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## Deer Hill Project Review Continues

*By Cathy Tyson*

The Homes at Deer Hill, the proposed 44 single-family home subdivision continued its journey through the city's review process at an introductory meeting with the Planning Commission recently. Prior to the January 2014 Process Agreement between developer O'Brien Homes and the City of Lafayette, the development looked much different: a 315-unit apartment complex. The current version is a partnership between the city and the developer to provide public amenities on roughly half the parcel, including a multi-sport field, tot lot, parking area and a pathway skirting the hill for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Project manager Dave Baker kicked off the applicant's presentation by discussing opportunities and constraints of the parcel and the challenges of integrating public amenities on the uniquely sloped site. He explained that in order to accommodate rugby, soccer and lacrosse, the size of the sports field grew, along with the necessity of saving the over 200-year-old oak tree that needed a wide buffer zone, according to their arborist. Having adequate space for the tree and the sports field crowded out the dog park. The developer has an option on a 2.9-acre parcel just across the street that could be home to a future dog park. Baker was at the Dogtown Downtown event to provide information about the project and pass out tasty dog treats to potential dog park supporters. Planning Commission Chair Tom Chastain commented that he appreciated the efforts of the applicant to date, pointing out that the commission's input is intended to make the project even better. Concerns focused on the sports field, especially traffic, parking congestion at game times, water run-off, along with questioning the adequacy of the 40 guest parking stalls on the housing portion of the parcel.

Commissioners requested that the applicant provide a three-dimensional model at the next meeting to better understand the overall concept, and to have the city engineer come out to discuss the proposed roundabout at the entrance as well as have the parks and recreation director discuss the necessity and impacts of the sports field at that site.

Minimizing off-site visibility was spelled out in the process agreement. Recent changes to meet that requirement include only one-story homes along the periphery with substantial evergreen vegetation to screen the project. This item will be back before the Planning Commission for further review examining the merits of the project and looking at the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report in May.

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