are a number of Town policies and goals that encourage the provision of housing for a variety of different citizens with different lifestyle needs. Blacksburg has been identified as both a great place to retire, as well as a good place to raise a family. The University is actively growing undergraduate enrollment which is impacting the Town's housing market. There have been a number of developments and redevelopments in the last several years that have sought to meet the demand for highly-amenitized off-campus student housing. There are almost 3,000 beds of off-campus student housing that have been approved in recent years that have yet to be constructed. Several of the large recently-approved projects include the Terrace View and Sturbridge redevelopments, Cedar Run Overlook, 1222 Patrick Henry Drive, 30-R at the CRC, and the Frith property development on Toms Creek Road.

In response to the recent surge of requests for rezoning for off-campus student housing, the Town Council recently passed a resolution adopting a policy of considering limited opportunities for more undergraduate student housing, specifically those where lifestyle conflicts are less likely to occur, and have significant commercial and office uses, and are particularly sensitive to site context, and are constructed with quality building materials.

The application does not specifically describe the development as student housing but rather as multi-family housing that will appeal to a wide range of residents. The units will be a mix of 2- and 3-bedroom units; though, not all units feature bed-bath parity. However, no proffers have been provided that indicate this development is to be non-student-oriented. Most of the recently constructed multi-family developments have been occupied by students whether that was the original intent or not.

Density

The density of the development is a factor in considering whether the proposed development is appropriate to the surrounding neighborhood. The Planned Residential Zoning District allows an applicant to choose a maximum residential density. This proposed standard should be considered and evaluated for its appropriateness and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, given the target market for the proposed development, the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood, and the proposal's mitigation of adverse impacts.

The proposed density of 68 bedrooms per acre is significantly higher than the existing residential density in the surrounding neighborhood. The surrounding neighborhood is zoned R-4 and R-5, which allow for 4 dwelling units per acre and 20 bedrooms per acre respectively. The proposed density is also higher than the surrounding commercial zoning would allow at 48 bedrooms per acre.

Buffering and Landscaping

There is no specific buffer yard requirement for the Planned Residential district as a whole because the nature of the proposed developments can vary so widely but the buffering proposed should be appropriate for the type and intensity and context of the development proposed. Each application is evaluated with regards to buffering to determine the appropriateness of the proposal as it relates to the surrounding uses and neighborhood, and whether the effects of proposed buffering mitigate any adverse impacts to the surrounding area.

The application text mentions buffering and landscaping in several sections but no detail or sheet was provided with the application. *While it references the prior approved site plan, the landscape and screening information specific to the rezoning area needs to be shown as part of the rezoning application.* The proposed new parking area above the underground stormwater detention is located immediately adjacent to a single-family house and will have impacts on the residents. The parking area is at higher elevation than the house and vehicle headlights

and parking lot lights may shine upon the house. The trash and recycling bins are shown to be located within the podium parking lot and on an existing dumpster pad. *As these would be visible from the road, a detail on how the dumpster would be screened is required.*

Open Space

The provision of open space is another component of residential communities that is included as a requirement for nearly every type of residential development. The Planned Residential Zoning District Standards and the Use & Design Standards for Multifamily Dwellings §4216(a)(6) require a minimum of 20% open space for developments. It is important that the open space be meaningful in its size and function and geared toward the use of the residents who in the development. The open space requirement is designed for larger-scale residential developments and may not be well-suited to the scale and nature of a rezoning of less than 1 acre in size. There is the opportunity to request a reduction or elimination of open space for parcels less than 2 acres. This request was reduced and approved as part of the previous 2018 rezoning. *Again, this should be evaluated with the proposed change to increase the density.*

The application states that an area of raised beds for “community gardens” is provided for the residents as recreational open space, showing a raised garden area located between two buildings. There are no interior recreational areas or community gathering areas. The applicant is requesting a modification to the open space requirement for the reduction of required open space as allowed in Zoning Ordinance section 3113(b)(1) for parcels less than 2 acres in size. The site is 0.94 acres. If the 20% open space requirement is waived, then no common 5,000 square foot area of recreational space for residents is required. The application states that the request meets the modification criteria below:

- i) Maximize developable area
- ii) Proximity to downtown
- iii) Walking distance to services and transit
- iv) Density and intensity of use in relation to neighborhood context
- v) Demonstrated access to nearby public open space
- vi) Alternative recreation space
- vii) Proposed improvements to the adjoining streetscape

It is the applicant’s burden to prove the need and the justification for the change in reducing the required open space and can be found on pages 7-8 of the application.

Sidewalks

The applicant is proposing to add 5’ sidewalk with no planting strip on Giles Road from the existing sidewalk along the Uptown Development (noted as Phase II) to the parcel boundary. *The applicant should clarify if this proposed sidewalk will complete the sidewalk along the entirety of the Uptown Development Giles Road frontage.* The Town is also working on sidewalk improvements along Giles Road from this site towards Patrick Henry Drive as part of the capital improvement program but it is not known when this project would be started or completed, as there are several easement approvals on private property that need to be secured. There are sidewalks existing on North Main Street.

Bicycle Facilities & Parking

There is an existing bicycle route along Giles Road identified within the Bicycle Master Plan and sharrows are planned for this route in the future. North Main Street does not have any bicycle facilities. Bicycle parking is proposed at a ratio of 0.59 spaces per bedroom. Bicycle parking is provided near the front and rear entrances as well as in the podium parking area. The applicant may wish to provide additional information as to whether the bicycle parking near the entrances is covered.

Signage

The applicant has indicated that signage will be provided on the building façade both on the Main Street side (36 square feet) and by the Giles Road entrance (18 square feet). In addition, the residential project will be listed on the monument sign for the entire development, which is located by the North Main Street entrance. *The proposed signage is in keeping with other residential signage in terms of size and number of signs.*

EVALUATION OF IMPACTS

In evaluating the potential effect on public services and facilities that this rezoning would have, the Town Engineering department has reviewed the application and the following comments were provided.

Stormwater Management

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the stormwater management plan. The concept plan is approved at this time. The proposed underground stormwater detention basin appears that it may be partially located within a Public Utility Easement, which is discouraged. The stormwater will be slowly metered out to go under and across Giles Road. The proposed construction by the Town of an improved stormwater conveyance on the opposite side of Giles Road is expected to begin later this year.

Sanitary Sewer

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the application with regards to impacts to the Town's sanitary sewer system and have run a sewer capacity analysis for this site and have found no issues.

Water

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the application with regards to impacts to the Town's water system and have found no issues.

Traffic and Transportation

The Town Engineering Staff have reviewed the traffic information provided by the applicant. Based on the information provided, an in-depth traffic analysis of impacts is not warranted using the trip generation of approximately 254 trips per day generated by this development. However, during review of the proposed trip generation values and occupancy limits, it was noted that there was some inconsistency that could again represent a significant increase in the proposed trip generation. The trip generation values are based on an occupancy of 1 resident per bedroom. However, the occupancy requested would allow for up to 4 unrelated persons per dwelling unit. This would increase the trip generation values by another 81.5% from 254 to 461 trips per day. At this level the need to provide more in-depth analysis would be recommended to accurately represent the possible impacts proposed by the development.

