

Asheville City Council October 11, 2022 Email Comments

TimeStamp	Text
10/10/2022 2:25:00 PM	<p>Hello City Council, I want to write in support of the plastic bag ban. There is no Planet B! I am originally from a city that has had a plastic bag ban for years. It worked very well! Thanks. Eloise Bradham 68 Henrietta St, Asheville, NC 28801</p>
10/10/2022 7:59:00 PM	<p>Jessie Shinn and Randall Grohman 33 Oakcrest Place Asheville, NC 28806</p> <p>October, 10, 2022</p> <p>Asheville City Council 70 Court Plaza Asheville, NC 28802</p> <p>Re: Oct. 11 Meeting, Item IV.B: Request to conditionally rezone 100, 54, and 999999(x3) Woodland Dr.</p> <p>Dear Council Members:</p> <p>While we recognize the imperative for more housing opportunities in and near Asheville, it is also imperative that every development proposal consider the impact and value to the community in light of the stated goals of our Comprehensive Plan for Living in Asheville. Clearly the plan was created to keep Asheville from going down the road of places that many - residents and tourists alike - come here to escape.</p> <p>It seems clear that the proposed development at Woodland Drive is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan:</p> <p>It is not “transit-supportive higher density” as it is not “along transit corridors” and thus not a “well-connected place.” The nearest bus stop is more than ¾ mile away and only accessible via streets without sidewalks or shoulders. (According to the Citizen Times of August 1st, Asheville ranks as the “number 1 city in the state for pedestrian crashes.”) Whatever portion of this development is committed to affordable housing, even those prospective residents will need a personal transportation option, thus leaving it out of consideration for some. It is not “minimizing traffic congestion” as it does not “allow for transportation choices beyond the car.” Any resident of this complex will need to use a personal vehicle for safely getting to and from any place of business even within a mile or two. It is not “thoughtful, holistic decision-making on behalf of residents.” There are no parks in the area and no facilities encouraging or enabling physical recreation for the current - let alone future - residents of the neighborhood. It does not “show respect for and enhance the existing neighborhood.” What the developer is asking for is not an organic evolution of this property or neighborhood, just a 44% increase in the number of expensive rentals and vehicles allowed to traverse the already overburdened one-lane streets in the neighborhood. Walking and biking safety on the local neighborhood streets will be further jeopardized by the additional traffic.</p> <p>This is a car-centric, characterless cluster of rental units that will contribute only noise, water and air pollution to the neighborhood. On the personal level, we live just below the development site. We will see a 12’ wall (erected because of the extreme slope of the property) uncharacteristic of anything in the neighborhood and akin to living on one of the interstates.</p> <p>This development will not contribute to the potential for improving transportation options because the neighborhood geography and overall density cannot support it. Roads cannot get wider and turns less acute - there will merely be more congestion locally and at the intersections with Patton as the only option for commuting - even to the closest businesses only a mile and a half away. The noise and exhaust from vehicles will be contained within the steep sided confluence of 2 perennial spring-fed streams. The runoff from parking areas will go directly into the previously pristine perennial stream that borders the property and flows into Canie Creek.</p> <p>The developer started with a plan solely to maximize their potential for profit, asking for concessions on requirements for sidewalk widths and bike lanes, and reductions in landscape buffers, with no plans for any affordable units within the development. In response to the concerns of commissioners and neighbors they were only willing to add 4 affordable units out of 72 total. After four visits to the Planning and Zoning Commission, enough concerns with the project remained that the developer was unable to get a recommendation from the commission.</p> <p>This property, as it is currently zoned, allows for 50 residences that could be more contextual “middle housing” infill, still pushing the boundaries of infrastructural capacity. The Woodland property can and likely will be developed, but it can be done in a way that is more in accordance with the surrounding neighborhood, including retention of more of the existing tree canopy that separates and defines the property within and apart from the business complex to the south, thus making it an enclave or haven for its residents, despite as-the-crow-flies proximity to Patton.</p> <p>We encourage you, as representatives of the current and future citizens of Asheville, to look at not just the number of housing units but also whether the development contributes to - or at least does not significantly detract from - a positive quality of life experience for residents who expect our leaders to do the right thing.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Jessie Shinn and Randall Grohman</p>

10/10/2022 11:14:00 PM

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for all the time you put into serving our city!

I am writing to you as a citizen of Asheville who lives near the proposed 72-unit Woodland project, not in my capacity as a city employee. I would like to request that you recommend continuing the Woodland Development project contingent on revisions to make it a more appropriate large project.

