

TO: Town Council

FROM: Kinsey O'Shea, AICP, Town Planner, KO

TITLE: RZN19-0002/ORD 1895-Request to rezone 33.871 acres of land formerly known as the Blacksburg High School at 520 Patrick Henry Drive (Tax Map Nos. 227-A 4, 227-A 4C & 227-A 4D) from R-4 Low Density Residential to PR Planned Residential by Jeanne Stosser of SAS Builders (applicant/contract purchaser) and Clint Pendleton of Parker Design Group (applicant's engineer/agent) for David Hagan of HS Development LLC (owner)

DATE: September 17, 2019

At the August 20, 2019 Town Council Work Session, the Town Council expressed a desire to have Planning Commission input regarding the changes that the applicant has made to the OBHS plan, application, and proffer statement since the Planning Commission public hearing on August 6, 2019. The Planning Commission recommended denial of the application by a vote of 6/0 with 2 members absent. Absent members were Kassoff and JB Jones.

Town Planning staff provided the Planning Commission with a memo summary of the changes to the application, plan, and proffer, as well as the latest proffer statement dated September 12, 2019 in advance of the Planning Commission work session on September 17, 2019.

Town staff took notes at the September 17, 2019 Planning Commission work session to provide to the Council in advance of the continued Town Council public hearing on September 24, 2019. Six members attended the work session. Absent were Colley, and JB Jones, who has retired. Below is a summary of the discussion of the Planning Commission's review of the changes to the application, plan, and proffer.

- Many commissioners were still concerned that no green building practices or features were being offered. Several expressed a desire to see any kind of sustainable features of the development. One commissioner reiterated that LEED Neighborhood would likely be a relatively easy target given a number of principles already incorporated into the development. The commissioner stated that perhaps there was a hesitance on the part of the developer with the fee associated; but noted that the fee could be passed on to the buyers/residents.
- While many commissioners appreciated the strengthened proffer language to restrict student occupancy, several had concerns about the discriminatory nature of the age restriction. One commissioner noted that the age restriction effectively rules out many residents who may have a 2-year degree, or a high school degree, but who are working. This commissioner stated that a work requirement would be better served, and meet the intent of the proffer to restrict undergraduate student occupancy in a different way. It was noted that even a half-time work requirement rules out many undergraduate students, but still allows for some graduate students to reside. To this commissioner, the proffer language seemed discriminatory to young people who are not students.
- One commissioner felt that the additional proffer language is a game-changer, and very strong, maybe even somewhat unprecedented.

- Several commissioners felt strongly that the language regarding abiding by the occupancy regulations should be added back into the proffer, even though it is a bit redundant.
- One commissioner noted that there is still a lack of programming for family- and community-oriented development such as community gardens.
- The clustered nature of the development was viewed both positively and negatively by commissioners. Some thought that the clustering of the development keeps a small footprint that is relatively sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood, while other commissioners felt that the development still felt too dense and clustered.
- Several commissioners were appreciative of the additional sidewalk and trail connections, though one commissioner noted the lack of any connection to the neighborhood to the southeast of the development.
- One commissioner noted that the changes made seemed sensitive and responsive to the concerns at the public hearing. This commissioner felt that overall, the development was relatively sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood. The commissioner stated that it is difficult to divorce the remainder of the property and the Town's interest in the property from the development request. The potential purchase of the property seems a fair and equitable deal, and that the whole project—both the development and the Town's purchase—are a benefit to the Town. This commissioner felt that the development proposal has improved over time through the process.
- A commissioner thought that the price point may be both somewhat affordable, and also out of reach for typical student housing.
- Commissioners stated their appreciation of the reduction in density and elimination of the largest 6-plex buildings, though some thought that the density of 100 units on the 11.22 acre development site was still too great.