

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2022 5:00 PM
To: yehuawei@gmail.com
Cc: Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; James Baker; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: FW: Letter to Mayor, Council and TCAB from Vineyard Square
Attachments: VineyardSq_HOA_Letter2MayorCouncilTCAB.pdf

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin
Office Assistant
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

From: Yehua Wei <yehuawei@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 1, 2022 4:44 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>; Pam Hemminger <phemminger@townofchapelhill.org>; Karen Stegman <kstegman@townofchapelhill.org>; Jess Anderson <janderson@townofchapelhill.org>; Camille Berry <cberry@townofchapelhill.org>; Tai Huynh <thuynh@townofchapelhill.org>; Paris Miller-Foushee <pmiller-foushee@townofchapelhill.org>; Michael Parker <mparker@townofchapelhill.org>; Adam Searing <asearing@townofchapelhill.org>; Planning Department <planning@townofchapelhill.org>
Cc: Jeffrey Ryan <ryanjef@gmail.com>; susannassar energistics.com <susannassar@energistics.com>; Nate Jackson <heynatejackson@gmail.com>; Tina Vaughn Nicholson <tina.v.nicholson@gmail.com>; Anya Grahn <agrahn@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Letter to Mayor, Council and TCAB from Vineyard Square

External email: Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to reportspam@townofchapelhill.org

Dear Mayor, Town Council, and Planning,

We, the Vineyard Square HOA board (Susan Nassar, Jef Ryan, Nate Jackson, Tina Nicholson, and Yehua Wei), have written a letter to express our concerns on the recent TCAB's recommendation of opening the full vehicular access point by the extension of Cabernet Dr. from Vineyard Square. The attached letter is also intended for the Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you!

Best regards,
The board of Vineyard Square HOA

Dear Mayor, Town Council, and TCAB,

We, the Vineyard Square HOA board, are writing to express our concerns about the TCAB's recommendation of opening the full vehicular access point by the extension of Cabernet Dr. into Stanat's Place. Next, we explain, in bullet points, why there should not be full vehicular access and how the board of TCAB, who only looked at the proposed Stanat Place on paper, may have overlooked some critical issues.

1. Vineyard Square is very heavily populated. About two-thirds of the families have children or pets who often play and walk in our residential streets, along with neighborhood pedestrians, runners, and cyclists. Given the recent spike in pedestrians on crosswalks hit by drivers (see <https://www.wral.com/chapel-hill-police-ramping-up-pedestrian-safety-effort-as-pain-from-recent-crashes-lingers/20195551/>), we PLEAD that the mayor, council and TCAB to carefully consider the safety of the pedestrians in our neighborhood, especially safety of our children and not to add the mental stress to that some of the young families are already dealing with. In addition, please note that the full vehicular access will not only create cut-through traffic (more on that later) through our neighborhood but also through Stanat's Place. As a result, if the full vehicular extension is implemented, our safety concerns would also apply to the middle-income families that will decide to live at Stanat's Place in the future.
2. The TCAB's recommendation was based solely on traffic added from the 47 families that are projected to live at Stanat's Place. However, this is not why our residents are extremely concerned. The residents, through the previous town meetings, have repeatedly raised the concern about how Cabernet Dr. will create a shortcut for vehicles going from Weaver Diary to Homestead Park, the parcel and food delivery vehicles, and vehicles going from Weaver Diary to the Homestead that are attempting to avoid the traffic light. All these can significantly increase the traffic on Cabernet Drive, especially during the evenings when parcel and food deliveries are busy finishing their jobs and people are driving to the park to swim, skate, or walk their pets.
3. Cabernet Drive is very narrow and has a relatively steep incline. There are often cars, parcel delivery trucks, or trash/recycling cans on the side of the road, severely reducing the visibility of the drivers and pedestrians. Unfortunately, even now, some cars go down the slope at over 25 mph, and we have already witnessed some close calls.
4. Finally, please note that we, the Vineyard Square residents, are not just protesting in our self-interest at the expense of other residents living in Chapel Hill. Many of us are excited and would welcome and help new neighbors to settle into Stanat's Place. However, the safety concerns are very real. If you have doubts about our argument, we would like to invite you to Cabernet Dr. at Vineyard Square in person, and some of our neighbors would be happy to meet and explain all our concerns to you. Mayor Hemminger and multiple council members have visited Cabernet Dr. 2021, which is precisely why they recommended against full vehicular access at the Town Council Meeting on 11/10/2021.

