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12-16-03

From: Quaker Village Homeowner's Association, Inc.
For: "Open Mike" Period, City Council Public Hearing
Subject: City Council Process Regarding Quaker Ridge
Date: December 16, 2003

Every citizen in Alexandria should consider this question: "Why was this small project so important to this City Council that the political pressure became as great as it did?"

We do not blame the developer, the attorney or the homeowners selling. The developer and attorney were simply trying to maximize profit on a project, and the homeowners trying to maximize their return. Where did the process go wrong? It began when a developer came to the City and presented what it wanted to build on property then zoned for single-family homes. The City gave the builder enough support for the proposal to give the impression that the City would change the Master Plan, so the developer offered contingent contracts to property owners. The density increase of this project started at more than 400% with an accompanying increase in traffic.

The first mistake the City made in the process was setting up a perception that the project would go through. This caused an inflated value of the single-family homes predicated on a density similar to what was being proposed. Of course property is worth more if you can build 3-5 times the number of units on it rather than the number that currently exists. This coalesced a group of residents who had a significant financial interest in the development being approved, but it should never have gotten to that point.

We were very disappointed with the Mayor's criticism of Councilman Andrew MacDonald at the last City Council meeting, when all he did was speak the truth. The Mayor indicated it was inappropriate to criticize the process in the manner he did, but it was apparently acceptable for Councilwoman Joyce Woodson to call a benefit that the developer offered Quaker Village "extortion." Councilman Smedberg then implied that if citizens complain they will be paid off. This is particularly offensive because we did NOT negotiate or request that offer. The difference between these two characterizations seems to be that one agreed with the Mayor and the other did not.

Quaker Village did NOT request or negotiate or agree to the \$40,000 concession, to the reduction in the number of town homes to 23, or to the additional 10 feet of tree buffer. As Councilman McDonald stated, the debate was never about these minor issues, but rather the greater issue—listening to the citizens of Alexandria. The bottom line was that we wanted the proposal rejected outright.

We take particular offense at the obvious threat that Councilwoman Woodson made: "if not this then what—I'll tell you what." She said that if this project were turned down, the City might put "transitional housing from the Carpenter's Shelter, homes for the mentally ill, or some other form of affordable houses built on slabs." This was an obvious threat, which is inappropriate for a City Council Member to make toward the citizens she is supposed to represent. Other City Council members agreed that it was a threat. It

suggests that we would not support those in need. We were told we should be aware of the “risks” of our position. We were told to “make the best deal.” We already have affordable housing next to us and live very peaceably with our neighbors.

Councilwoman Woodson’s threats towards citizens are offensive and show a lack of respect for not only the citizens opposing her view, but also the people she hypocritically states she is trying to help. We believe positioning people who have needs as a worse alternative to the proposed development is truly offensive to them as well.

Is this the atmosphere the citizens of Alexandria are to be subjected to by City Council? The Mayor said that the City did not seek out this development. Why then did they work so hard to pressure other members to approve it?

Some of the other obvious pro-development comments included the statement that the area was not appropriate for open space for a park. Was there any explanation of what is appropriate? Why is it not appropriate and where will open space be appropriate? The area was certainly considered appropriate for a skate park. Councilman Krupicka stated that we need to stick to our plan for open space. Of course we haven’t purchased any yet so let’s not start now. We don’t need to stick to the Master Plan even though there was significant citizen opposition. The Master Plan is clearly not as valid as the Open Space Plan in which we need 100 acres and have purchased none to date.

This City Council is following an unhealthy tradition of adding density time after time after time. The last 10 years of development have created a situation that if continued will turn Alexandria from a “livable city” into an “unlivable city.” Reducing a development from 28 to 25 to 23 town homes and thinking this is a win for everybody is nonsense! It is an *increase* in density from 5 to 23 or a 360% increase. This City Council should either stop hiding behind words that indicate they care about quality of life, density and traffic and admit what they are—pro-development, or *change their actions to match their words*.

