



**CHATHAM COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ABSTRACT**

ITEM NUMBER:
MEETING DATE:
7-16-07

PART A

Subject:

Request by Sears Design Group, P. A. on behalf of Fitch Creations for subdivision sketch design approval of **“The Knolls At Ferrington”**, consisting of 30 lots on 20 acres, located off SR-1817, Millcroft and SR-1859, South Langdon Place, Williams Township.

Action Requested:

See Recommendations.

Attachments:

1. Major subdivision application.
2. ArcView map, parcel #19333
3. Letter from Alan R. Keith, P. E. regarding the Ferrington WWTP capacity.
4. Letter from Dan Sears, Sears Design Group, dated June 15, 2007.
5. Revised sketch design map titled “The Knolls at Ferrington”, prepared by Sears Design Group, P. A., dated 6/15/07

Submitted By:

Keith Megginson, Planning Director

Date

County Manager Review:

Charlie Horne, County Manager

Date

This abstract requires review by:

County Attorney

Date Reviewed

Finance Officer

Date Reviewed

Budget Officer

Date Reviewed

PART B

Re: The Knolls at Ferrington

Introduction / Background / Previous Board Actions:

The subject property is part of the approved Planned Unit Development for the Village of Ferrington which includes 1602 dwelling units on approximately 925 acres. The property is in a WSIV-Protected Area watershed district and requires a 50 foot water hazard setback / vegetative stream buffer from creeks and streams. The property is not within a portion of the 100 year flood plain.

Issues for Further Discussion and Analysis: The developer is requesting sketch design approval of "The Knolls at Ferrington" consisting of 30 townhouse lots on 20 acres. Per Dan Sears, Sears Design Group, P. A., "These units will be Townhouse type ownership where the owner owns fee simple the land under and immediately around his home, and the Homeowners' Association, of all these owners, owns the common land upon which the homes are clustered." There are areas of open space and common lands within this project. See sketch plan Section SPI – 5 Property Information for a breakdown of the various areas. The Knolls at Ferrington will be similar to existing Weathersfield and Beechmast town homes in regard to ownership of the open space and common lands.

County water is available and will be utilized. Lots will be served by the Ferrington Wastewater Treatment Plant. Attachment # 3 is verification / certification from Alan R. Keith, P. E., with Diehl & Phillips, P. A. that the Ferrington WWTP plant currently has capacity to serve the Barber Lands Subdivision and the Knolls at Ferrington.

Since the June 5th Planning Board meeting, the developer has met with many of the Ferrington homeowners to hear their concerns regarding access and traffic. Per Dan Sears, Mr. R. B. Fitch, the developer has agreed to relocate the entry to the Knolls from South Langdon, as shown on the original plan, to Millcroft. The revised sketch plan included in this packet, attachment # 5, shows the entrance relocation. Attachment # 4 addresses other commitments the developer is making to the homeowners.

Streams shown on the sketch plan are perennial and have the required 50 foot per side water hazard setback / vegetative stream buffer, measured from the top of the bank landward. During the discussion the Planning Board requested that the buffers be increased to 100 feet each side of the stream bank. Dan Sears, representative for the developer, stated that due to the development being approved as a PUD that it has vested rights and cannot be required to increase the buffers. The Planning Board stated that they are requesting the additional buffers although it is not a part of their recommendation.

Staff's review of the Natural Heritage Program shows the property to potentially contain the Loggerhead Shrike, which is county wide. The subject property also lies within the Big Woods Road Upland Forests area. The Inventory of the Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Chatham County dated June 1992 states "The Big woods is the largest tract of unbroken upland forest remaining in the county, if not the entire triangle region. As such, it serves as an important wildlife reservoir, supplying the entire area through its connections via the Jordan Lake game lands to the Haw River, New Hope Creek, and Morgan Creek watersheds.....Conservation

Re: The Knolls at Ferrington

Issues for Further Discussion and Analysis – con't

Recommendations: The value of this tract to wildlife requires that its unbroken, wooded character be preserved. Although its rugged terrain continues to offer some degree of protection, development is already making noticeable inroads, particularly along the Jordan Lake frontage. Ideally, this tract will continue to be used primarily for forestry, although the owners should be encouraged to shift away from clear-cutting to the use of selective harvesting, shelter wood stands, and other practices less disruptive to wildlife (particularly wild turkey and bobcat).”

Various subdivision of land has occurred in this area since this report was prepared including Big Woods Hills, The Preserve, The Legacy at Jordan Lake, and Windfall Creek. An e-mail sent to staff from Alan Weakley dated July 10 discusses concerns regarding development within the Natural Heritage Program Area and the Big Woods Road Upland Forest Significant Natural Heritage Area. A copy of these comments and a map showing the areas can be viewed on the Planning Department web site under “Barber Lands” – public comments. These comments refer to both the Barber Land and The Knolls project. Board discussion followed regarding subdivision projects being allowed within these areas, increased buffer requirements along creeks and streams to provide wildlife corridors, and loss of the areas due to increased development.

Staff meets monthly (and/or receives written comments) with Jacqueline Presley, Urban Wildlife Biologist, with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission to review projects submitted for subdivision development. Ms. Presley sends her comments on the projects she thinks warrant additional protection beyond the county’s current requirements. We have not received written comments concerning this project. Staff incorporates these comments into the review notes for Board consideration; however, current ordinances and regulations do not allow for the requirement of increased stream buffering or denial of subdivision projects due to location of a project within the Natural Heritage Program Area specifically the Big Woods Road Upland Forest Significant Natural Heritage Area. The developer can voluntarily agree to provide additional requirements if he chooses.

The Planning Department staff and Allison Weakley, Chair of the Environmental Review Board discussed with the Planning Board additional information concerning the development of the County Natural Areas Inventory, specifically that each tract has not been inventoried in detail due to limited funds and time. The Planning Board is recommending that an environmental impact assessment be conducted on this property to provide additional information.

Staff notified Delores Hall, Deputy State Archaeologist-Land, Office of State Archaeology of the sketch design submittals received for the June 5th Planning Board meeting for comments or recommendations. For the Knolls at Ferrington, Ms. Hall stated “No recorded archaeological sites are present and I do not recommend any survey”.

Recommendation: The plat displays the necessary information and meets the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations. The Planning Department recommends granting sketch design approval of “The Knolls at Ferrington” as shown on the revised sketch map, dated June 15, 2007.

The Planning Board recommends granting sketch design approval with the requirement that an environmental impact assessment be prepared and reviewed by the Environmental Review Board prior to preliminary plat submittal.

