

**Planning Commissioner's Written Comments
July 10, 2012**

Southpoint Trails (Z1100017)

Ms. Beechwood - I voted to deny this plan amendment and zoning change.

The applicant did not make the case that an increase in density from 4 du/ac to 6 du/ac was necessary for the development to succeed or overall beneficial for Durham. The fact that the applicant managed to appease the neighbors was beside the point. What is of consequence is getting the Comprehensive Plan right and achieving a consensus for the future of the 751 corridor.

Much attention was paid the 751 corridor during the period when Southpoint was being developed and approved. At that time the comprehensive plan was amended to fine-tune the zoning in this area to serve the disparate needs of our community. But that was a decade ago, and much has changed in the interim. Currently, discussions of the future of this strip of land are as polarizing as they are passionate. Durham needs a 751 Corridor Planning effort.

Significant amounts of cash, time and energy have been thrown at our NC54 Corridor Plan. While not perfect, we have come away from the effort with a vastly better understanding of the corridor, our place in the region, how to negotiate successfully with our neighboring stakeholders, regional and rapid transit, and transit-based development. Stakeholders at every level have a much better understanding of how it all works. And this is exactly the same effort that is needed in the 751 corridor.

The Southpoint Trails case illustrates perfectly what we will be forced to repeat for years to come if we don't get some kind of consensus on our vision for the 751 corridor. It is not the job of the Planning Commission to tweak the zoning of each parcel, one-by-one, all the way down to the Chatham county line. Although undoubtedly less expensive, I don't think we'd be happy with the final outcome.

Ms. Board – While I might be convinced that this property could be developed at 6 units per acre while preserving the character aesthetics of South Durham this proposal not only fails to do so, but could easily apply to projects not well suited in this area. This plan is very vague and lacks any of the committed elements. I would expect regarding buffers, architectural styles, tree save and open space. Without these I must recommend against approving this plan. We don't need another project on 751 which lacks the committed elements needed to ensure the project is well suited to the area. If you are going to build a good project, then you should be willing to make the commitments.

Mr. Davis – I vote approval.

Ms. Gibbs – Approve

Mr. Harris – Voted against motion to approve.

Ms. Mitchell-Allen – I voted to approve.

Mr. Smudski – I would rather the fence be 1' from the sidewalk as this leaves more back yard for the residents.

Mr. Whitley – I vote to approve.

Ms. Winders – I voted against approval because of inconsistency with the current Land Use Plan (I voted to maintain the current low density designation).