Engineering staff recommends a traffic impact analysis be performed to include volume counts, turn lane and taper warrants, and LOS analysis as needed, **unless occupancy could be limited to a level comparable to that proposed by the rezoning document (page 15).**

Engineering staff provided several comments with regard to the layout and design of the proposed entrance which are included in the staff memo attached to this report.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

A neighborhood meeting was held on Thursday, August 29, 2019. Meeting notes and the sign-in sheets are attached. There were concerns expressed about traffic/pedestrian safety on Giles Road, effects of the 4-5 story residential building upon the adjacent single-family residences, timing of stormwater and sidewalk improvements along Giles, and the impact of the proposed new parking lot area on the adjacent single-family home.

KEY ELEMENTS

The key elements listed below are in the order found in the staff report, and do not represent a prioritized list:

- Increase in density
- Parking areas fronting Giles Road
- Mass and scale of building
- Occupancy limits
- Buffering and Landscaping
- Reduction in open space
- Additional traffic information

SUMMARY

The Planning Commission is asked to consider and make a recommendation of approval or denial of the proposed amended rezoning, open space, and parking in front of the front building line. If the request is approved, the property will be rezoned to amend the existing Planned Residential with any proffers offered by the applicant and accepted by Town Council. Any changes to the master plan would be required to be reviewed through the public hearing process to amend this PR district. If denied, the property will continue to be zoned Planned Residential with the previously approved configuration and any such subsequent site plan and building permit will have to adhere to all the minimum standards found therein. The decision to grant or deny the rezoning request is a discretionary decision, and should be made according to the criteria outlined in §1151, and with the analysis provided.

PROFFER STATEMENT

The applicant has submitted a proffer statement dated August 1, 2019.

1. The property shall be developed in substantial conformance, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, with the submitted rezoning application entitled Uptown Phase III Planned Residential Development (the "Application") dated August 1, 2019.

APENDICES

- Staff GIS Maps
- Staff PRD Appendix
- Engineering Memos
- Neighborhood Meeting Notes & Sign-In Sheets
- 2011 Memo on Front Building Lines
- Received E-mail from citizens

RZN19-0006 The Flats at Uptown PRD

-  Subject Parcel
-  Uptown Development
-  Parcels
-  Corporate Limit

0 100 200'



2019 Aerials provided by Pictometry
Town of Blacksburg, P&B Dept. 09-06-19



RZN19-0006 The Flats at Uptown PRD

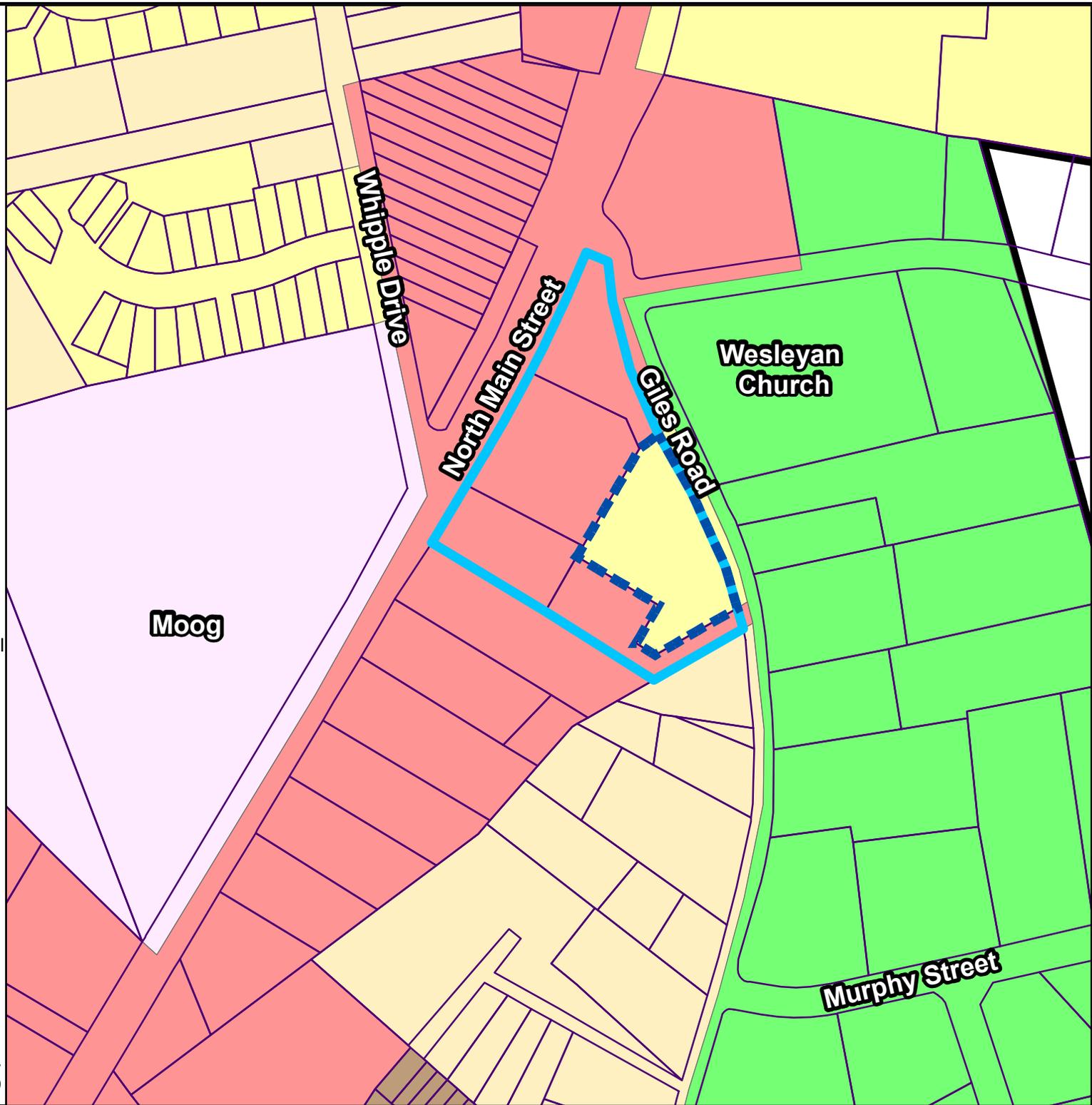
Zoning

-  Subject Parcel
-  Uptown Development
-  Parcels
-  R-4 Low Density Residential
-  R-5 Transitional Residential
-  RM-48 Medium Density Multiunit Residential
-  GC General Commercial
-  RD Research and Development
-  PR Planned Residential
-  Corporate Limit

0 100 200'



