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2/25/2021

RE: Public Hearing on proposed Town Center code and design guidelines

Protection and enhancement of our City's natural assets today and for generations to come is the Stewardship Foundation's paramount mission. We commend our Council, city leadership and planning commission for crafting a development code for the Town Center, the heart of Lake Forest Park, that reflects a steadfast commitment to this core value of environmental stewardship.

We have closely followed the lengthy and sometimes rocky evolution of this code, much of it happening during a devastating global pandemic. Early on, none of the alternatives studied in the 2019 DEIS presented viable options for environmental health and quality of life. The baseline or "no action" option provided for density up to 700 dwelling units and under the third option, up to 1500 units were permitted. 400 parking spaces and 85' tall buildings were contemplated. Many citizens, along with the Stewardship Foundation, strongly opposed the DEIS framework.

We then proposed "The Preferred Environmental Alternative," with aspirations and limitations consistent with environmental responsibility and quality of life. After numerous iterations, the latest draft code and design guidelines effectively incorporate many of our recommendations and honor the community's longstanding Vision. We are pleased with the City's approach to the Town Center as a "Village in the Green" that requires development with the following critical features:

- (1) Reasonable baselines for height, density, set-backs and footprint, with bonuses contingent on providing public benefits that must be completed during the first phase of construction.
- (2) Construction employing the use of sustainable elements and best green practices for storm water management, solar access, electric vehicle infrastructure and smart lighting.
- (3) Requirements for protection and enhancement of the tree canopy and Lyon Creek, while promoting the creek as a public focal point.
- (4) Baseline areas of easily accessible open space with bonuses tied to enhanced green construction.
- (5) Landscaping specifications that require native trees and plants for screening at the perimeter and within buffers and rights of way; and
- (6) The use of a development agreement or Major Design Review process for plans that depart from the Code, so that citizens have input via the newly-created Design Review Board and public hearings. Further, the Council maintains a critical role as the final arbiter and appellate body.

As the introduction to the new TC Design Guidelines states so eloquently, "*Our community's environmental ethic is a living practice that envelops our stewardship of the private and public lands and waters in and around Town Center.*" We thank you for making environmental stewardship fundamental to this new legislation.

Sincerely,

The Stewardship Foundation Board of Directors