Respect for the City Council has been severely damaged. We believe the following steps should be taken toward rebuilding that respect:

1. Councilwoman Woodson—make a **public apology** for threatening our community and for referring to the process as extortion.
2. Councilman Smedberg—make a **public apology** for referring to us as a community which “complained enough” to get a concession.
3. Mayor Euille—make a **public apology** to Councilman MacDonald for criticizing him in public for characterizing the process while saying nothing to Councilwoman Woodson and Councilman Smedberg about their characterization of our community.
4. City Council—What is your vision for the City of Alexandria? It is stated the build out of Alexandria will result in a population of 150,000 to 200,000. Where does the City Council stand on this? Where is the comprehensive traffic plan that this City Council should have in place before they approve additional density? When is enough enough?

SPEAKER'S FORM

DOCKET ITEM NO. 2

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM.**

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

- 1. NAME: ANN Dorman
- 2. ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE NO. _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
- 3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? _____
First Night Alexandria
- 4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER: _____
- 5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST,
CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):
Presentation to Council
- 6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO X

This form shall be kept as a part of the permanent record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of three minutes will be allowed for your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the Clerk.

Additional time not to exceed 15 minutes may be obtained with the consent of the majority of the council present; provided notice requesting additional time with reasons stated is filed with the City Clerk in writing before 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

The public normally may speak on docket items only at public hearing meetings, and not at regular legislative meetings. Public hearing meetings are usually held on the Saturday following the second Tuesday in each month; regular legislative meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays in each month. The rule with respect to when a person may speak to a docket item at a legislative meeting can be waived by a majority vote of council members present but such a waiver is not normal practice. When a speaker is recognized, the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply. If an item is docketed *for public hearing* at a regular legislative meeting, the public may speak to that item, and the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply.

In addition, the public may speak on matters which are not on the docket during the Public Discussion Period at public hearing meetings. The Mayor may grant permission to a person, who is unable to participate in public discussion at a public hearing meeting for medical, religious, family emergency or other similarly substantial reasons, to speak at a regular legislative meeting. When such permission is granted, the rules of procedures for public discussion at public hearing meetings shall apply.

Guidelines for the Public Discussion Period

- (a) All speaker request forms for the public discussion period must be submitted by the time the item is called by the City Clerk.
- (b) No speaker will be allowed more than three minutes.
- (c) If more speakers are signed up than would be allotted for in 30 minutes, the Mayor will organize speaker requests by subject or position, and allocate appropriate times, trying to ensure that speakers on unrelated subjects will also be allowed to speak during the 30 minute public discussion period.
- (d) If speakers seeking to address council on the same subject cannot agree on a particular order or method that they would like the speakers to be called on, the speakers shall be called in the chronological order of their request forms' submission.
- (e) Any speakers not called during the public discussion period will have the option to speak at the conclusion of the meeting, after all docketed items have been heard.

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1. NAME: Sheryl Bell

2. ADDRESS: 3805 Mt. Vernon Ave. Alex. 22305

TELEPHONE NO. 703-684-8837 E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? _____

Tenants & Workers Support Comm. Education Project

4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER:

5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST,
CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):
Civic interest

6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO

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SPEAKER'S FORM

DOCKET ITEM NO. Public Discussion 2

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM.

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

- 1. NAME: Laurie Kusek Followed by Suzanne Seoville
- 2. ADDRESS: 18 Arell Court Alex, VA 22304
TELEPHONE NO. 4/751-3113 E-MAIL ADDRESS: lauriejkusek@aol.com
- 3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? self (Quaker Village)
- 4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER: X
- 5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):

- 6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO _____

This form shall be kept as a part of the permanent record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of three minutes will be allowed for your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the Clerk.

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OPEN MIKE

SPEAKER'S FORM

DOCKET ITEM NO. 2

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PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: Suzanne Scoville (preceeded by Laurie Kusek)

2. ADDRESS: 59 Arell Court, Alexandria

TELEPHONE NO. (703)370-1002 E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? Quaker Village

4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER: _____

5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):

6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO

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PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: Julie Cusshaw

2. ADDRESS: 816 Queen St

TELEPHONE NO. 7549-2632 E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? _____

4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: _____ AGAINST: _____ OTHER: _____

5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.)
Conditional

6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL?
YES _____ NO _____

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