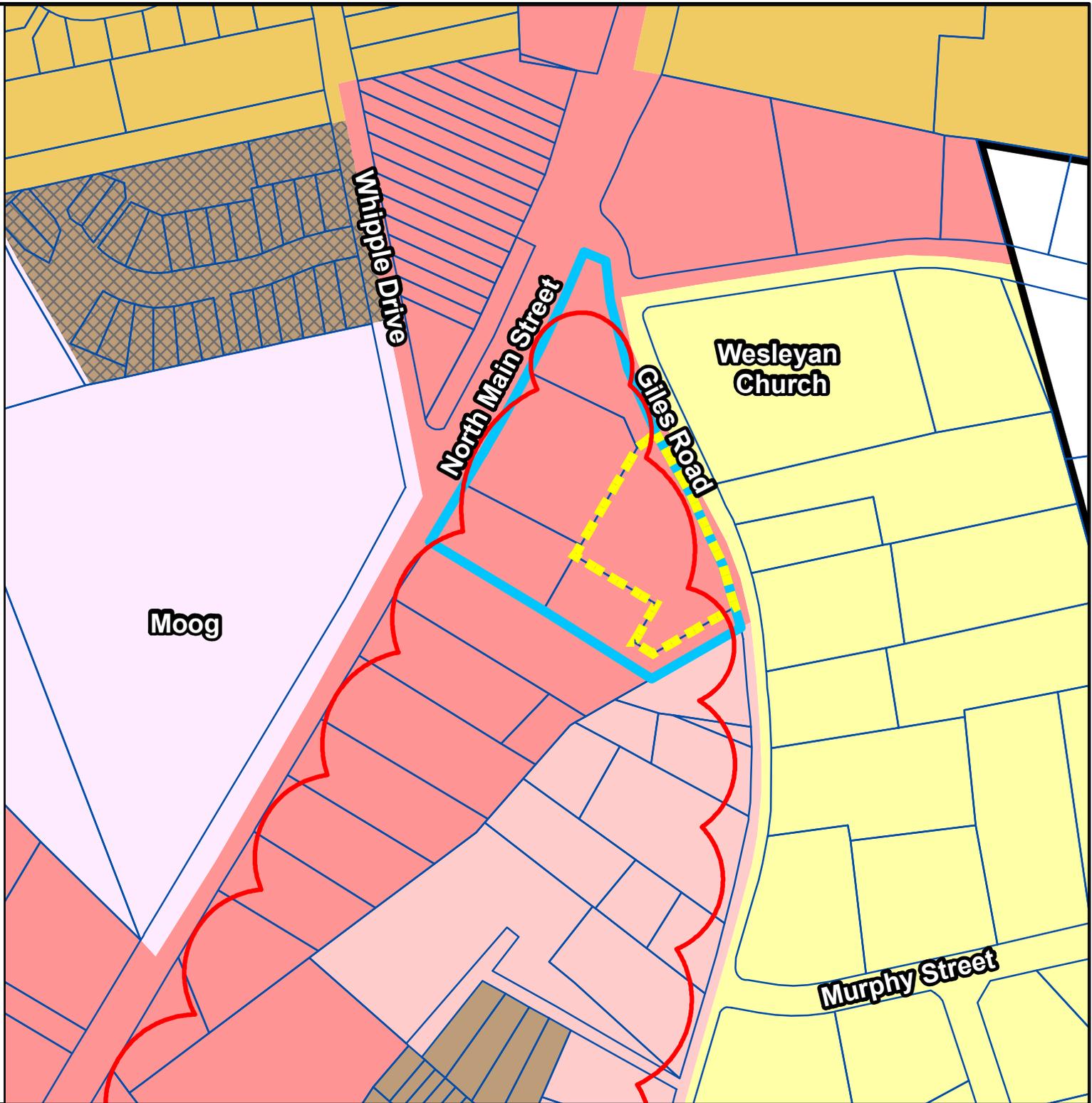
2019 Aerials provided by Pictometry
Town of Blacksburg, P&B Dept. 09-06-19



RZN19-0006 The Flats at Uptown PRD

Future Land Use

-  Subject Parcel
-  Uptown Development
-  Parcels
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Limited High Density Residential Development
-  High Density Residential
-  Low Impact Commercial
-  High Impact Commercial
-  Research / Development
-  Mixed Use Area
-  Corporate Limit



2019 Aerials provided by Pictometry
Town of Blacksburg, P&B Dept. 09-06-19

Staff PRD Appendix

This appendix is provided to give additional supporting information from the Comprehensive Plan, the Residential Infill Guidelines, and the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances in order to allow the staff report to focus on the analysis of the application.

Physical Site Development

Building Design: Orientation, Style, Materials, Scale, Massing, and Height

- **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policy LU.6:** Consider the compatibility of development with surrounding uses. Utilize strategies such as landscaping or other buffering techniques along with modification of site design to minimize impacts and facilitate compatibility.
- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.21:** The Town is concerned about the height, mass, and placement of buildings, cell towers, or other features of considerable height on viewsheds.
- **CCP 12:** To serve the needs of the community, support opportunities for commercial development and redevelopment in appropriate locations.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Best Practice #1:** Respect neighborhood context and enhance community character
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Best Practice #2:** Provide...transitions...of building scale, building design, form and color...Complementary architectural design, materials, scale, massing and the use of landscape, screening, and open space are strategies to achieve compatibility within the neighborhood and the Town.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Site Design & Parking:**
 - Buildings oriented toward streets are a key characteristic of Blacksburg's residential neighborhoods.
 - Locate the primary entrance towards the street
 - Clearly define the primary entrance of the structure by using a front porch or stoop, and other architectural details.
 - Retain space in front of the structure to relate to the street or sidewalk without intervening elements such as parking.
 - Entry porches and porticoes in two-story homes should be one story to minimize the appearance of bulk.
 - The scale and style of porch and portico elements should be consistent with the scale and style of the home, and should strive to respect the scale and style of porch and portico elements in the other homes on the block.
 - Buildings should be designed to fit within the context of the surrounding structures and provide visual interest to pedestrians.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Building Design:**
 - The mass and scale of new infill residential buildings should appear to be similar to the building seen traditionally in the neighborhood.
 - The width of a building face of an infill project should not exceed the width of a typical residential structure on adjacent lots.
 - Building roof forms that are similar to those seen traditionally in the neighborhood, such as gabled and hip roofs, should be used.
 - Buildings should be designed to fit within the context of the surrounding structures and provide visual interest to pedestrians.
- Multifamily Dwelling Use & Design Standard for building orientation §4216 (a)(3):

- The street elevation of the residential buildings shall have at least one (1) street-oriented entrance and contain the principal windows of the front unit.

