

..TITLE

Request by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to consider amendments to Section 12.3 Housing of the Compact Communities Ordinance to modify the allowable uses for funds provided through the payment-in-lieu of providing lots for affordable housing option.

..ABSTRACT

Action Requested:

Request by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners to consider amendments to Section 12.3 Housing of the Compact Communities Ordinance to modify the allowable uses for funds provided through the payment-in-lieu of providing lots for affordable housing option.

Introduction & Background:

During the September 16 Commissioners meeting, the Board of Commissioners scheduled a public hearing to consider amendments to the Moderately Priced Dwellings Option of the Compact Communities Ordinance. A public hearing on the proposed amendments was held on October 21, 2013.

Discussion & Analysis:

In July 2012, the Board adopted an amendment to the moderately priced dwelling provision of Section 12.3, Housing of the Compact Communities Ordinance to allow a payment-in-lieu of providing of affordable housing option. The amendment includes that the payment be used to “fund construction of affordable housing or land for construction of affordable housing to address the needs of low and moderate income persons and families.” Subsequent to adoption, the Board entered into a contract with Newland Communities to accept a payment-in-lieu of providing the remaining affordable housing lots in Briar Chapel. It is the Board’s desire to allocate a portion of the Newland payment to projects that may not fit the standards of the ordinance. The County Attorney advised that the Compact Communities Ordinance needs to be amended for the release of those funds.

During the October 21, 2013 public hearing, several people spoke and comments included that there is a demand for affordable homes and rental housing on 15-501; funds should be distributed as provided in the currently adopted ordinance; and the funds were being arbitrarily allocated. Comments also included that funds would assist Family Violence and Rape Crisis to build a new facility; could be used for rehabilitation for veterans in need; or construction of a therapeutic community.

The Board also requested that the affordable housing needs assessments prepared for the county in 2002 and 2008 be provided to the Planning Board. Those documents have been placed on the planning website as an attachment to this item and are available for reference.

The Planning Board discussed this item at their November 5, 2013 meeting and recommended approval by a vote of 8-1. The board discussed how affordable housing funds from the original \$1.1 million allocation from Briar Chapel have been used; issues associated with the affordable housing lots within Briar Chapel; and how the text amendment still allows the use of the funds for affordable housing.

Recommendation:

The Planning Board, by a vote of 8 -1 (9 members present), recommends approval of an Ordinance Amending the Chatham County Compact Communities Ordinance as shown in the attached redlined text.