

**TOWN OF BLADES COUNCIL MEETING
TOPIC: CYPRESS LANDING MAY 13, 2024**

**GOOD EVENING, MAYOR, COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.
MY NAME IS DENISE REDMOND AND I HAVE BEEN A RESIDENT OF THE TOWN OF BLADES SINCE 2020.**

I would like to frame my comments this evening by first sharing the objective:

We all want and support SMART GROWTH and can partner together to help this town grow, what is important to us and should be to you is that this can be done without major impacts to our quality of life, safety, and welfare with NO increases to our real estate taxes for the benefit of a large developer like Fairway Village Investments.

1. This past March residents of Blades had an opportunity to meet with representatives of Fairway Village Investments, a branch of Insight Homes of Bridgeville and our Town representatives. The purpose of that meeting was to address residents' questions about the Cypress Landing project and the timing.
2. We thank the Mayor, the Council, and the Fairway Village representatives for this opportunity.
3. Materials provided by the developer during this presentation were at best illegible and the representative narrated the content.
 - a) Please note that I am NOT implying that the representative or anyone one else misrepresented information during that meeting.
 - b) However a project of this magnitude potentially increasing the population of the Town by almost 20 % (estimated population of 1500, avg household size of 2.9 ppl, adds 272 more ppl) should NOT be considered for recommendation for approval without the voting/deciding individuals on the planning and zoning commission taking the time to personally read, comprehend and vet their questions and concerns to the developer and to ensure that all aspects of the project have been considered, specifically related to safety, access to palatable and adequate water and welfare of the residences of the Town of Blades.
 - c) The citizens continue to have concerns regarding this project, related to the apparent absence of impact studies regarding the Cypress Landing project on the Town of Blades, surrounding communities and our current limited resources.
 - d) The following list of concerns only represent a few of many unanswered questions from *The Pulse* response from David Edgell, the Director of the office of state planning coordination from the developer:
 - *Has the consultation with DNREC on the environmental impact been completed?*
 - *The Pulse application submitted by the developer indicated that the wetlands were delineated, has the US Army Corps of Engineers confirmed the delineation and if so, did their assessment also result in triggering Section 106 of the National Historic preservation? As any disturbance to this site before an archaeological survey is complete may disturb this known/reported pre contact site.*
 - *The displacement of a variety of wildlife is known, what assessment has been conducted to confirm that this displacement will NOT include any protected species?*
 - *DelDot estimates that there will be an additional 667 vehicle trips per day of which 43-52 will be during morning and evening rush hours. Why was the traffic impact study waived, based on DELDEL it is certainly warranted. Typically, on average only 2 dump trucks or Commercial vehicles get through the Concord Road light traveling east and/or north bound. I am sure that many of us sitting here tonight have experienced several light cycles just to get through that intersection. Can you imagine what would happen with the project increase in traffic and forget how long it will take when the bridge is up over the Nanticoke, which always redirects traffic onto Concord.*
 - *The 2021 Water Facilities Plan indicates that near term growth in the Town of Blades will require additional well capacity, water storage, water meter upgrades, water system expansions, and water treatment upgrades. Quoting cost estimated at \$13million and annually operation and maintenance of an additional \$350k. The report further notes that that the Town does not have the resources to self-fund these enhancements. Will Fairway Village Investment be making a capital contribution to support the additional infrastructure needed to support the almost 20% growth placing additional demands on the water plant? Where is the funding coming from to*

ensure proper staffing and annual budget, will the taxpayers for the town of Blades be left to pay these bills by raising our real estate taxes?

- i. Our current equipment is aging, is replacement currently budgeted and when will the work on the infrastructure start to support the increased demand?
 - ii. Residences are already dealing with low water pressure issues, adding another 188 toilets, showers and bathtubs, 94 dishwashers and washing machines will only further strain our current limited water resources.
- What is the status of the Sewer system concept from the planning and design review department? The evaluation would need to be approved prior to construction.
 - Since the meeting in March, have impacts assessment been obtained from our public safety officials: police, fire, and emergency response for both the Town of Blades and our neighboring jurisdictions that back up Blades?
 - The last report that we heard indicated that the initial height of the townhouse was too high for our existing fire equipment to properly control the fire and during the same discussion the height of the townhouse was modified. Do you have the actual specifications for these townhouses and has the Fire Chief had the opportunity to confirm that we have the adequate equipment?
 - What is the current stage of the project, has planning and zoning made their recommendation to town council, if so when was that done?
 - Was that recommendation made after reviewing the developers' responses from *David Edgell* as outlined in his July 24, 2023, letter?
 - At the last check on Friday the 10th the responses were not available on PLUS website, so we assumed those items remain outstanding.
 - These signed petitions represent _____ individuals who are only a fraction of those in the community (Blades and beyond) who are concerned about this project and who believe that further study is required before moving forward. We also believe that there should be more opportunities for the residents to engage with the Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission on this topic before it moves forward.

In conclusion, what we are looking for is a copy of the Planning and Zoning project plan, outlining scope, financial benefits, negative impacts short- and long-term infrastructure required to support something of this magnitude. The project plan should also include itemized Town of Blades, Sussex County, Delaware and Federal requirements and guidelines the status, assessment and analysis of each aspect and of this project documented to ensure that nothing is left to our memory and/or recollection. Having this level of detail to reflect upon will ensure informed competent decisions are made, provide the much-needed transparency for all citizens of the town of Blades, the emergency responders that protect us 24/7/365, ensure compliance with local, state and federal authority.

We attend these town council and planning and zoning meetings so that we can be informed citizens of the Town of Blades and without this level of information as requested above, naturally creates opinions about decisions being made, questioning what process steps were followed (and are they consistently applied), what things have been taken into consideration, making up our own benefits and negative impacts.

All we collectively are looking for is transparency into the process of how decisions are made that affect our day-to-day enjoyment and pride in calling Blades our home! Talk around Town has been said that this is a done deal, but without answers and subsequent analysis of the above we are unsure how residents have jumped to that conclusion.

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We respectively await your reply.
Denise Redmond