

Agenda Item: Decision on Application 2017-674 Mt. Harmony Townhomes

DATE: June 5, 2018
FROM: Jay Camp

Background/Issue:

- In April, Planning Board voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the rezoning request with the recommendation that a 6' privacy fence and additional plantings be used as screening in lieu of the proposed 6' berm with evergreen trees. The applicant has revised the plans to provide the design preferred by Planning Board.
- Revised color elevations show additional detail for all 4 sides of the elevations of both unit types. The rear load elevations have been revised to show different color palettes and decorative carriage style garage doors.
- A 20'x20' open air structure is located as an amenity in the large common open space on the site plan.
- Subject to NCDOT approval, a pedestrian refuge will be installed on Mt. Harmony Church Road to provide a crossing to the church and school.

Proposal/Solution:

- The PCO Concept Plan has been approved.
- The developer has revised home elevations to provide distinction between each unit.
- The use is consistent with the nearby Stallings area plan.
- An attractive streetscape will be created along both Mt. Harmony Church and Stevens Mill with townhomes facing each street.
- A design should be provided for what the 20x20 structure will look like.
- Staff continues to maintain that amenities such as a clubhouse, pool, playground or dog park should be provided to give residents ample onsite recreation options. We have included an article from New Home Source that offers some great points regarding provision of amenities in new neighborhoods.

Financial Impact:

None

Related Town Goal(s) and/or Strategies:

Quality of Life

Economic Development/Land Use Planning

Recommended Motion/Action:

Staff has continued reservations about the project due to lack of amenities in the vicinity, however, the development can meet general land use plan goals and is eligible for approval.

DRAFT---FOR APPROVAL

**STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL ADOPTED GROWTH POLICIES
Final Decisions on Zoning-Related Issues**

ZONING APPLICATION # 2017-674
ZONING MOTION # _____
ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENT _____

Matthews Board of Commissioners adopts the checked statement below:

A) The requested zoning action, as most currently amended, is **approved**, and has been found to be **CONSISTENT** with the Matthews Land Use Plan (or other document(s)), and to be **REASONABLE**, as follows:

CONSISTENT: with the Matthews Land Use Plan and provides a well-designed R-VS development with both front loaded and alley loaded townhomes with open space for resident use.

REASONABLE: The rezoning creates new housing opportunities in an area of Matthews with few housing options today.

OR

B) _____ The requested zoning action, as most currently amended, is **not approved**, and has been found to be **INCONSISTENT** with the Matthews Land Use Plan (or other document(s)), and **NOT REASONABLE**, as follows:

INCONSISTENT: The rezoning creates housing densities that are too high due to the lack of nearby daily needs such as shops, services and parks.

NOT REASONABLE: The rezoning is not reasonable and would cause additional traffic congestion on local roads.

(In each case, the Statement must explain why the Board deems the action reasonable and in the public interest (more than one sentence). Reasons given for a zoning request being "consistent" or "not consistent" are not subject to judicial review.)

Date **June 11, 2018**



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Top Community Amenities in New-Home Neighborhoods

By Drew Knight

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As you begin the search for your new home, you'll also be searching for the right neighborhood. Here are some of the top community amenities homebuilders are offering their buyers to help you find the right home – and the right neighborhood – for your needs.

If you've been running through your home search for a while, you're probably noticing a common trend among new-home communities: amenities galore.

One important thing to keep in mind when looking for a new home is how you can add value to your investment and that's exactly what homebuilders aim to do by offering a variety of amenities in their new-home communities — not to mention you get the added benefit of simply being able to use them any time you want.

We sat down with a few new-home experts to discuss the top community amenities on the market today to help you understand what to look for when you begin touring neighborhoods.

Top Community Amenities

According to a study by real estate advising company Robert Charles Lesser & Co., homebuyers are increasingly looking for green space and trail systems for walking, running and biking. So it's no surprise you may be seeing parks and trails offered at nearly every community you visit.

In fact, green space and trail systems were the No. 1 and No. 2 desirable community features. Robert Charles Lesser and Co.'s full list can be found below:

1. Parks and green spaces
2. Paved trail systems for walking, jogging, biking, etc.
3. Main street village centers with retail services and cafes for gathering and socializing
4. Outdoor, resort-style pools
5. Exercise rooms and equipment
6. Natural (unpaved) trail systems for hiking and walking

Heather McCune, director of marketing for Bassenian Lagoni, an architectural planning and interior design firm in Newport Beach, Calif., referenced this study in her speech about trends in the Best in American Living competition at the 2016 International Builders Show in Las Vegas, Nev.

"Entries into the Best in American Living design competition incorporate many of these trends in innovative ways that can inform developers and builders as they plan future homes and neighborhoods," McCune said.

Which certainly explains why you're likely to see many of these features and more while you're on your home hunt.

Even More Amenities

And if those six amenities mentioned above don't suit your fancy, there are still even more amenity trends taking over the new-home nation.

"We found that it's the custom touch to the amenities we offer that really appeals to our buyers," says Marshall Gobuty, developer of the award-winning [Mirabella](#) community in

Bradenton, Fla., designed for 55-plus active adults. “A dog park just for the residents’ four-leggeds and two pickle ball courts address two recent trends adopted by many master-planned communities, and which are offered at Mirabella in a more personal environment.”

Pet-focused amenities were a topic that also came up in McCune’s presentation at IBS.

“Pets are now family members and, increasingly, for-rent and for-sale communities are responding to homebuyer demands for dedicated spaces to care for the four-legged family members,” she said, adding that dog parks show up in almost every community she sees, in addition to the occasional dog-wash station.

So when choosing the neighborhood that’s right for you, it’s best to keep in mind the lifestyle and activities you’re interested in and look for those in your potential new community. Chances are, a new-home community out there will have something for you, no matter how adventurous you may be.

“We’ve learned that today’s homebuyers will not settle for a community that doesn’t echo their needs and expectations,” says Michael Lindeman, vice president of sales and marketing for Taylor Morrison’s Austin division. “Finding a community that offers the amenities you desire is important and makes the homebuying process worth every penny.”

And at Taylor Morrison’s [Heritage at Vizcaya](#) community, for instance, those pennies can get you amenities like craft and game rooms, yoga, Zumba and aerobics studios, bocce, tennis and pickle ball courts and even a porch area for hosting events like concerts and other activities.

“Each homebuyer is wonderfully unique, making it important to cater to both the adventure seekers and those who appreciate the quieter luxuries,” Lindeman adds.

Amenities Add a Sense of Community

One final agreement among all of our experts? **In addition to adding a return on investment if you ever tried to sell your home, amenities are there to provide members of the neighborhood an overall sense of community.**

“An amenity-rich community obviously helps with resale value,” says Gobuty, **“but of equal importance to our buyers: a diverse offering of leisure activities that fosters a stronger sense of community.”**

Steve Snoddy, vice president of sales for Phoenix-based [AV Homes](#), agrees.

“We like to create a community, which means we want people to utilize the amenities we build to help bring people together and have an enjoyable living experience when they’re outside of their home,” he says. “It’s not the home, it’s not necessarily the neighborhood; it’s the lifestyle that is offered with that community.”

One way AV Homes helps accomplish this lifestyle is by providing some of its neighborhoods with community directors, whose jobs are to set up various events and activities within and around the community for its residents.

For instance, in AV Homes' [CantaMia](#) community, their director arranges outings to Phoenix Suns games.

"It's really all about trying to connect people with the neighborhoods," Snoddy says. "It provides a reward for us, but it also really provides a sense of community for the people living there."

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