Lot Configuration, Setbacks, Lot Coverage, Buffer Yards & Landscaping

- **Subdivision Ordinance §5-200 Lot Characteristics**
 - The lot arrangement, design, and shape shall be such that lots will provide appropriate sites for buildings and be properly related to topography so that each lot has an acceptable building site with direct access from an improved street. ***Lots shall not contain peculiarly shaped elongations solely to provide necessary square footage of area which would be unusable for normal purposes.*** Subdividers are encouraged to shape and orient lots to maximize solar access.
- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.15:** Blacksburg is a responsible headwaters community for Southwest Virginia
- **CCP.16:** Responsible site design and development practices will minimize environmental impacts within the town
- **Comprehensive Plan Environment Objective E.17:** As a part of the development review process, the Town will evaluate a proposed development’s impact and proposed mitigation measures for the following:
 - Open Space
 - Urban forest canopy
 - Watershed
- **Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Objectives & Policy S.6:** Promote, protect and enhance the Town’s urban forests through Town initiatives and in the development review process. Minimize site disturbance to protect existing tree canopy, native vegetation, and pervious surfaces to encourage open space.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Site Design and Parking:**
 - Streets [that] feature consistent front building setbacks...help define neighborhood character.
 - Provide a front yard consistent with those found on the block facing the street.
 - Front porches are encouraged and may extend into the required front yard setback.
 - In residential neighborhoods, multi-family housing should adopt the predominant setback, but should also vary the building façade to relieve the appearance of mass.
 - Setbacks should be proportional to the height and mass of a building
 - The “green edge [landscaped setbacks between the...buildings and sidewalks]” provides residential streets with a clearly identifiable character; [landscaping] and fences are often used for transition between public and private space; provision of open space is critical for multifamily developments...
 - Natural features and existing trees should be retained
 - Parking lots should be generously landscaped to provide shade, reduce glare, and provide visual interest
 - All site areas not covered by structures, walkways, driveways, or parking spaces should be landscaped
 - Street trees and planting strips also help buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic.
- **Zoning Ordinance Landscaping Development Standards §5425:** Tree Replacement Requirements: Any trees on the site which are a caliper of five inches or more at a height of one foot above the ground, or ornamental trees over twelve feet in height which are to be removed during site development shall be replaced up to the maximum canopy coverage required in

§5426.

- **ZO §5426:** Canopy Coverage Requirements: Trees shall be provided within the limits of construction to the extent that at twenty years from the date of planting, tree canopies or covers will provide at least the following minimums: Planned Districts—Per [similar] Uses: RM-48 = 10%
- **ZO §5427:** Parking Lot Landscaping:
 - The following provisions are intended to require that 5% of the entire parking lot, excluding the access drive, is landscaped with trees and vegetative ground cover. The area of the parking lot is the square foot of the parking spaces and aisles and interior parking lot islands, excluding access drives that do not contain either parallel or perpendicular parking spaces.
 - Within the parking lot there shall be planted one tree per ten spaces, rounded down to the closest whole number.
 - Planter islands or peninsulas containing trees shall be located within the parking lot, such that each island or planter is surrounded on at least three sides by parking lot or an access road to the parking lot. Their size shall be eighteen feet square in area, or equal total area in irregular shapes such that adequate space is provided for adequate tree canopy maturation.
- **ZO §5428 Street Trees:** In addition to the requirements set out above [in this ordinance division], in every development requiring a site development plan, there shall be planted on or adjacent to the site an average of at least one tree for every thirty feet of public street frontage.

Streetscape, Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.1:** Well-designed pedestrian and bicycle friendly routes and facilities are essential to the Town's identity as a walkable and bikeable community.
- **CCP.14:** Transit connections and bus stop facilities are important components to support transit as a viable transportation option in town. These elements should be part of the design of new developments and be coordinated with Blacksburg Transit regarding service availability.
- **CCP.18:** Minimize light pollution, balancing dark skies with a safe pedestrian and vehicular experience at night
- **Comprehensive Plan Transportation Objective & Policy T.10:** Complete the construction of a connected sidewalk system
- **T.11:** Minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.
- **T.12:** Maintain and improve the aesthetic quality of the pedestrian environment by planting street trees and other landscaping, and installing street furniture where appropriate.
- **T.16:** Develop and implement a comprehensive bicycle parking program throughout the Town and in coordination with Blacksburg Transit to install covered bicycle racks at public sites and commercial and residential locations, as well as to coordinate with Montgomery County and the New River Valley Planning District Commission for bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the region.
- **T.17:** Investigate implementing a bike share program
- **T.20:** Monitor the public transportation provided to ensure effectiveness and efficiency while maintaining the priorities of safety, courtesy and scheduling.
- **T. 22:** Enhance transit accessibility and convenience; lower parking demand, energy use, and air pollution by reducing traffic on local roads; and educate the community on the positive

environmental impact from using public transit in order to encourage its overall use throughout the Town.

- **T.27:** Increase the number of covered bus shelters and covered bike parking provided at transit stops where appropriate.
- **T.28:** During the development review process, ensure that transit service and access to/from the transit stop and the development are provided.
- **Comprehensive Plan Environment Objective EN.34:** Support citizens in establishing and reaching vehicle travel reduction goals to reduce air pollution.
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Best Practice #3:** Create a pedestrian friendly streetscape
- **Residential Infill Guidelines Site Design & Parking:**
 - The design of the space between the edge of the curb and the front of a building is essential for encouraging pedestrian activity and promoting safety and security.
 - [Sidewalks] contribute to the character of the neighborhoods by providing safe places for people to travel and interact with one another.
 - Walkways should connect public sidewalks and parking areas to all main entrances on the site. For townhouses...fronting on the street, the sidewalk may be used to meet this standard
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Use & Design Standard for sidewalks §4216 (a)(2):**
 - Sidewalks shall connect each unit to the parking area serving that unit, to other units on-site, and to other buildings or uses on adjacent lots.
- **Zoning Ordinance Site Development Plans Minimum Standards and Improvements Required §5120(d)(1):**
 - Sidewalks meeting the design standards of the Subdivision Ordinance shall be provide on public or private land along all parts of a site abutting a developed public street where such sidewalks do not exist as of the date of the application for site plan approval. The provision of these sidewalks will advance the goal of the Blacksburg comprehensive plan of development of “a network of walkways in the Town to increase the safety and convenience of pedestrian travel.” The Town Council finds that the need for such sidewalks in this Town is substantially generated by the development.
- **Subdivision Ordinance §5-401**
 - Except as otherwise provided by the Zoning Ordinance, sidewalks shall be constructed of concrete and shall be a minimum of five feet in width. A minimum four foot planting strip is required between the curb and sidewalk for pedestrian/vehicle separation and to provide for mailbox and utility service placement.

