

Women lead an effort to stop development

Jim McNally Mar 16, 2017

DAVIDSON – Residents of a thicket of wooded area in western Davidson are working against a proposed development of the land and are promoting a plan to preserve most of the greenland and convert it into a park.

“The first thing we want to make clear is that this is not a NIMBY thing,” said Heidi Dietrich in referring to the acronym for “not in my backyard.”

Dietrich lives in a neighborhood not far from the site.

According to Denise Beall and her family, if the residential project is seen to its proposed fruition, much of the woodland just beyond the backyard of her Julia Circle home will be leveled to make way for an 11-unit housing development, for a project called Luminous, which is part of a larger schematic for the approximately 18-acre, town-owned property.

And while Beall and Dietrich and other neighbors are concerned that the green space and the tree canopy will vanish, plans for the Luminous project as presented to the town last month include a 6.5-acre park and the retention of 60 percent of the current green space.

Beall said her intentions to see the land put to use a park are not selfish ones.

“There are no parks on this side of town,” she said.

Added to the women’s concerns is that the portion of Davidson where the site is located is also home to highest number of minority residents of the town and the area with the lowest percentage of green space, she said.

“I don’t think that’s a coincidence,” Dietrich said and added that the Town of Davidson has won numerous awards for a variety of environmental achievements, including being a Bee City and a Tree City.

“Let’s try to win an award for an urban park,” she said. “Let’s do this Davidson-style or at least in the style Davidson is perceived to be.”

Also, both women have young boys and are fearful that they will lose the joys that come with exploring in the woods.

Beall said the boys played in a park in Cornelius for two hours, including about half that time in a gaga pit, in which a safer version of dodgeball is played.

“We have nothing like that here,” she said.

The neighbors planned to plead their case to the Davidson Town Board of Commissioners Tuesday night, March 14, which is after the Herald Weekly’s press time. Among the topics they hoped to address was one aimed at inducing developers to create a dining and shopping area near the intersection of Beaty and Main streets that would serve as a kind of entranceway into the park behind it.

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