

Good evening Planning Board members,

My name is Alicia Koblansky, I am a resident of Chatham County and tonight I am speaking regarding the amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances proposed by the Vickers Bennet group.

The addition of the new section of a mixed used development to include a single-family Cluster residential component within the Compact residential and Community Center as proposed does not sufficiently define their impact on existing surrounding communities. As stated by the Vickers Bennet group, they request that the location limitation of this new regulation be deleted, and the county follow its land use policy when considering a rezoning request. Therefore, the increase in residential density applies to all in the county and not just "Centers" and "Villages" as defined in the current Comprehensive Plan. This proposal at this time does not address the varied situations across the county. For example, not all areas of Chatham county have access to public water provided by Chatham County, nor a centralized wastewater treatment plant. What would be the impact of 100 new wells that go down 500ft beside adjacent properties that have wells that only go down 150ft.

In the Northeast section of our county, the maximum residential density is governed by the Watershed Ordinance and protecting the Jordon Lake Watershed, which is a massive regional resource that is utilized by 10 counties, 27 municipalities and over 700,000 water customers. Our decisions to increase density in these regions in an uncontrolled way, will affect more than those in our immediate community.

In the revised amendment, the Maximum Built Upon Area and Residential Density allowed in a Mixed Use Cluster Residential district shall be no greater than twenty-four percent (24%) of the total project area. However, it is not clear if the developer could divide the project into phases and would the 24% of BUA be for the first phase or for the entirety of a multi-phase project, especially with the removal of the Net Land Area Computation. In addition, section D continues the requirement of at least 20% of the BUA be non-residential with the goal keeping the ratio of residential and commercial balanced, therefore this introduces the possibility of commercial and/or light industry being built directly adjacent to residential districts that have been zone for lower density.

The current Compact Communities Ordinance was implemented to protect Chatham County's character by adequately buffering compact communities from neighboring properties and roadways. In the current proposal, as written, a 100ft setback will be apply to all residential and non-residential buildings and structures along the exterior boundary. There is no information provided to a true vegetative perimeter buffer between the adjacent properties and the proposed new zoning. Within a 100ft setback from a building and/or structure stills allows the possibility of parking lots, lighting, dog parks and waste collection for commercial and light industry being adjacent to established residential zones without optimal buffering.

The Vickers Group refer to the Compact Communities Ordinance throughout their proposed amendment. The CCO provides zoning regulations made in accordance with the comprehensive plan, that was designed to promote public health, safety, and general welfare. We know the CCO is not perfect, that in reality more specific language should have been included. For example, other counties in NC include information in regard to the specific pipes that can be used for removal of wastewater. But even with the CCO faults it provides a starting point for increase residential density; two dwellings units for each acre of gross land in the project and capping the amount of dwellings thereby providing some protection to the existing communities.

The Vickers Group new text amendments, provides a starting point to discuss the addition or a modification to current zoning ordinances to provide a better balance of residential and non-residential for Chatham County. However, as written, the new text amendments are too vague and imprecise to provide correct guidance for this type of zoning. As we have learned from the CCO, we can not afford vague and imprecise language. Also additional consideration must be included in this new zoning due to the particularities of our county compared to our sister counties which provides public water and public wastewater removal to a majority of areas that have increase residential and commercial density.

These are major amendments that will have lasting impacts on the local and surrounding communities. Precedence must be set for these larger developments. These are not simply building a dozen houses. These developers are asking that you change policy, so let's work towards a solution that will not cripple the

established communities and an UDO that will be structured to support those existing here now.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Planning Board,

My name is Charles Esther, and I would like to take a few minutes to express my concerns with the amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances proposed by the Vickers-Bennett Group.

These amendments seek to add a new Mixed Use-Cluster Residential zone with higher residential density than existing zones. The applicants' justification states that these amendments are needed to meet the objectives of the Plan Chatham comprehensive plan, which in their view calls for higher residential density within specific areas along the 15-501 corridor. In fact, the applicants were very clear in their presentation to the Board of Commissioners that their proposed zoning would only apply to Compact Residential and Community Center areas as designated by Plan Chatham. However, the applicants were subsequently informed that ordinances cannot utilize a policy statement like Plan Chatham to define geographic regions. To correct this error, the applicants now propose to remove geographic restrictions entirely and allow their proposed zone to apply throughout the county. Their entire rationale for these amendments was the need for higher residential density within specific regions of the county. Without geographic restrictions, almost nothing in their justification still applies.

It is important to note that these amendments are not necessary to permit cluster residential within a Mixed Use Zone. The current Subdivision Ordinance includes several options for clusters within residential zones, including Planned Residential Development and Conservation Subdivisions. Any of these would be available as residential uses within a Mixed Use Zone under the existing ordinances.

What the Vickers-Bennett amendments really seek to do is double the allowable residential density within Mixed Use Zones throughout the County. This is far higher than the 10% density bonus that is allowed for cluster residential within a Conservation Subdivision. Furthermore, the applicants intend for this increased density to apply to all Mixed Use zones, not just the new Mixed-Use Cluster Residential. That is apparent from the fact that the amendment to the Watershed Ordinance specifically mentions increased density for mixed use and mixed use-cluster residential separately. The applicants provide no justification for this wide reaching change or any analysis of its environmental impact.

In short, the proposed amendments are flawed and do not meet the objectives of Plan Chatham. They are not the way to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Any changes to the ordinances need to be carefully considered to achieve the optimal balance of economic and environmental needs. Chatham County already has a process in place to do just that: the Unified Development Ordinance. The UDO will allow all stakeholders a voice in modifying the ordinances, not just a developer group. I urge the Planning Board to recommend against adoption of the Vickers-Bennett amendments and let changes to the ordinances take place through the UDO process.

Thank you