Parking and Circulation

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.13:** Increasing the safety and efficiency of traffic flow on arterial and collector roads is important in maximizing the functionality of the transportation network.
- **CCP.14:** Transit connections and bus stop facilities are important components to support transit as a viable transportation option in Town. These elements should be part of the design of new development sand be coordinate with Blacksburg Transit regarding service availability.
- **Comprehensive Plan Transportation Objective & Policy T.50:** The development review process ensures:
 - Surface parking facilities are landscaped and appropriately lighted
 - Structured parking facilities are designed to minimize the visual impact of the bulk of the structure and the horizontal appearance of a parking deck

- New parking lots minimize impacts on stormwater
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Dwelling Use & Design Standards §4216(a)(4):**
 - All parking spaces shall be located behind the front building line
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Dwelling Use & Design Standards §4216(a)(5):**
 - Entrances to the site should be minimized and placed in such a way as to maximize safety, maximize efficient traffic circulation, and minimize the impact on the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Density & Occupancy, Housing Variety, and Lifestyle Conflicts

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.2:** Lifestyle conflicts are inherent in a college town, where neighborhoods may have a mix of students and non-students.
- **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Objective & Policy LU.7:** Encourage developers to work with surrounding property owners and tenants to resolve community concerns prior to formalizing development plans.
- **Comprehensive Plan Jobs & Housing Objective & Policy J&H.48:** Plan for the housing demands of a changing and diversifying population
- **J&H. 51:** Promote varying types of housing types needed, including:
 - Rental or starter homes for purchase by graduate students and young families
 - Young professional housing and services in the Downtown area
 - Workforce housing for those making 80% - 120% of AMI
 - Affordable workforce housing options for LMI families making less than 80% of AMI
 - Housing with universal design features to allow aging-in-place

PR development requests in Town past 5 years:

Year	Development Name	Status	Density	Parking Ratio
2014	Progress St Townhomes PRD	withdrawn	41 br/ac	
2014	Whipple South Townhomes PRD	approved, withdrawn	29 br/ac	
2014	Eheart & Main PRD	approved, site plan review	64 br/ac	
2014	Warren Street PRD	withdrawn	154 br/ac	
2014	Fieldstone PRD	approved, completed	25 br/ac	
2014	The Retreat PRD	approved, completed	20 br/ac	1.01 spaces/bedroom
2016	The Lofts on North Main	withdrawn	89 br/ac	0.95 spaces/bedroom
2016	Sturbridge Square	approved, site plan review	89 br/ac	0.85 spaces/bedroom
2017	Preston Row	approved, completed	55 br/ac	0.88 spaces/bedroom
2017	Whipple Duplexes (Uptown Village)	approved, completed	27 br/ac	0.95 spaces/bedroom
2017	Warren Street Stadium View	withdrawn	75 br/ac	0.82 spaces/bedroom
2017	Stonegate II	approved, site plan review	20 br/ac	1.09 spaces/bedroom
2017	Hearthstone Redevelopment PRD	approved, under construction	48 br/ac	0.78 spaces/bedroom
2018	Cedar Run Overlook	approved, under construction	35 br/ac	0.93 spaces/bedroom
2018	Uptown Commercial Phase III PRD	approved	48 br/ac	1.2 spaces/bedroom
2018	30-R at the CRC	approved, site plan review	58 br/ac	0.85 spaces/bedroom
2018	Frith/The View	approved	68 br/ac	0.88 spaces/bedroom
2018	Terrace View PRD 2018	approved, demolition	114 br/ac	0.77 spaces/bedroom

2018	1222 Patrick Henry	approved, under construction	66 br/ac	0.75 spaces/bedroom
2019	The Standard at Blacksburg	pending, under review	147 br/ac	0.8 sp/br + commercial

Loss of Commercial Land

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle 9:** With limited availability of commercial land, efficient use of the land is critical to provide services to a growing population. Redevelopment of aging commercial centers is the most significant opportunity to meet this need. Residential development should not encroach in these areas unless incorporated as part of a well-designed mixed use project.
- **CCP.12:** To serve the needs of the community, support opportunities for commercial development and redevelopment in appropriate locations.

Open Space

- **Comprehensive Plan Community Character Principle CCP.6:** Creation of public and private parks and recreation amenities is an important part of land use development decisions
- **CCP.17** The preservation of open spaces is an important part of community identity.
- **Zoning Ordinance Multifamily Use & Design Standard for open space, recreation, and trails §4216(a)(6)**
 - Except in the Downtown Commercial (DC) district and the Mixed Use (MXD) district, for any development of twenty (20) or more bedrooms, a minimum of twenty (20) percent of the gross land area shall be preserved as open space. A specific recreational activity area or areas shall be developed and maintained for the residents of the development as a part of this open space.
- **Zoning Ordinance Use & Design Standards §4328 Open Space General Standards:**
 - Composition of open space. Open space shall include the most sensitive resource areas of the site. All primary conservation areas located within the development shall be designated open space. In addition, the open space area should include locally significant features of the property. To the greatest extent practicable, all secondary conservation areas, up to at least the minimum required percentage of the remainder of the site, shall be designated open space. In addition, open space shall include areas of the site adjacent to designated open space on adjoining lots.
 - Configuration of open space. To the greatest extent practicable, open space land should be designated as a single block with logical straightforward boundaries. Fragmentation of open space land shall be minimized so that it is not divided into numerous small parcels located in various parts of the district. Long, thin strips of open space shall be avoided, unless necessary to connect other significant areas, or when they are designed to protect linear resources such as streams or trails.
 - Recreational use of open space. Open space intended for use as community or public recreation shall be integrated into the residential community in such a way as to maximize its accessibility to residents. It should have appropriate physical characteristics for recreational use.
 - Open space shall not include required yards, except for single-family detached.

Comprehensive Plan Map C Excerpts:

A 1. Commercial and Employment Areas

There are five core commercial and employment areas in Town where needs of employees, customers and suppliers converge. These areas in the Town contain the majority of the jobs in Blacksburg but do not incorporate home-based businesses, which have minimal land use impacts. These areas include all but one of the Town's gateway entrances (the other primary gateway, North Main Street, is discussed under *A 4. Suburban Residential Neighborhood Areas* later in this chapter).

Commercial and Employment Area Issues for the Future

- The activity in these areas generates traffic and congestion. Mass transit, alternative transportation and other creative options, such as staggered working hours and telecommuting, can mitigate some of these negative impacts.
- Connectivity between the non-residential uses in these areas provides options for employees and customers alike to move between the uses without having to go out into the main road network. Connections should be safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles.
- There is an opportunity to upgrade technology infrastructure in these areas so they can become more economically competitive.
- Unique utility demands of new Research and Development, Light Industrial or Manufacturing businesses in these areas will need to be accommodated and incorporated into the Town's infrastructure.
- With a variety of commercial and employment areas throughout the Town, strengthening and expanding that economic vitality while adding to a high quality of life for residents is a primary focus.
- Creating a master plan for site redevelopment in these areas helps to assure that appropriate site design is achieved and fosters successful collaboration.
- Site design elements such as street orientation, preservation of historic landmarks, adequate open space, and effective and efficient use of land are important to these areas and can address the Town's goal of economic, environmental and social sustainability.
- Implement the pending 2012 Economic Development Strategies once adopted (*Refer to the Jobs & Housing Chapter*).
- There are a number of aging commercial properties in these areas. Stimulating redevelopment or the refurbishing of existing buildings in accordance with the various Commercial Infill Design principles discussed earlier in this chapter will help make these properties contribute more, both to the Town's economic tax base and the Community Character Principles of Blacksburg.

