



**ADVISORY PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING
Greenbelt Community Center
August 5, 2009
Minutes Prepared by Amy Hofstra**

Meeting was called to order at 7:36pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT WERE Emmett Jordan, George Branyan, Brian Gibbons, Jim Cohen, and Sandy Lange.

CITY STAFF PRESENT WAS Amy Hofstra.

OTHER ATTENDEES present included Ken Merganer, Court Treuth, David Kaufman, Bill Orleans, Daryl Hutchinson, Claudia Shehata, John Lippert, Peter Pomponio, and Garth Beall.

The agenda and the minutes of June 17th and July 15th were approved with a few minor corrections. Mr. Branyan began the meeting by setting the agenda and introducing the guests and the Board. Ms. Hofstra then reviewed the project for guests who may have been present at previous meetings. Mr. Chernikoff had previously sent a report to Ms. Hofstra indicating that the oldest Craftstar development in Rockville appeared to have aged well.

The Board asked the representatives from Craftstar what changes could be made to the elevations. Mr. Mergner indicated that adding more features to the architecture would increase the cost of the product. New dormers in the roof might be possible, however, art shop windows, reverse gables, or stone and brick siding on side elevations would be more expensive. In response to a question from Mr. Branyan, Mr. Treuth indicated that the building elevation could not be raised because it is a slab on grade construction and the garage must be at grade.

The Board then discussed the size of the alley. Mr. Hutchinson indicated that he did not like the tiny alleys because they were hard to maneuver with a large vehicle. Mr. Beall indicated that small driveway aprons would create small decks. Mr. Branyan felt that a 12 foot driveway apron would create a hazard because parked cars would block the alley. Mr. Mergner indicated that approximately 70% of home buyers selected the four foot extension. Mr. Beall indicated that an homeowners associated (HOA) would be in place before any residents purchased their homes. Mr. Treuth indicated that the HOA could assume responsibility for ticketing vehicles which park in the alley. Mr. Orleans indicated that he did not like the undemocratic structure of HOAs.

The Board briefly reviewed the requirements of the covenant agreement. Mr. Cohen felt that it was not necessary to stick to the existing covenant agreements. Mr. Cohen also indicated that the images brought by Craftstar were flat and it was difficult to evaluate them. Mr. Kaufman agreed to send more images of the Craftstar homes to the Board for review.

In response to a question from Mr. Jordan, Mr. Kaufman indicated that Craftstar would pre-select where each unit was placed to ensure that the houses did not look the same as neighboring houses.

Mr. Lippert asked the representatives about the HERS rating of their Energy Star homes. Mr. Treuth indicated that they have achieved a rating of 70, however, he could not confirm the rating for the townhouses being proposed for Greenbelt Station. Mr. Lippert indicated that a HERS rating of 70 would be pretty good. However, in his experience, Mr. Lippert found that many builders include only a few features in order to reach a HERS rating of 85 and achieve the energy star label. Mr. Mergner indicated that Craftstar also hires a private firm to sort and recycle construction debris.

Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Hutchinson asked for an update regarding the rest of the north and south core developments. Mr. Gibbons was concerned that this was a risky development because it is isolated and not connected to the Metro Station without the north/south connector road. Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Branyan both felt that the retail core of the development was critical to its success. Mr. Gibbons felt that the project has a higher likelihood of success if it is developed as an entire community. Mr. Beall responded that NVR would likely be constructing the two over two homes, and Metropark LLC had a tentative four year loan extension with the bank. Mr. Beall indicated that his office would contact the City of Greenbelt in the next 30 to 60 days to address their outstanding obligations.

The Board agreed that another meeting was required before a recommendation to Council could be made. The Board agreed to revisit this issue at their next meeting on August 19th. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.