Unlike others in my neighborhood, I'm not concerned about the number of housing units and think that even more could work. (If we assume two cars per home, at a peak rush of 144 cars leaving or arriving during one hour that's only another 2.4 cars per minute on the road. Our roads can take it and the tax base needs a lot more infill to afford city goals).

The problem I see is the cookie cutter design that prioritizes low-cost construction rather than neighborhood compatibility and appropriateness. I would feel the same if this were in any other neighborhood. We need housing, yes.

For large projects, however, of which you have discretionary review of, shouldn't we demand housing that is well designed and attractive. See the new Broadway units (photo below) just north of downtown which are gorgeous and will contribute positively to Asheville forever. This shouldn't just be a standard for wealthier neighborhoods.

The proposed Woodland project places the housing units where it's easiest to put ten foundation pads, some at strange angles and far from the street. Also, the project proposes a sea of concrete/asphalt that undermines walkability and tree health.

I wonder whether the Woodland 72-unit tract housing design would be acceptable in N. Asheville while closer to the Deaverview housing community we're okay with it? The project proposes *six* of these 8-unit, garage-oriented buildings next to each other:

[image: image.png]

[image: image.png]

A more varied mix of housing types would be appropriate. Sometimes repetition works well when designs are good (like the previous Broadway photo, or Brownstone Brooklyn), but repeating garages and driveways is choosing to prioritize a parking lot experience. Should we accept this form or negotiate one that is more aligned with city goals: people oriented, tree friendly, and good design (Comp plan goal #3 <<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/106269/138/#zoom=true>>)?

Until the city's zoning can catch up to better protect all neighborhoods we should be wary of housing allure at the expense of long-term community/city health. We can have our cake (housing units) and eat it too (appropriately-scaled design). All that's needed is some design reworking and time.

Please require this project to bring the housing units to the street with parking in the rear to make it walkable and tree supportive (while respecting the need for cars), and to have them mix up the types of housing units. After they pull it off, maybe the developers will even be more proud of the result.

Thank you for listening,

Vaidila Satvika

10/11/2022 1:50:00 AM

Dear Council Members,

Justin Holt emailed you on September 21, 2022 when the Woodland Development proposal was going to the Planning & Zoning Commission, which ultimately did not support this request.

As a representative of this community, I am writing to you again to let you know that more people have signed on to our request. We are asking you to make this project more appropriate. Simply put, we think it could be better and should be revised to prioritize people and the future of our community. Please review our slides to learn more.

Thank you for hearing our concerns,

In Creativity,
Ona (she/her/hers)

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"Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what *makes you come alive*. And then go *do* that. Because what the world needs is people who have *come alive*." -Howard Thurman.

10/11/2022 2:48:00 AM

Dear City Council Members,

As co-owners of Green Sage Cafe, we are writing to urge you to pass the Plastic Bag and Styrofoam Container Ban tonight. We understand that the City Staff would like more time to research this issue, but with 5 million plastic bags being given out each month in Asheville we think it's time to act and urge City Council to proceed with this ban now. We believe that the community is generally excited for Asheville to take the lead in North Carolina in this important first step to eliminate as much single use plastic as possible.

Green Sage Cafe opened in 2008 with a strong commitment to sustainability. We embraced the practices of the Green Restaurant Association, that require eliminating styrofoam containers as the first step towards certification. We helped lead 18 AIR restaurants to GRA certification and establish Asheville as America's first green dining destination. We have been recognized by Mountain Xpress Reader as Asheville's Greenest Restaurant for many years in a row. We are committed to green practices that include using compostable togo supplies and contracting with Danny's Dumpster to divert compost and recyclables from the landfill. We produce fresh organic juices and bottle them in reusable glass containers. We reuse about 50% of the glass bottles that we purchase. Our green choices cost a little bit more, but they are appreciated by our community.

From our experience at Earth Fare, we learned that a small fee for paper bags or a small discount for bringing in reusable bags are beneficial to help customers remember to bring in reusable bags. We believe that most people are aware of the problems that plastic pollution poses to the environment and want to see the city take action now to help steer consumers in the right direction. As for styrofoam, since it can't be reused or recycled and doesn't biodegrade, it makes good sense to ban its use in food establishments. There are plenty of other reasonably priced recycled paper options.

Now is the time for the big box retailers and supermarkets to follow our lead. They are expecting and ready for Asheville to make this decision, just as over 400 other cities in America have already done. Most chain retailers are already selling and promoting reusable bags. They need the city's help to remind customers to reuse them every time.

Please take this important step and ban plastic shopping bags and styrofoam containers now--not later.

Thank you,
Randy Talley & Roger Derrough
Co-owners of Green Sage Cafe