A.4 Suburban Residential Neighborhoods

Suburban residential neighborhoods are commonly made up of detached single-family homes on quarter acre or larger sized lots. Homes are typically owner-occupied and known for their good exterior maintenance and appearance. They are on tree-lined streets with houses nestled under a full and mature tree canopy. Homes are often rented to families who complement the already existing family-oriented neighborhood. Many of these neighborhoods are located near parks and recreational amenities. The low density neighborhoods are located on the edges of town, and many about agricultural and open land. There is no transit service to single-family neighborhoods in these areas. These areas do not contain some of the urban/walkable amenities such as sidewalks and streetlights on all streets. The neighborhood street grid is not as well connected as older neighborhoods closer to Downtown. While commuting by biking and walking is possible, residents in these neighborhoods predominantly use their

personal automobile to get to places. Suburban neighborhoods are primarily located at the edges of town, where urban development transitions to rural areas. The North Main Street gateway entrance to Blacksburg is in this area. These neighborhoods developed as demand increased for individuals and families looking for less urban lifestyles and more land while remaining close to employment and commercial areas.

Suburban Residential Neighborhood Issues for the Future

- Parks are an integral part of these neighborhoods. Maintaining the high quality of parks requires the cooperation and support of the neighborhood residents and the Town. New developments in these areas should be encouraged to provide pocket parks within their developments.
- Neighborhoods in these areas should increase connectivity to other neighborhoods, Town parks and other recreational facilities.
- Other means of transportation should be supported in these predominantly vehicular-oriented traffic neighborhoods.
 - Construct new sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and off-road trails where appropriate.
 - Provide creative transit options.
- The Town has classified streets as arterial and collector roads to carry support traffic with local traffic connecting to local streets. Planned road connections and improvements will complete the Town's interconnected grid system to efficiently move traffic. Any road improvements should honor the Town's arterial and collector road system while reflecting the character of the surrounding area.
- While cul-de-sacs are typical suburban development features, they are not always desired in Blacksburg. New developments should connect to the existing street system and existing neighborhoods where possible and as allowed by topography. This should include the provision of stub-outs as part of the development review process.
- Additional small-scale commercial services will be needed in some of these areas as residential communities grow. These uses will be considered in large planned residential developments and should be pedestrian-oriented and should not generate additional traffic from outside the area.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Paul Patterson, Zoning Administrator

FROM: Randy Formica, Director, Engineering and GIS
Joshua Middleton, Town Engineer

DATE: September 11, 2019

SUBJECT: The Flats at Uptown Rezoning – Transportation Comments

Traffic Impact Analysis

As indicated by the rezoning documents the previously approved development proposed a total of 32 bedrooms with a desire to now increase to 64. As anticipated this would increase the number of vehicular trips that would be added to the existing road network. As highlighted by the tables on page 15, the anticipated vehicular trips would increase by 100% from 127 to 254 trips per day, with the highest peak hour volumes occurring in the PM with 19 total trips. Though a significant increase over the approved development volume, the addition of 254 trips would not be expected to have a substantial impact on the operational or safety aspects of the adjoining road network.

As represented within the rezoning documents, an in-depth analysis of the traffic impacts would not seem warranted as engineering judgement would limit the need for robust analysis based on the level of impact to the adjoining network. However, during review of the proposed trip generation values and occupancy limits, it was noted that there was some inconsistency that could again represent a significant increase in the proposed trip generation.

The trip generation values provided on page 15 indicated a total of 64 residences, or an occupancy of 1 resident per bedroom. However, the occupancy requested would allow for up to 4 unrelated persons per dwelling unit. As there are 28 dwelling units proposed, this would indicate that a total of 112 residences could be obtained. This would increase the trip generation values by another 81.5% from 254 to 461 trips per day. At this level the need to provide more in-depth analysis would be recommended to accurately represent the possible impacts proposed by the development.

Entrance Design & Layout

The entrance proposed along Giles Road appears to generally conform to Access Management Guidelines. However, grading information has not been provided and may create a significant challenge for the proposed location. It would be advisable to provide a preliminary grading plan or profile for the entrance such that it can be evaluated for conformance to the required standards. If issues were identified they could be addressed as part of the master plan layout ensuring that all desired functionality could be achieved.

Recommendations

- 1) A traffic impact analysis be performed to include volume counts, turn lane and taper warrants, and LOS analysis as needed, unless occupancy could be limited to a level comparable to that proposed by the rezoning document (page 15).
- 2) A grading plan or profile be provided for the proposed entrance.

August 27, 2019

Balzer and Associates

Attn: Steve Semones

80 College St., Suite H

Christiansburg, VA 24073

RE: **RZN19-0006 The Flats at Uptown PRD - Stormwater Concept Plan**

Dear Mr. Semones:

The Engineering Department has completed the review of The Flats at Uptown Rezoning to Planned Residential district stormwater concept plan. The Concept Plan is **approved** at this time. This current site, owned by J3 Properties, LLC consists of one parcel totaling 0.94 acres in size. Currently the area is rezoned for multifamily but this rezone is proposing a PRD with higher density allowed than current PRD zoning district. The proposed development would result in a multi-family structure with a maximum of 68 bedrooms per acre.

The stormwater management for this site is currently designed and approved for the installation of an underground detention facility to address quantity requirements and a water quality swale (similar to a bioretention basin) for the water quality requirements. This rezoning and density increase is resulting in the elimination of the on-site water quality treatment and replacing it with the purchase of 3.15 lbs/yr of off-site nutrient credits. ***This meets the minimum state and local stormwater requirements for water quality, but does no benefit to the improvement of local water quality in Blacksburg.***

The energy balance method is the technical criteria met for quantity, therefore additional downstream analysis past the property line is not required and no offsite information was provided. The small detention facility in conjunction with the impervious reduction will reduce the 1-year and 10-year storms from the current flows, as shown below.

	PRE-DEVELOPMENT		POST DEVELOPMENT	
Drainage Area	1	10	1	10
POA-1 (Giles)	1.58	5.21	0.79	5.20
POA-2 (N Main)	0.78	2.47	0.31	0.71

Comments to be addressed prior to Site Plan Approval:

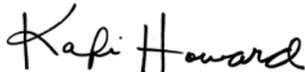
1. All references to AHV calculations must be included in the final package.
2. Access to the underground stormwater facility will need to be addressed.
3. Confirmation of Nutrient Bank Availability must be confirmed.

Notes:

1. The Town of Blacksburg Town has implemented a stormwater utility fee based on total impervious lot coverage. The rezoned area of this parcel would generate a stormwater fee of **\$163.64 dollars per month** for this site. For more information on the details of the Stormwater Utility fee, please go to: <http://www.blacksburg.gov/stormwaterfund>.

Please contact Kafi Howard with the Engineering Department at (540) 443-1354 or via email khoward@blacksburg.gov, if you have questions or concern regarding this review.

