

MOSBY MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

May 29, 2019

Albemarle County Planning Commission
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

On behalf of the Mosby Mountain Community Association and the owners and residents of our 121 member homes, we write to object to the proposed rezoning of Southwood Phase I (Planning Application Number ZMA201800003) due to the substantial concerns set forth below.

Mosby Mountain neighborhood is located directly across Old Lynchburg Road from the Southwood community. As such, any zoning changes will most directly impact Mosby Mountain. While we do not represent any other neighborhood, upon information and belief, our concerns are shared by the owners/residents of neighboring communities (e.g., Oak Hill Farm, Redfields, Whittington, Mountain Valley Farm).

More specifically, we object to the high intensity characteristics that would be permitted in the area referenced as "Block B" along Old Lynchburg Road. The proposed zoning is intended to maximize the economic potential desired by for-profit, third-party developers who wish to acquire those outparcels from Southwood. Such high intensity development is not consistent with the semirural character of the neighborhoods and existing development along Old Lynchburg Road (including the adjacent state park), would exacerbate already dangerous traffic conditions in the area, and would impair the property value of neighboring property owners.

Mosby Mountain supports the overall objectives of the Southwood redevelopment project as an innovative, not-for-profit endeavor for the benefit of our neighbors who reside in the Southwood community. We object, however, to rezoning that benefits for-profit development by third parties unrelated to Southwood and that is to the detriment of surrounding property owners and residents.

Only in recent months did we learn through news reports of the intention of Southwood/Habitat for Humanity to sell outparcels to for-profit developers. Subsequent review of the rezoning application and meetings with Southwood representatives revealed intentions for far higher development intensity than we could have imagined. Previous communications from Southwood representatives described residents' desire for commercial amenities such as retail shops and community spaces near the main entrance to the community; the rezoning application substantially exceeds what is necessary for those desires. We note that the multi-family developments envisioned for Block B would be largely market rate rental units, a departure from the overall themes of affordable housing and resident ownership that have engendered strong support for the Southwood project.

Four-story buildings that stretch 65-feet tall, are set back only 50 feet from Old Lynchburg Road, and have minimal setback from Hickory Street would be a radical departure from the existing R-2 zoning that applies to most of Block B. Such urban development characteristics would be incompatible with the semirural character of surrounding neighborhoods and the adjacent state park. The relative elevation of Block B is also noteworthy. Heading across Old Lynchburg Road into Mosby Mountain, the land slopes downward some fifty to seventy feet before it begins to rise again. From the perspective of some affected parcels, the new buildings would tower well over one hundred feet above.

Our residents choose to live in Mosby Mountain in large part due to the semirural character of the area. We do not oppose development around us; indeed Oak Hill Farm, Whittington, and Mountain Valley Farm have built up around us in the past five years. But to protect our owners' investment we depend on stable zoning so that new development is within expected boundaries. For that reason, we ask the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to reject the proposed high intensity rezoning for Block B.

Further, our review of the Timmons Group traffic study and the VDOT responses dated December 18, 2018, raise substantial concerns regarding the traffic impact of such dense new development. It is critical that these impacts and responsible mitigation be addressed as part of any rezoning process. We would be remiss not to note the dangerous traffic conditions on Old Lynchburg Road, particularly at the intersection with 5th Street Extended during the morning commute. Or those at the intersection of Stagecoach Road with 5th Street Extended which already requires daily police intervention to direct traffic. We encourage the Commission and the Board to address these issues prior to approval of any project that will add substantial additional traffic.

In the event that other considerations prevail and the Commission and Board are inclined to approve the proposed rezoning, we ask that substantial modifications be considered to alleviate some of the adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhoods, including but not limited to:

- Substantial increase to the required setbacks from Old Lynchburg Road (this could be accomplished on the conceptual site plan by moving some of the greenspace and parking to the front),
- Require a berm along Old Lynchburg Road with mature plantings and landscaping to provide a visual barrier at ground level and reduce the urban character of the development,
- Require the proposed trail buffer area to extend the full length of Block B (both sides of Hickory Street),
- Reduce the proposed building height maximums, and
- Require appropriate proffers related to infrastructure investment necessary to address the traffic challenges presented by increased density.

We look forward to your feedback regarding these issues and hope that constructive dialogue will yield a resolution that addresses the needs and concerns of all parties.

Respectfully,

Mosby Mountain Community Association
Board of Directors

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cc: Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
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