

**Planning Commissioner's Written Comments
June 9, 2015**

Belgreen Road (Z1400026)

BUZBY – I voted against this proposal due to concerns about increased traffic congestion and the valid neighborhood concerns that have been consistently raised and have not been addressed. While I would likely vote to approve a similar proposal in similar circumstances, the lack of other transportation options creates a traffic bottleneck that will have significant negative implications for the neighborhood.

DAVIS – No approval.

GIBBS – I approve this development – some compromise of density would be one deal but economics (investment returns to developer) seems a non-negotiable factor. Upgrades to Fayetteville Road would be important to the traffic increase @ Belgreen/Fayetteville Road.

HARRIS – Voted for approval.

HOLLINGSWORTH – This is a rather difficult decision due to the details of the case. The developer has made some valid comments. The developer seems has made attempts in good faith to acquire right-of-way in adjacent properties in an effort to reduce the forecast impact to Belgreen Road and the surrounding neighborhood. I can also understand the reason given for not developing the areas as RS-20. Again, the surrounding might be an issue. However, the existing neighborhood and roads were based on RS-20, and as pointed out during this meeting, the higher density development would create a burden on those in the current neighborhood. Also, with a petition from the neighborhood when was brought in and was said to have signatures from 85% of the residents in opposition this makes it difficult for me to vote in favor. It is an unfortunate situation for this proposal of land and it seems there is no clear-cut good solution for those involved.

HUFF - I oppose the rezoning of this property for the reason that the resulting increase in traffic will destroy the living experience of the surrounding community. Members of the community brought to our meeting a 100 or more signatures in support of denial. I agree with them that it is not fair to ask people to absorb the number of daily automobile trips (529 more than the RS-20 zoning) this rezoning would create. Belgreen, Silver Star Dr., Odyssey Dr., and Yorktown Ave. are neighborhood streets not meant for the influx of traffic created by this project, which has but one point of access. I am not satisfied the developer vigorously pursued all options that might yield a second access to Martin Luther King or Fayetteville other than through the neighborhood streets.

The developer argued that the rezoning would bring the property in compliance with the FLUM. He further said that he would not be able to sell the smaller number of units afforded by

the RS-20 zoning at a high enough price to make the project worthwhile on account of the light industrial and multifamily developments to the north. I am unconvinced that is the case. Anyway he could have sought a plan amendment to increase the density from RS-20 but still less than this rezoning would. I think in this case the FLUM's density designation for this property is wrong and the developer should have sought a plan amendment. Given the state of the neighborhood streets and single point of egress into the surrounding roads, it seems a very bad idea to develop the property the way the FLUM would suggest.

Finally, given any increase in traffic a sidewalk needs to be built along the length of Belgreen. The community asked the developer to commit to it but to no avail. As far as I could tell no exploration of feasibility or costs was ever done. I want people to imagine what the experience would be like for residents—especially young people going to the ATT, Solite Park or school—walking in the middle of the road when there is a great increase in traffic. Even though the sidewalk would enhance the development (as I said in my comments about this two months ago) the developer was unmoved. So people are forced into their vehicles to go pretty much anywhere. This doesn't help mitigate a bad traffic problem.

My impression of the developer was that he generally seemed uninterested in how his project fits into the surrounding community and was unwilling to consider any move that would increase costs at his end.

HYMAN – Cannot support an item which has so much opposition from the Community. Zoning change not recommended.

MILLER - The city council should turn this rezoning down. Although the density proposed is at the lower end of the density range found in the future land-use map of the comprehensive plan, strict application of the FLUM in this case will produce an undesirable result. The problem is that the property depends entirely upon Belgreen Road for vehicular access. Belgreen Road is nothing more than a residential street designed to serve a low density neighborhood that was laid out and developed under the old R-20 standards. The proposed development would put 1,000 more trips on Belgreen Road (530 more than if the property were developed as zoned) making the neighborhood it was built to serve bear the entire traffic burden of the greater density which would be allowed by the FLUM. Higher densities require a more thoughtful organization of public roads and other facilities, such as sidewalks and traffic controls, than are provided on the ground near Belgreen Road. As long as the subject property is entirely dependent on Belgreen Road for access, the land should remain zoned RS-20. If, however, a roadway connection between the property and Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway could be established, then the density of residential development contemplated in the FLUM would be appropriate and I would be inclined to support a rezoning of this property. Also, even without a connection to MLK, I would be inclined to support a PDR rezoning of the subject property for a density a little higher than could be obtained on the site under RS-20, but certainly nothing approaching the 95 lots contemplated in the subject case. Such a rezoning would require a plan amendment. The better course would be a connection to MLK.

The developer may point to the considerably denser subdivisions to the east and south of the subject property as an argument for rezoning the subject property. Please note, however, that these subdivisions are not locked into an RS-20 development pattern like the subject property. Each has a connection to MLK Pkwy and a grid of streets that diffuses rather than concentrates traffic in the neighborhood.

The neighbors who oppose this rezoning invested in their homes and neighborhood with the reasonable expectation that future development in their area will be handled in way that will not unduly burden them for the benefit of developments which come later. As we apply the FLUM and the comprehensive plan as tools to guide future development we should always look to see how new development will perform in relationship to what has already been built. In this instance, without better roadway connections, higher density development on this property is inappropriate – even if such development is consistent with the broad brush strokes of the future land-use map.

PADGETT – This is a classic case where there is a double standard used. This time the lobby wants to ignore the standards they usually support. Unfortunately their standard falls short of those who could actually afford these specific homes when complete. The City needs to look at the land they own to open access to the new homes. That's a perfect compromise for those in the surrounding residential areas. I approve.

Too many times surrounding residents are not willing to truly mediate. When they don't it only leaves one battle to win or lose. No room to design a plan for everyone and one plan each can live with.

WINDERS – The streets in this area are not adequate to support doubling the permitted density (from approx. 2 per acre to 4). Streets in surrounding subdivisions have not been designed to provide a workable grid through the area. This development needs better street connection to MLK and Barbee, and sidewalks along Belgreen.