Sincerely,



Kafi Howard, Town Engineer – Stormwater, (540) 443-1354

ZONING INTERPRETATION
MEMORANDUM

TO: FILE

FROM: ANDREW WARREN, AICP, CZA, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT: INTERPRETATION # 11-01

**ZONING ORDINANCE; ARTICLE IV USE AND DESIGN STANDARDS;
PARKING IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING LINE DETERMINATION**

DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2011

CC: ANNE MCCLUNG, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND BUILDING
LAWRENCE SPENCER, TOWN ATTORNEY

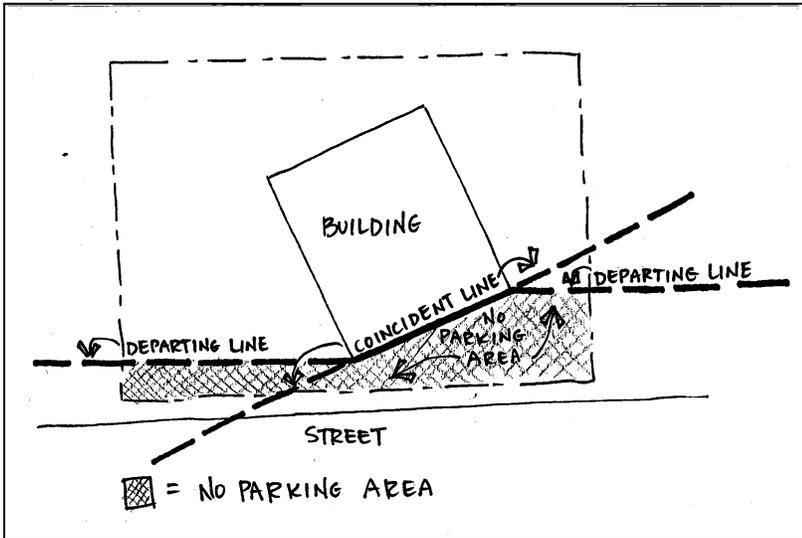
The Use and Design Standard Section of the Zoning Ordinance contains a number of instances where parking spaces are not allowed to be located in front of the building line. Based on criteria stated in the Ordinance, exceptions can be granted either through review by the Zoning Administrator during the plan review process or by the Planning Commission as part of the Rezoning or Conditional Use Permit process. The requirement for parking to be located behind the building line is to ensure that the front of a building faces the street and has a direct relationship with the street. Parking should not separate the building from the street. This is a common planning principle for neo-traditional design and the creation of pedestrian friendly spaces. Through the Comprehensive Plan and implementing mechanisms such as the Zoning Ordinance, the Town is trying to create a less auto-centric and more pedestrian scaled environment.

There are different ways that the plane of the building line can be drawn, and that affects where parking can be located (and, more specifically whether it is considered to be behind the building line or not.) The following text and diagrams illustrate situations where the question of “what constitutes parking in front of the building line.” These more thorough and illustrated interpretations address several common development scenarios.

1) In determining the allowable location of parking behind a front building line in case of an angled building,(where the front building line¹ is not parallel to the front property line), the front building line shall be coincident with the plane of the façade closest to the lot line and then parallel with the front lot line where the coincident line departs from the building. This is a determination consistent with the intent to require parking behind the front building line. Any interpretation allowing parking in front of any portion of the front façade is not consistent with the intent and not allowed. The illustration below, “Graphic 1,” shows the areas in which parking would not be permitted, based on this determination regarding the front building line.

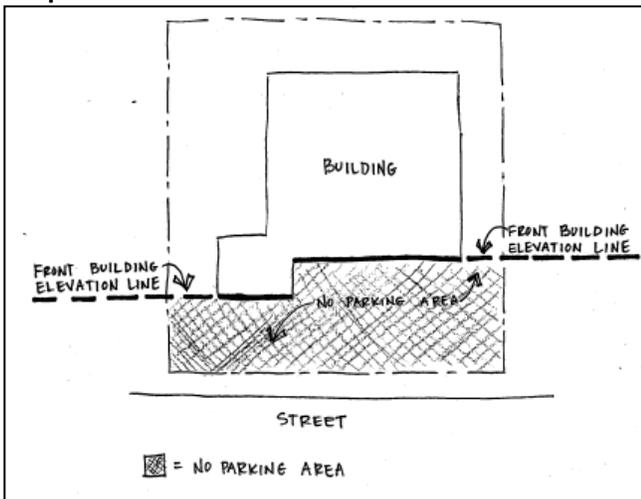
¹ Zoning Ordinance Section 2103 - BUILDING LINE—A straight line extending from the front, side, or rear of a building, coincident with the plane of the facade closest to the lot line.

Graphic 1.



2) In determining the allowable location of parking behind a front building line in case of a vestibule or projection from the front building façade², in accordance with the definition of façade, the entire front elevation is to be considered the front building line. Therefore, the allowable location of parking spaces shall be behind the furthest parallel façade constituting front building line. The illustration below, "Graphic 2," shows areas where parking would be permitted, based on this determination regarding the front building line.

Graphic 2.



This interpretation shall apply to any new site development plan submitted after the date of this memorandum. Any plans currently under review shall not be affected by this interpretation. Any rezoning or conditional use permit approved subject to a binding plan of development shall not be subject to this memorandum if compliance would violate compliance with the binding plan.

² FACADE—An entire outside wall of a structure, including wall faces, parapets, fascia, windows, and doors, of one complete elevation.

Kali Casper

From: Margaret Dean
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2019 11:31 AM
To: Paul Patterson
Subject: RZN19-0006 Flats at Uptown Sewer Comments

Paul,

I have no comments on this rezoning. I have already run the sewer capacity analysis for this site and there are no issues.

Margaret Dean
Town Engineer
Town of Blacksburg
400 South Main Street
O: 540-443-1352
C: 540-686-5250

****Please note that my email address has changed from mpagington@blacksburg.gov to mdean@blacksburg.gov****

RZN19-0006 The Flats at Uptown at 1401 Giles Road
Neighborhood Meeting
Thursday, August 29, 2019
5:30 PM

Town staff in attendance were Paul Patterson and Kasey Thomsen.

Attendees for the applicant were Justin Boyle, Jason Boyle and Ben Prices of J3 Properties and Steve Semones of Balzer and Associates.

The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

Paul Patterson opened the meeting by discussing the schedule of meetings yet to come, planning department review and responsibilities pertaining to this project; purpose of the neighborhood meeting and overview of the parcel in question. He also directed all those in attendance to where the application and all documents could be located on the Town of Blacksburg website.

Steve Semones gave a presentation on the history of the project, the already approved rezoning request and the changes the applicant wishes to make to the previously approved rezoning request.

Those in attendance were encouraged to make comments or ask any questions.

-An attendee asked why it was rezoned from Mixed Use to Residential originally.

-A next door neighbor to the property asked if the parking lot grade will be the same as his property. He is concerned that storm water and light pollution will go directly into his yard. He asked if there would be a fence or any other kind of screening and that any storm water needs to be emptied into a drainage system.

-A citizen asked if the storm water would drain down Giles Road or in a pipe and culvert down Giles Road.

-A citizen asked where the storm water goes currently.

-A citizen asked about sewer capacity.

-An attendee stated that sidewalk and sewer line have been promised for this area (Giles Road) but have not been constructed yet. What is the update on that project?

