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Subject: Re: Chatham County Nov. 10 Planning Board Meeting - Agenda Item VII.1 - 919 Storage (15-501 North Proposed Self Storage Development Application)

To: Jason Sullivan chathamncplanning@gmail.com

Cc: George Lucier <glucier5@gmail.com>, Caroline Siverson <cwsiverson@gmail.com>

George (Planning Board Members) and County Staff - Please accept the following for the records and in the event I am unable to present at the virtual meeting, to be read by staff or the planning board at the November 10 Planning Board Meeting as Public Comments associated with Agenda Item VII.1 - 919 Storage (15-501 North Proposed Self Storage Development Application):

This morning, the public was provided access to the applicants newest application materials that they produced as a result of County Staff and Public concerns voiced prior to October 6 Planning Board Meeting. In the essence of time as there has not been adequate time for the public (and I am assuming the Planning Board and County Staff) to fully digest, review and analyze the produced materials I offer the following immediate questions and comments on the standards that the applicant was intending to address via their additional information:

Standard #2

By the virtue of purposely not acknowledging the drastic oversupply of existing self storage within just a 1/2 mile - 1 mile of the facility, the applicant are trying to dismiss what's happening in the immediate surrounding area which is unacceptable and vital to understanding the true "needs" or "essential" aspects of this rezoning request. There is, based on the applicants own information, an approximate 50,000 sf of vacant/available self storage just within 1 mile of the subject site which is the equivalency of nearly one fully unoccupied storage facility. The planning board needs to be able to understand what the applicant and their analyst are presenting in their new study. Based on the inadequate amount of time being able to look at the document, I can already see a surplus of specific questions that need to be asked in order for you to rest assured knowing that there is or isn't an essential need in the County for this type of highly disputed development (I have included these questions to the county staff and planning board chair).

As for the general welfare of the community and community members, how will this development be a positive contribution? More than 3x the number of people in favor of this development have voiced opposition of the proposed development? This proposed development is not providing an essential service that is not already readily available via the surplus of available self storage space within just a 1/2 mile - 1 mile of the subject site (again there is over 50,000 sf of available storage within just this area). In fact, the approval of such a development would be detrimental to the welfare some of local residents and small business owners. Bill and Judy Akridge moved to Chatham County in 1963 and in 1994 built from the ground up their self storage facility, Chatharidge Self Storage which they personally continue to operate to this day. The applicant and their market analyst have deliberately disregarded Bill

and Judy along with their small business, as they deemed this storage facility “insignificant in the overall market”, didn’t include them in their analysis associated with calculating supply in the area but will be more than happy to take away their business lifeline of the population they serve to help inflate their demand calculations. Bill and Judy are the rural character that the Comprehensive Plan looked to preserve and their welfare is absolutely on the line when it comes to the approval of this application. I ask, is the planning board going to openly disregard this County resident and small business just as the applicant and their analyst did?

Standard #3

There is no consistency associated with the comprehensive plan goals of the land use or neighborhood center descriptions and this proposed development. Reference of “service” through the land-use plan and associated corridor market profile describe services associated with general retail uses and mixed-use commercial, such as: insurance, financial and medical businesses (typical professional service uses that would be found in a mixed-use and retail setting).

The applicant references its proposed development being consistent with the existing self storage facility that is directly across the street from the subject property and states that it also reserved the same conditional rezoning that is being requested by the applicant. What is being left out is that a.) the existing self storage facility was approved prior to the comprehensive plan being adopted, and b.) at the time of the rezoning of the existing self storage facility immediate market area had a total of approximately 40,000 sf of self storage vs the now 189,869 sf of existing self storage (not including the subject site). To be clear, at the time of the existing self storage facility being approved there was no comprehensive plan and there was less total existing self storage in the immediate area than there is now vacancy of self storage in that same immediate market area.

In closing, concern and dispute of the application pertain to the following:

The proposed development is not essential or desirable;

The proposed development will be detrimental to the welfare of the community and will impair the character of the adjoining areas;

The proposed development is not consistent with the objectives of the land use plan; and,

The application does not meet all of the standards that must be found in the affirmative to be approved for a rezoning per the County Ordinance.

I respectfully request that the Planning Board not make a vote to approve or disapprove this application at this time until they can fully comprehend all of the data and factual points associated with it and that a public comment period or meeting be able to take place to assure all concerns are discussed and clarified.

As an understanding of the supply and demand in this market is imperative, I implore the County staff and the Planning Board to ask and understand the following as these are all critical aspects to understanding the supply and demand associated with this proposed development:

What is the analyst saying is the demand square footage per person for this subject property?

Why is the market analyst NOT including the 1 mile radius in their analysis seeing that all of those facilities are associated with the competition and vital for the understanding of the overall proposed development?

Why does the market analyst NOT include some of the existing facilities in their supply and demand estimate? All of the facilities that are existing and proposed within the market area should be shown as they are all absorbing some of the markets population.

Is the analyst basing the “expansion forecast” based on the current household calculations or future?

Why is the analyst NOT showing the supply and demand outcomes when you incorporate their 100,000 sf planned facility?

The report states that the seasonal demand is due to the local colleges and that the owner of the facility should “plan for significant annual swings in the occupancy related to seasonal demand”. Understanding that a driving aspect to the success of the proposed facility is based on occupancy from students (for two seasons each year out of 4), shouldn’t vast consideration be given to all of the proposed facilities in the Chapel Hill area be given that are in the planning stages (~180,000 sf between three planned facilities including one that 919 Storage is also working on up there) as students will likely gravitate to a closer facility to their campus vs the 5 mile +/- drive to the subject site? It is easy to understand that all of the facilities to the north of the UNC campus will compete against and likely have a leg up on the immediate micro market and is even more reason that a facility should not be developed relying on a student population filling the facility (also clearly showing that this is not a local County need in this case).

In short, while the applicant has passed along new information, it is critical to understand what the information is that they passed along. The above are some immediate questions that come to mind as there is no clear answer to any of these and there should be as it is a analytical equation based on data set points. I also question some of the information that is contained in the report ie: Chatharidge Self Storage facility SF is short by nearly 6,000 sf, the Farrell Storage facility is short by nearly 20,000 sf.

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