



Charlotte Housing Authority

Boulevard Homes Rezoning, Petition #2009-043

Petitioner Open House Forum

Meeting Date: Thursday, April 28, 2009; 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Location: Southwest Recreation Center
1720 Vilma Street; Charlotte, NC 28208

Prepared By: Eric Orozco, Neighboring Concepts

Attendees: Effie E. Woods, Local Resident
Elaine Cooper, Local Resident
Willie Simpkins, Local Resident
Mary Simpkins, Local Resident
Louise Pruitt, Local Resident
Thomas L. Jones, Local Resident
Dorothy Waddy, Local Resident
Twyla Taylor, Charlotte Housing Authority
Chris Ogunrinde, Neighboring Concepts
Eric Orozco, Neighboring Concepts

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

The purpose of the meeting was to receive comments from the public regarding the CHA rezoning petition for Boulevard Homes, a 40 acre site at the corner of West Boulevard and Billy Graham Parkway (just east of the Parkway and Taggart Creek). The petition is to rezone the CHA properties from R22-MF to MUDD-O, in order to develop up to 460 multi-family units, a K-8 CMS School, a Child Development Center, an Apartment Leasing Office, an Indoor Track, a Greenway and other open space areas and residential amenities. At the meeting, residents were given a forum to voice their thoughts, concerns, priorities and recommendations regarding the CHA's redevelopment proposal for the study area, the CHA's most current candidate for a HOPE VI grant. The public input and comments that were recorded at the meeting (which are summarized herein following), and will provide the city staff and petitioner with a preliminary response of local homeowners and stakeholders toward the proposal.

1) Opening Remarks

Agenda and Introductions

Chris Ogunrinde opened the meeting by thanking the attendees for coming. He introduced Twyla from the CHA, himself and Eric Orozco of Neighboring Concepts. Chris explained Neighboring Concepts is part of the consultant team preparing the rezoning petition on behalf of the CHA. They are assisting the architects and planners Wallace + Perdomo, Inc. and the grant-writing firm the Boulevard Group, Inc. to help secure a HOPE VI grant for the redevelopment of the aging CHA Boulevard Homes site, which shall be redeveloped into a new residential community integrated with a school, or “educational village”.

Chris explained that the meeting was the first of a series of meeting in the rezoning process. Its purpose is to present to the public the Boulevard Homes development plan being petitioned for rezoning to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning, and to gather the attendees’ feedback or field any questions concerning the petition and development proposal.

Project Overview

Chris then gave a brief overview of the redevelopment project.

Built in 1969, the CHA’s Boulevard Homes site is a 300 unit housing community, which is the oldest property in CHA’s portfolio yet to be improved. In 2006, the CHA conducted a study to investigate the improvement options for the site, and a decision was made that a total redevelopment of the site would be the best solution to achieve higher and better use of the site (the options for improvement included: 100% rehab, 100% redevelopment, and a 50/50 option to renovate 50% and rebuild 50%). The primary funding source for such redevelopment available are Federally funded HOPE VI grants, which are awarded to different housing authorities by HUD based on a variety of outcomes, all of which the CHA is diligently pursuing, including the advantageous inclusion of a new CMS school site to serve local residents and provide “magnet type” educational programs. The CHA has successfully pursued and been awarded HOPE VI grants in the past, and has used these grants to redevelop Park at Oaklawn, Piedmont Courts, First Ward, and others. The funding allows the CHA to build the new infrastructure and site development, allowing the development of below-market and affordable rental units in a mixed-income development. Twyla mentioned that this would be the sixth HOPE VI grant that the CHA has pursued.

1) Plan Presentation

Chris provided an overview of 40.6 acre development and the surrounding area context, including the CPCC Harris campus and Southwest Park to the north, and the Little Rock Apartments to the east. Chris described the plan and briefly explained the different uses and their site locations.

Chris explained that this plan leverages several key partnerships for a holistic approach to public housing improving life and educational services for families. The CHA is partnering with CMS to create a new K-8 school much needed in the area, a child development center named the Ruckus House, the Mecklenburg Co. Park & Recreation Department (to be served by greenway connections to the Southwest Park and Recreation Center), CATS (to be served by three bus stops and future routing options) and CPCC (which shall partner with the school and recreation center for educational programs). The overall goal is to redevelop Boulevard Homes into an "educational village", which supports families in the community with the fuller resources and educational opportunities they need for success.

The development goal is to replace and even exceed the number of housing units of housing than exists, as many as up to 340 new multi-family units and up to 120 units of Elderly Housing. A 16,500 SF Development Center and a 200,000 SF K-8 School, Gym and Community Service Center will also be constructed, with a possibility being studied to include a 200 meter indoor track facility. The Housing Authority will provide land and infrastructure, including water, sewer, and open space. The CHA has recently put out an RFP for developers to build out the (all-rental) housing component, which shall include the Elderly Housing building and a mix of towns, walk-up flats and apartments.

3) Open House Question and Answer Session

Chris then asked the attendees if there were any concerns or questions. The following questions, comments and answers were provided at the meeting:

Q: What is happening with Little Rock?

A: Chris and Twyla responded that the CHA is working with the owners of the Little Rock Apartments to address future management of the site. For example, the CHA is in talks with the current owners of the Little Rock Apartments to assure that a coordinated security plan is in place.