-An attendee stated that they were very wary of putting more population in this area.

-A citizen asked the applicant to talk about the ingress/egress of the property. Having been shown the ingress/egress on the map, the citizen stated that people will be cutting through Patrick Henry and onto Giles and Giles is already a "dicey" road to navigate. If you change the egress to closer to North Main, then it seems it would be safer.

- The property owner at 1402 Giles across from the egress stated that moving that egress further down would mean a great deal to them.
- A participant suggested having the ingress/egress across from the church to create less of a “headache” for surrounding homeowners.
- A citizen asked how many parking spaces you will have for this new project.
- A citizen asked where roommates and visitors would park.
- A neighbor stated that the plan was originally for the building to be commercial, then residential now you are requesting higher density residential. They stated that a 5-story building like the one the applicant is proposing is not compatible with the area and if the neighbor has to look at such a large building, they would rather it be filled with things they could possibly use (retail uses).
- An attendee pointed to Clay Court and stated that that was a nice 3-story building. A five –story building seems too big.
- A citizen queried that they had seen a project view from Main Street in Mr. Semones’s presentation. Was there a project view from Giles Road?
- A participant stated that it is the increased density that bothers them. It will be primarily students which means more cars and more people. Traffic is “unreal.” The bottom line is, there are too many people and cars and not enough room.
- An attendee stated that they feel that all parking will come out on Giles Road. This will be a big mess for those that live there and for those in the surrounding area.
- The pastor of the church across from the project asked how many bedrooms per unit. He questioned as others had in the meeting about 1-car per bedroom and the limited amount of space.
- A citizen stated that it was better to have fewer parking spaces to discourage more people from crowding the units. The amount of traffic and people and parking is a quality of life issue for the neighbors.
- The pastor to the church next door complimented the applicant on the work they have done on the property although he is concerned that the church parking lot will become excess parking for the residents and those that visit.
- An attendee stated that they have never had any issues or problems with the applicants so far and have never had any complaints but they are, as well, concerned about the increased density.
- An attendee asked what kind of tenants did the applicant see occupying these dwellings.
- A participant asked if you intend for 1 person to occupy 1 bedroom.
- A participant asked if the applicant could get Blacksburg Transit (BT) service to this area.
- Upon hearing that BT service might not be a possibility, a citizen asked that the Town work on it.
- A citizen asked how people will get onto North Main Street from the building to access and utilize the commercial spaces.

- An attendee asked about walkability. Are there bike paths, sidewalks or other pedestrian paths?
- An attendee asked about the total impervious area. Is what is proposed more than what you had before?
- A participant asked the applicant if they were charging rents that would be more accessible to young professionals and not students.
- Another participant stated that you can prohibit undergraduates as they are not a protected group.
- A citizen asked if there was any consideration for 1-bedroom units.
- An attendee asked if all the units on each floor will have the same layout. They questioned if not having a bathroom for each bedroom would be attractive for families.
- An attendee asked the applicant if there was another example of a complex in Town with the same elevation as the building they are proposing.
- A neighbor asked how far back the proposed building would be from Giles Road.
- A neighbor asked if the side of the building facing the Giles Road side would be all pavement or would there be some landscaping.
- A citizen asked if when/if the sidewalk on Giles Road comes to fruition, will the road width remain the same and the sidewalk will take up some of this development's space.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Neighborhood Meeting

The Flats at Uptown, 1401 Giles Road

Date

Thursday, August 29, 5:30 PM.

Name	Address	Email
STEVE SEMONES	80 CONVERSE ST. SUITE # CBUES	SSEMONES@baldwiner.cc
JASON BOYLE	3730 Hoxterford Bucks, VA 22000	jboyle@greenvalleybuildersinc.com
Tim Lutz	1315 Giles Rd, Blacksburg, VA 24060	tclutz@gmail.com
PAUL PATTERSON	TOWN OF BLACKSBURG	ppatterson@blacksburg.gov
DAVID PRICE	214 PRICE ST. N.E.	TRIP 41 DAVE@adk.edu
John M. Hopkins	1004 Willard Dr.	jhopkins1976@gmail.com
Adam Katche	1402 Giles Rd	akatche@gmail.com

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*PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE STAFF REPORT EMAILED TO YOU

Neighborhood Meeting

The Flats at Uptown, 1401 Giles Road

Date

Thursday, August 29, 5:30 PM.

Name	Address	Email	*
Lisa McCrickard	1501 Hoyt St, Bburg	LMCCRICKARD@gmail.com	✓
Bria He Ratche	2830 Windy Ridge Ln Bburg	bratche@comcast.net	
Bob Ratche	2830 Windy Ridge	bratche@gmail.com	
Ray Archerhart	1502 Whynagle Dr.	ragera@17.com	

Please Print Legibly

*PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE STAFF REPORT EMAILED TO YOU

Kali Casper

From: Brigitte Rotche <brotche@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2019 8:24 AM
To: Paul Patterson
Subject: [CAUTION EXTERNAL EMAIL] Fwd: The Flats

Here is the original message I tried to send. The system said it was over 2000 words and kept giving me an error message. Thank you for your quick response.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Brigitte Rotche <brotche@comcast.net>
Subject: The Flats
Date: September 3, 2019 at 8:17:34 PM EDT
To: jason@greenvalleybuildersinc.com, justin@greenvalleybuildersinc.com,
ben@greenvalleybuildersinc.com

I wanted to follow up with some thoughts on the August 29th meeting regarding your re-zoning request for “The Flats” project.

The development your firm has done on North Main Street has added much needed business opportunities to that end of town. The existing building on the site are attractive and functional and I appreciate that you locals from this area and considerate of the needs of the town, the community, and the neighbors in close proximity.

That said, I still have a couple of concerns with the development of the residential building as outlined in the presentation at the meeting.

The elevation of the building on the side facing Giles is out of line with anything else on that end of town. I drove North Main Street from Price’s Fork to the 460 bypass and nothing is that tall. Even at 3 stories with a gable roof in the student housing developments on Patrick Henry, The Flats is another story taller. If the residential building had 2 or maximally 3 floors over parking that would be more in line with the rest of town and less imposing, towering over the neighbors. If the town blocks the increase in the number of bedrooms per acre, that would not only eliminate 1 floor of apartments, it would decrease the need for parking and decrease the increased car traffic in the area, while still allowing significantly dense residential development on the site. If the site proves able to handle the residential load, a floor of residential use over commercial with egress onto North Main Street would still be an option at a later date.

The egress onto Giles could feasibly be shifted further north to align more with the church driveway and encourage traffic to exit onto Main Street rather than continue south on Giles to Patrick Henry. There is currently a gravel pull off there. This would lessen the impact on the houses that are directly across from the currently planned egress, and possible decrease the negative impact on the house directly south of the site.

I think if those two adjustments could be made, and if the firm and the town follow through with the stormwater, sidewalk and landscaping plans this project should be an asset to the residents living in the area. I appreciate your consideration of this input.

Brigitte Rotche
540-239-2729