

Development of the American Legion Property -

You may have noticed the announcement in the Washington Post on January 22 regarding potential development of the American Legion Property. The December American Legion newsletter provides more information. (See attached Legion Post O' Gram.) Several of us on Christopher Place have come together to learn more and try to minimize impacts on the surrounding area. Should development be approved, we believe it is important to minimize the allowable density and not exceed that of our existing neighborhoods (Longwood Estates and 2 other neighborhoods are impacted). The December American Legion newsletter says that the Legion membership gave approval to its officers to sign an agreement with NVP, Inc. to sell their property for a new site and a new, state of the art Legion home in the Spring of 2008. NVP, Inc. plans to build between 55 to 72 homes on the site. Even 55 homes far exceeds our current neighborhood density.

If you look at other developments, including several sites developed by NVP in the Woodbridge and Manassas areas, it should be expected that they will clear almost 100 percent of the site, level the area to smooth slopes and comply with stormwater management rules and build as many homes as permitted. Acting together, our voice will be heard and we may have a chance to preserve some of the trees. There will be Public Hearings for a change in the County Comprehensive Plan and for property zoning. The LOCCA PELT (Lake Ridge/Occoquan/Coles Civic Association Planning Environmental Land and Transportation Committee) has offered to sponsor a dialog with the builder. The Occoquan District Land Use Committee will meet on this topic at their next meeting in February and will provide citizen input to Supervisor Stewart and Planning Commissioner Hosen. We need good ideas that will convince the builder and Prince William County to include Conservation Areas and tree preservation zones on the site.

Since the Park Authority leases the ball field, the property is currently designated as Park and Open Space in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The County believes it is necessary to change the designation to residential since only 60 days are needed to terminate the lease between the Legion and the Park Authority. The next scheduled County action will occur on March 14 at a Public Meeting. The County will review the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, including the American Legion Plan Amendment and if it does, Public Hearings will be scheduled with the Planning Commission and then with the Board of Supervisors. At public hearings, they will review input from the County Planning Office as well as hear from residents.

Should the Comprehensive Plan Amendment be approved to change the designation to residential, the next action that will need to occur is a rezoning. (If the rezoning application comes in between now and the Comprehensive Plan Amendment review, rezoning could be done at the same time). When the developer applies for the rezoning, this is when they will request a specific density of housing and should be required to provide a site plan for the development that shows the layout of the proposed development/neighborhood and the number of houses. As with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the same public hearing process is required for a rezoning.

Several of us attended the LOCCA PELT meeting on January 26, which included the American Legion item on the agenda. It was suggested by LOCCA that the residents open a dialog with the builder - NVP - and as previously indicated, LOCCA PELT offered to help us. We have not yet initiated anything. Also, I participate on the Occoquan District Land Use Committee of citizens and will be prepared to discuss this at our February meeting.

We are providing this letter to the property owners who are adjacent to the American Legion property. The neighbors involved are in Omisol Estates, Longwood Estates, and on Fowke Lane. If you would like to join an e-mail list to share information and coordinate actions, please send an e-mail to me at esh Sheridan@att.net. Thanks and we welcome your ideas and help.

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