Q: What is the actual rezoning to?

A: To change from R-22 MF to MUDD (Optional). The intention is to create a development very similar to Arbor Glen.

Q: Is there opportunity to build more on the Southwest Park side?

A: No. Chris explained that the wooded areas on the plan just north of the Boulevard Homes site actually have a very difficult topography. Park and Rec currently has plans for hiking/biking trails in the area as not even playing fields can be located there.

Q: Is there opportunity to build a grocery or retail space?

A: We looked at that potential but it appeared unsupportable, both from a retail supportability aspect and due to the limited site area for the school and the community and child care needs of the residents.

Q: What about on the other side of West Boulevard?

A: That is a potential. However, there is an interchange project planned for that area.

Q: There will be a ramp?

A: Yes. There is a future NCDOT plan to grade separate West Boulevard and Billy Graham, potentially in 5 to 15 years. The questioner responded that the properties belonged to his family. Chris explained NCDOT would approach the property owners once the state allocated funds to the project, but beyond that neither he nor the CHA are in a position to speak on behalf of the NCDOT as to details regarding the ramp project.

Q: How soon will the (Boulevard Homes) redevelopment begin?

A: As mentioned, the CHA has hired a grant writer to assist the CHA with the HOPE VI application. Notice of Grant Availability is expected in June. If the grant is awarded, demolition work is expected to begin as soon as 2010.

Q: How will the current residents be temporarily housed?

A: Some of the families will be relocated to other public housing communities and some will receive housing vouchers. Each individual household chooses its option and receives counseling services for a relocation to assist their needs as well as moving assistance. Some families will be in a position to transition into the private sector (through a homeownership program). As for families that choose to return to the new development once space is available, Twyla explained, the planned Community Service Center will be provided in the new community to continue to assist families to transition to financial independence. The Center, which will contain a computer lab and provide spaces for community activities and services, shall be integrated with the K-8 school and a 200 m. indoor track.

Q: Will the school serve the community itself?

A: Absolutely. Twyla explained that while it will offer a "magnet type" program, the residents of the community and immediate area would all be served by the school. She emphasized the importance of the school as a keystone for the proposal. Pertaining the Community Service Center in the school, Park & Recreation has agreed to partner to manage and operate programs. Overall, the siting of all community supportive services to serve the local community will be tied to the HOPE VI Grant requirements. An attendee responded that this was going to really be "a blessing" for those who live there.

Q: Who will be served by the Elderly Housing?

A: Twyla responded: Those 55 and over. As with the rest of the multi-family units percentage of the units will be set aside for housing assistance, much like those in First Ward.

Chris: Any other comments?

An attendee responded: "Got a good plan!"

As Chris highlighted the good track record of CHA to implement successful projects, a few latecomers joined the meeting.

4) Review and Second Question and Answer Session

Chris gave a summarized recap of the project and rezoning plan for the benefit of the late comers. Afterwards, he and Twyla fielded the following questions:

Q: What will happen with Little Rock?

A: We have had conversations with Little Rock concerning a management agreement for the property. For the time being, the present apartments will stay where they are due to Section 8 contracts.

Q: Do you want us to approve (of) this plan?

A: We're simply here to present the proposal and address any questions, comments, concerns you may have. It is your right to speak for or against the petition at any public hearing.

Q: How will the proposed school impact Reid Park Elementary?

A: Currently the entire CMS system is overcrowded...The proposed K-8 school is a true current need.

Q: Will there be a Soccer Field?

A: No, but Park and Recreation has a plan for ball fields near this recreation facility. We are partnering with CPCC and Park & Rec to run programs out of shared facilities, including this one (such as after school activities, GED, basic literacy, job prep).

Q: Will (nearby residential) property values go up?

A: It is likely that they might.

Q: Are taxes going up?

A: It may be likely. A resident attending the meeting responded: We need to work on that as West Corridor community to hold (our tax) payments down so that we don't lose our properties.

Q: Will the city have any plans in the future for addressing potential property tax increases?

A: If that is the outcome, most likely (although we cannot speak on the City's behalf).

Chris asked if there were any further questions/comments.

Q: How did you advertise this?

A: We sent out letters to local residents and stakeholders, which the City provided us with.

Q: How many letters did you send out?

A: We sent out about 40 to residents and neighborhood groups.

Q: How did you choose the date?

A: The availability of this facility in the rezoning schedule. The questioner suggested that next time the petitioner should make every effort not schedule a meeting with another public meeting nearby – due to the Ponderosa NIP public meeting some folks who would have been interested couldn't show up today.

5) Closing Remarks

Chris referred to the upcoming events for the petition process and thanked all for attending.

Boulevard Homes Redevelopment Rezoning Petition 09-43

Date: April 28, 2009

Time: 6:30 pm

Attendee's Name

Address/Organization

1. ERIC OROZCO NEIGHBORING CONCEPTS eric@neighboringconcepts.com
2. TWYLA TAYLOR Charlotte Housing Auth. ttaylor@CHA-NC.ORG
3. Effie Z Woods
4. Elaine Cooper
5. Willie Mae Simkins simkins2@bellsouth.net
6. Louise Pruitt
7. Thomas L. Jones
8. Dorothy WADDY djwaddy@bellsouth.net
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