



March 14, 2008

Keith Megginson, Chatham County Planning Director
Chatham County Planning Department
P.O. Box 54
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Subject: Request by Winter Custom Yachts, Inc., for Conditional Use District – Light Industrial, and Conditional Use Permit – Light Manufacturing and Retail Sales

Dear Mr. Megginson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced zoning and conditional use permit case for this site located in the center of the Chatham-Cary Joint Land Use Plan study area. We offer the following observations regarding the proposed land use:

1. In our opinion, the rezoning and conditional use permit request are in conformance with the last draft of the Chatham-Cary Joint Land Use Plan as prepared by the Joint Staff Team in February 2007. As you are aware, that plan version included a recommendation for a mixed-use and employment center in the vicinity of NC Hwy. 751 and its intersection with Lewter Shop and Hollands Chapel Roads. This proposed light manufacturing and sales use could be deemed consistent with the proposed mixed-use center.
2. However, the requested rezoning and conditional use permit are not consistent with the subsequent plan proposed by the Chatham Board of Commissioners in May 2007. The Board's draft recommended only residential uses within the study area, and with lot sizes of at least five acres. Further, at the joint work session of the Chatham Board of Commissioners and the Cary Town Council in September 2007, the Board again rejected the suggestion for any nonresidential uses at that location or within any portion of the study area.
3. The overall size of the facility, with a manufacturing building of 8,000 square feet, is rather limited, and the level of traffic and off-site impacts are likely to be minimal. And the sketch plan included in the submission indicates that the buildings will be set back on the northern half of the property, 300-400 feet back from Hollands Chapel Road. Thus, the visual impacts from Hollands Chapel Road will be negligible, especially if a mature vegetated buffer is left intact between Hollands Chapel Road and the new buildings. However, the proposed building site arrangement also places the new buildings closer to the northern property boundary with the Gary Riggsbee property, which might present some future incompatibility in the event that the Riggsbee property is subdivided for residential development.

In addition to the general land use considerations mentioned above, the rezoning and sketch site plan raise the following questions about locating a manufacturing facility that may employ

paints, thinners, solvents, adhesives, and other toxic chemicals within the Jordan Lake watershed, as well as concerns about stormwater and nutrient-loading impacts. The facility is located about 800 feet from a stream that flows directly into Jordan Lake. There may also be some concerns about fire safety, given the combustible nature of the materials to be used at the facility. However, we need more information about the manufacturing facility before we can provide more specific and meaningful comments regarding these water quality and fire protection issues. For example:

- (a) Are they using fiberglass to form hulls or are they installing engines in hulls built off-site?
- (b) A location was not shown on the plan for finished boat storage or materials storage, and the total site impervious coverage is unknown. Can these items be clarified?
- (c) The plan does not show the location of the well or septic system and repair areas. Are measures proposed to protect the well and septic from damage? The plan does not describe changes to the pond outlet structure to meet the detention requirements.
- (d) Will the building be equipped with sprinklers or other automatic fire suppression technologies? In the case of fire, would water have to be trucked in to the site, or is the intention to pump water from the ponds? If the latter, have the ponds been evaluated for adequate supply, even in times of drought? Will there be a cleared area around the manufacturing building(s), to serve as a fire break to stop fire from spreading to adjacent forest cover?

These missing pieces of information make it difficult for us to comment on these topics from an informed perspective.

Thank you for the opportunity to have our views considered during your deliberations on this case.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffery G. Ulma". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jeffery G. Ulma,
Planning Director