Yours truly,
The Board of Vineyard Square HOA

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2022 8:52 AM
To: Carl Schuler
Cc: Colleen Willger; Chelsea Laws; Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; James Baker; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: Comments to Proposed Changes with the STANAT'S PLACE Concept Plan

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)
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From: Carl Schuler <gocarlschulergo@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2022 8:08 AM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Comments to Proposed Changes with the STANAT'S PLACE Concept Plan

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Dear Mayor Hemminger, Mayor Pro Tem Stegman and Council Members,

We are writing this letter in support of recent changes proposed by the developer to the Stanat's Place Concept Plan. These changes address vehicle traffic and a widened buffer between Vineyard Square townhouses- immediately south of Vintage Drive- and the proposed parallel townhouse units planned for the northern end of the development.

The new proposals are encouraging insofar as they underscore concerns raised both by Town Council and Vineyard Square neighbors over the last year. It is our belief that adopting the two proposals will not only address existing concerns for these populated neighborhoods but will also meet Town goals.

Cabernet access point:

To address the issue of limiting vehicle traffic flow from the Cabernet Drive access point to the Stanat's Place Development, the developer proposed using collapsible bollards along Cabernet Drive, including curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. The proposal will enhance safety not only for children playing nearby, but also will improve overall pedestrian safety for the Stanat's Place and Vineyard Square communities. The revised plan aligns with the Town's connectivity goals insofar as it provides an additional emergency access route for the proposed Stanat's Place Development. Currently, the community's only ingress and egress point to the proposed Stanat's Place Development is to the east along Aquatics Drive. The plan for a continued street surface along Cabernet Drive with collapsible bollards allows for emergency and service vehicle access into the adjacent neighborhoods while maintaining the focus on connectivity and pedestrian safety.

The Vineyard Square neighborhood is a densely populated community comprised of 161 townhouse units. The compact townhome community already experiences traffic challenges given its narrow streets, need for personal parked streetside vehicles, and consistent flow of delivery and service vehicles to the area. All these factors affect pedestrian safety and smooth traffic flow within the neighborhood. On numerous occasions we have witnessed many near accidents within the Vineyard Square community due to the issues noted above and combined with inattentive motorists and drivers engaging in excessive speed. The nearby public school bus stop at the corner of Cabernet Drive and Napa Valley Way adds to existing pedestrian hazards.

Buffer distance between neighboring developments:

We support

the developer's plans to extend the southern buffer between Vineyard Square townhouse units, south of Vintage Drive, and the proposed townhome units to the northernmost point of the Stanat's Place Development. The increased buffer between neighborhoods accommodates greater privacy. The added distance between townhouse units will allow for an undisturbed mature landscape consisting of a mixture of perennial green vegetation and tall pine trees. Vineyard Square neighbors have come to enjoy this forested area and to rely on the privacy it provides. Furthermore, increasing the distance between properties will help with storm water runoff as a significant amount of impervious ground will be added from the construction of 47 townhome units.

For these reasons we support the developer's proposal to limit vehicular access along Cabernet Drive and to extend the buffer distance between the Stanat's Place Development and Vineyard Square neighborhoods. We hope that Town Council Members will keep these privacy and safety issues in mind as they continue to hear further details regarding the Stanat's Place Conditional Zoning application.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Jenal and Carl Schuler

102 Vintage Drive

Chapel Hill, 27516

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 11:59 AM
To: Yehua Wei
Cc: Colleen Willger; Bergen Watterson; Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; James Baker; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver; Amy Oland; Brian Litchfield; Chelsea Laws; CHRIS BLUE; Cliff Turner; Faith Brodie; Lance Norris; Phillip Fleischmann; Sabrina Oliver; Susan Brown; Vencelin Harris
Subject: RE: Letter of Concerns regarding full vehicular access from Cabernet for Stanat's Place development

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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From: Yehua Wei <yehuawei@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:52 AM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Letter of Concerns regarding full vehicular access from Cabernet for Stanat's Place development

External email: Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to reportspam@townofchapelhill.org

Dear Chapel Hill Mayor and Town Council members,

We are owners, residents, and neighbors of Vineyard Square. We write to express our collective concerns regarding TCAB and the Planning Commission's recommendation to open the full vehicular access point by the extension of Cabernet Dr. into Stanat's Place.

