

Supervisor LaPisto-Kirtley,

I was planning to attend tonight's meeting at the Forest Lakes pavilion to share my thoughts on the proposed RST Development project, but something has come up that will prevent me from coming to the meeting. However, I would like to share my thoughts with you on the proposed development.

I do not support the scale or density of this development project. This project, and others that I fear have already been approved, or that may be seeking approval in the near future is going to turn the north-end of town where I live into a place that resembles northern Virginia, an area where I previously lived, and moved to Charlottesville because of the people, the quality of the community and the ability to move about, i.e. shopping, restaurants, commuting to work, etc., without feeling consumed by traffic. I would urge you to help create a livable community by rejecting developments that are so dense and will contribute to an excessive number of vehicles on our roads. For me, and I believe others, the sense of community exists beyond the borders of a neighborhood, it's the feeling you get when you walk, ride a bike or drive along a road near shops and other housing. What we have in this area, though it's quickly eroding, is a nice community with some shops, restaurants, banks, etc. and housing that fits into the character of a community. What's at stake is the charm of this community and the accessibility to get from your home to the grocery store or your job without fighting traffic.

The other day I was thinking about the businesses we've lost and the businesses we've gained within about a 1 mile radius of where I live. We've lost a Mexican restaurant, Panera Bread, an outdoor sporting store, and a bank. We've gained a car wash (coming soon), an oil change express (coming soon), a Wawa, a Sheetz (coming soon), a car dealership and two vape shops. Just by the types of businesses that are now gravitating to our community, I think you can tell that these are not the type of quality businesses that attract people to a place, and that define a positive character for a place. Think about a charming place you visited on a trip somewhere, and the feeling you got when you were there. It was a place that you wanted to spend time in. Now consider just about any stretch of highway where you pass fast food restaurants, gas stations, the local dollar tree, a car wash, and a vape store. That was not a place you wanted to spend time visiting, nor would you see yourself living there.

I hope I've been able to illustrate why the look and feel of a community matters, and why a multi-story condo/apartment building does not benefit the desirability of a community. Should we have affordable housing, absolutely. Should we force builders who want to provide this housing to come up with a different set of plans that includes smaller ranch homes and townhomes that can and should be affordable, absolutely. Just because a builder wants to maximize profit by building lots of uniformed, warehouse looking condos, doesn't mean the County should allow them to put forth one set of plans. Let's force developers and architects to get creative and develop housing that is affordable, desirable to live in and aesthetically pleasing to look at from Rt. 29 and neighboring communities.

We can and should do better, and I would ask that you take a position of leadership on this issue since your district is one of the ones that is under a great deal of development pressure. Please do right by the folks who already live here, and those who would like a place they can call home and have a sense of community.

I urge you to take a strong, and difficult stance on this issue.

Thank you

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