



June 23, 2021

## **Comments on Chatham Park North Village Small Area Plan**

### **Major Points:**

#### **1. Does the Town of Pittsboro have the capacity and resources for this Review Process?**

- This is a very LARGE area plan. The North Village “Small Area” plan encompasses 2225 acres north of Pittsboro, bounded by the Haw River and Hwy. 15-501. Wrapped into one plan are 11 of the original 27 development areas for Chatham Park. The plan calls for 7548 dwelling units and 11 million sq/ft of commercial development.
- There is a very large amount of details and technical information to review:
  - 185 pages: North Village Small Area Plan
  - 95 pages: North Village Design Guidelines
  - 35 pages: North Village Fiscal Impact Analysis
  - 27 pages: North Village/Chatham Park Impact Analysis tables, with 40 year buildout

We urge the Town of Pittsboro to hire an outside consultant who can carefully review these documents, referring back to the Master Plan and all the approved “Elements” for comparison and continuity. At the very least, the Town Board must ask for more time for themselves, the staff and the public to adequately and completely review this plan, including input from the Pittsboro Parks and Recreation Dept. and Advisory Board.

#### **2. Chatham Park says Biophilic Design (connection with nature) is one of it’s goals for this development (pg. 5), but does North Village meet that definition?**

- Parks and open space - much more priority is needed for nature. We don’t believe that sand volley ball or a dog park should be in the most sensitive areas such as the proposed Haw River Nature Park, or that dead end trails should lead into the protected state conservation land. More should be done as “biophilic design” to be compatible with the Lower Haw River State Natural Area.
- Need for better wildlife connectivity and habitat protection. Using every riparian buffer as a human trail reduces the use of that important connectivity space by wildlife. More of the existing upland hardwood forests need to be preserved, which will also protect steep slopes and their headwater streams. This would also create corridors for connections between upland and lowland areas.

- Stormwater impact from North Village will be regionally significant. Chatham Park will be a dense urban/suburban development with all stormwater leading into the Haw River and Jordan Lake, which are already suffering from excess nutrients and sediment pollution. The use of green stormwater methods are encouraged in this SAP, but most of the development is expected to use the minimum state and Pittsboro requirements of conventional stormwater control methods, which have already led to Haw River and Jordan Lake pollution. The “Exceptional Design” stormwater point system within Chatham Park needs to be transparent, and available for the Town and public to see, for all construction projects.
- The SAP allows building on steep slopes which will lead to destruction of headwater ephemeral streams. Despite the recommendation in the Southwest Shore Conservation Assessment for only building on slopes of 15% or less, the North Village plan (pg. 98) allows for building on slopes of 20% and even allowing grading of “isolated slopes” greater than 20%. Even builders with approved sedimentation and erosion control plans have a very hard time keeping sediment from reaching streams, due to heavy rainfalls or operator errors. This has already occurred during construction of initial stages of Chatham Park.
- Sections 1.1, 1.3, and 1.2 near the Lower Haw River State Natural Area, include some of the densest residential building in areas of the steepest slopes, many are over 20% (Fig. 10.5 pg. 164). This is also the part of North Village with an intact Mixed Upland Hardwood forest (Fig. 10.8, pg. 167) which is important for the plant and animal communities. We urge you to consider reducing the number of dwelling units to leave more of the existing forest intact.
- Use of native plants, dark sky lighting, and green building design need to be requirements for building, not just suggestions. There are examples in the “North Village Design Guidelines” that contradict the goals of the North Village Small Area plan in terms of being in “biophilic” or in harmony with nature.

### **3. Who should pay for stormwater treatment and parks? Are current Pittsboro taxpayers being asked to pay for costs that should be the responsibility of Chatham Park?**

- The Town should not pay for stormwater treatment from private properties within Chatham Park, which they essentially will be doing by being the receiving end of stormwater treatment “trains” in street ROWs and by accepting “Hourglass Park” as a Town park, when it is essentially a 15 acre stormwater pond.
- The Town should not accept the costs of building parks with amenities, unless desired. The Town should not be asked to accept and pay for parks in advance of any tax revenue from new Chatham Park residents. The entire chart of park amenities and the parks building phasing (Table 9.3 pg.147) is problematic, and should be omitted.
- The Town should not be asked to accept (and build) a regional South Village Sports Center (pg. 148) in the Moncure area - far from North Village residents and long before there is tax

revenue to pay for it. Worse, this sports center is being used by Chatham Park to count towards their park land requirements instead of building or designating more parks and recreational areas in North Village.

#### **4. Design for Social Equity? Where is the Affordable Housing?**

Section F (page 7) of the introduction has some fine goals for creating a livable development, but they are not what are usually considered the definition of social equity. The Affordable Housing “Additional Element” has still not been approved for Chatham Park, and without it social equity in Chatham Park remains undefined. What will be the balance of different priced housing within North Village? Will Chatham Park join other developers in for in-lieu payments to a fund where affordable housing is built elsewhere?

#### **5. Design for the climate crisis**

An innovative development in the 21st century should include land set aside, and incentives, for solar and wind generation, as well as places for community garden and urban farming sites. And always - save more trees.

#### **6. The Development Agreement should come last**

The Development Agreement between the Town of Pittsboro and Chatham Park Inc. should be discussed and voted on only after the North Village Small Area Plan is finalized and approved.

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