

10/12/2024

Good evening, members of the board,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns regarding the proposed public walking trail along Wilkinson's Creek in relation to the Hamlet's Reserve development.

As a resident who lives near the creek, I value the privacy and natural beauty this rural area provides. I moved to this remote acreage specifically to enjoy a quieter, more secluded lifestyle. I not only appreciate the appeal of natural spaces but also feel strongly that they should be thoughtfully protected. In the case of this proposed trail, I see an opportunity for a developer to market "outdoor living" to potential buyers, while gaining county support under the appearance of contributing to Chatham's parks and trails goals. This resembles the Briar Chapel trails, which primarily serve neighborhood residents rather than the wider public.

Additionally, Chatham County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan has already prioritized the Lower Haw River corridor, with a commitment to work with the Friends of the Lower Haw on developing that area. That project represents a much more inclusive use of resources that could truly serve the whole county in a cohesive manner.

In closing, I urge the board to prioritize initiatives that offer inclusive access to nature while respecting current residents' privacy in rural areas like mine.

Thank you for your attention.

-Laura Sandvik