

To: Chatham County Board of Commissioners
From: Harvey Harman, Manager of Walk Softly, LLC
Chatham County "Green" Builder and Conservation Developer
Date: 20 October 2008

RE: Comments for Public Hearing on proposed Subdivision Regulations

I would like to thank the Planning Board for their extensive work on the proposed new Subdivision Ordinances. I know it has taken a lot of time to research and put together this updated proposal.

As a local builder and developer I would like to especially encourage the Board to adopt provisions that both encourage the type of development we want in Chatham County (well thought out, respectful of neighbors and the environment, energy-efficient buildings, etc) and supports our local builders and developers. Since most of the local builders and developers are relatively modest in business size and are not able to take extensive risks, something that would greatly help us are items that streamline or make more certain the approval process. Therefore I strongly support provisions in the subdivision ordinances that give a streamlined or more certain outcome for developers proposing things like Planned Unit Developments that preserve Open Space and dedicate a certain percentage of lots for affordable housing. Likewise the Conservation Subdivision with clustering of infrastructure and buildings, preservation of open space, and buffers around sensitive natural areas and neighbors should be encouraged with similar incentives.

I thank everyone for the time they have put into these new ordinances. And I thank the Board for the opportunity to make these brief comments in support of the positive potential for these new initiatives.

Sincerely,

Harvey Harman
Manager, Walk Softly, LLC
1108 Callicutt Road
Bear Creek, NC 27207
919-799-6819

**Diana Hales
Friends of the Rocky River
PO Box 314
Pittsboro, NC 27312**

20 October 2008

Chatham County Public Hearing:

The Friends of the Rocky River applaud the Environmental Review Board, the Planning Board, county employees, and Chatham residents who are actively working to safeguard the lands and surface waters in our county. These proposed amendments to the existing regulations and ordinances place environmental protection within the real context of land-disturbing activities related to all development. Friends of the Rocky River support the adoption of these ordinances.

Public Hearing request for text amendments to Chatham County Subdivision Regulations to amend the major subdivision process from three steps to four steps.

Adding the Environmental Review Board step in the process is a huge leap forward for Chatham County. It will help assure that developers think beyond the sale of the last unit. It should result in a stronger commitment to leave the community better and more environmentally sustainable.

Public Hearing request for text amendments to the Chatham County Watershed Protection Ordinance to provide increases in density to accommodate conservation subdivision density bonuses in the Chatham County Subdivision Regulations.

Conservation subdivision density bonuses are a reasonable trade-off to increase residential density in watershed areas only when there is a net gain to the environment. Chatham County is rich with perennial and intermittent creeks and two rivers. But those waters are endangered because of our human desire to be near them and use them, often without much respect. These new regulations ask for something in return for that proximity that can help save their natural values.

Public Hearing request for text amendments to the Chatham County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance to reduce the minimum land disturbance requiring an erosion and sediment control permit from 1 acre to 20,000 square feet.

These text amendments are extraordinary and can make a huge impact on the quality of surface waters in Chatham County. A big issue we face is sediment working its way into the rivers and feeder creeks because someone is timbering, or building a private road, or building a new development. These sediment problems aggravate already stressed rivers. Living along the Rocky River I have seen currents of sediment flowing downstream after a rain. In fact, look at the color aerial imagery the county purchased in 2007 and you can see a serious sedimentation flow on the Haw. If this ordinance can prevent that disgrace, we will all be better.

