

Summary of Reasons Why the Majority of the Planning Board voted to Recommend an Increase in the Allowed Units in Briar Chapel from 2500 to 2650

The Planning Board voted 7-3, at our August meeting, to recommend that the Compact Community Ordinance be amended to increase the maximum number of dwelling units to 2650 and to amend the Conditional Use Permit for Briar Chapel to allow the increased number of units.

The Planning Board had extensive discussions on this issue during our July and August meetings. While the vote was mixed, both the majority and minority had general agreement on the points made in favor and those against. The mixed vote occurred because each of us weighed those points differently.

Since a minority report has been prepared documenting the concerns of the minority, this report will only summarize the reasons for those voting in the majority. These reasons are as follows:

1. The increase in the number of dwelling units can only be used for apartments and there is a clear shortage of apartment units in the Northeast part of Chatham County. Furthermore, the apartments can only be placed in the designated commercial areas of Briar Chapel.
2. This action does not require that additional land be rezoned because the apartments will be located on land already designated as commercial. The apartments will only be replacing other potential commercial endeavors.
3. Briar Chapel has been a good corporate citizen. They have been very supportive of county non profit organizations, they have donated land for two schools (Woods Charter and Margaret Pollard), they have worked with the county to provide a county park and they are now working with the county on an Elementary School site.
4. Briar Chapel has voluntarily provided an additional \$2000 to the county impact fee. This means that for each apartment unit, the county will receive an additional \$2000 to be used in new school construction. No other developer in Chatham County has made a similar voluntary contribution.
5. Briar Chapel has addressed some of the homeowner concerns expressed by some residents in Briar Chapel. For example, apartment residents will not have access to amenities available to internal residents such as the pool and activity building. The apartments will be part of a separate homeowners association.
6. Apartments will help attract other commercial activities to Briar Chapel and this was the stated reason for request to increase the allowable dwelling units. This will enhance the

success of commercial ventures in Briar Chapel. Commercial development, in general, lessens the tax burden on current residents of Chatham County.

7. The Compact Community Ordinance requires that there be a 300 ft buffer between Fearington and any apartments located in SD East which means that apartments will have a substantial separation from existing residents.
8. Briar Chapel has embraced Green Building practices and the apartments will likely have no more environmental impacts than other potential commercial activities that would be located there without the apartments. Again, no more land is being rezoned and the apartments will simply replace other potential commercial activities.
9. The apartments should not worsen the impending traffic problems along 15-501. In fact, some people who live in the apartments may work in the Briar Chapel commercial activities, or in the Community College, or be students there, or work in one of the nearby schools so the apartments may actually lessen traffic problems not exacerbate them.
10. The intent of the Compact Community Ordinance was to foster mixed use developments. This application is consistent with that intent.

Those voting in the majority were:

George Lucier, Bill Arthur, Brian Bock, Jim Elza, Tony Gaetta, Gene Galin and Jamie Hager