1. Vineyard Square is very heavily populated. About two-thirds of the families have children or pets who often play and walk in our residential streets, along with neighborhood pedestrians, runners, and cyclists. Given the recent spike in pedestrians on crosswalks hit by drivers (see <https://www.wral.com/chapel-hill-police-ramping-up-pedestrian-safety-effort-as-pain-from-recent-crashes-lingers/20195551/>), we PLEAD that the mayor and council to carefully consider the safety of the pedestrians in our neighborhood, especially safety of our children and not to add the mental stress to that some of the young families are already dealing with. In addition, please note that the full vehicular access will create cut-through traffic (more on that later) through both our neighborhood and Stanat's Place. As a result, if the full vehicular extension is implemented, our safety concerns would also apply to the middle-income families that will decide to live at Stanat's Place in the future.
2. The TCAB and Planning Commission's recommendation was based solely on traffic added from the 47 families that are projected to live at Stanat's Place. However, this is not why we are extremely concerned. The fact is that Cabernet Dr. will create a shortcut for vehicles going from Weaver Diary to Homestead Park, the parcel and food delivery vehicles, and vehicles going from Weaver Diary to the Homestead that are attempting to avoid the traffic light. All these can significantly increase the traffic on Cabernet Drive, especially during the evenings when parcel and food deliveries are busy finishing their jobs and people are driving to the park to swim, skate, or walk their pets.
3. Cabernet Drive is very narrow and has a STEEP incline. There are often cars, parcel delivery trucks, or trash/recycling cans on the side of the road, severely reducing the visibility of the drivers and pedestrians. Unfortunately, even now, some cars go down the slope at over the 25 mph limit, and we have already witnessed some close calls.
4. Suppose the town decides to have full vehicular access by the extension of Cabernet Dr. In that case, there should be at minimum multiple speed tables installed on Cabernet before the construction of the extension. However, during a meeting with the town staff, we were told that the town does not want speed tables on Cabernet. This makes the bollards and limited access at Cabernet even more crucial.

We share all the optimism and concerns about a sustainable, diverse, and equitable Chapel Hill. We in Vineyard Square today represent what Council members, town visionaries, and developers express for Stanats Place and the Chapel Hill of tomorrow -- young families, empty-nesters, middle-income and middle-income aspirants, people with disabilities, immigrants, retirees, culturally and linguistically diverse, and families committed to sustainable, equitable and just opportunities to thrive. We do not oppose the development of more affordable housing in our neighborhood; in fact, we represent the voices of those who would live in Stanat's Place. If you have doubts about our argument, we would like to invite you to Cabernet Dr. at Vineyard Square in person, and we would be happy to meet and explain all our concerns to you. Mayor Hemminger and some council members have already visited Cabernet Dr. in 2021, which is precisely why they recommended against full vehicular access at the Town Council Meeting on 11/10/2021.

Respectfully,

Yehua Wei
Lei Zhang
Yian Wei
Susan Chiurco
Zhiyue Lu
Huizhi Bai
Xiaoyue Lu
Melina Orces
Patricio Orces
Rebecca M. Parrilla
Xiaolin Duan
Wei Zhang

Lori Montgomery
June Carbonneau
David Carbonneau
Inna Tchivileva
Christy Tate
Jim Tate
Rosy Tate
Cengiz Alabacak
Bingchao Liu
Siyuan Su
Howard Shang
Jing Fang
Joy Yin
Songlin Zhu
Carl Schuler
Stephanie Jenal
Liuyang Wang
Gang Li
Nana Yuan
Chenghao Chen
Fang Wu
Yuliang li
Emily Tsai
Joe Tsai
Jing Fang
Edmund Huang
Lolita Huang
Nicole Orces
Nana Yuan
Li Wang
Yanyan Yang
Ming Feng
Jiangang Lu

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2022 11:49 AM
To: Geoffrey F. Green
Cc: Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; James Baker; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: Comments on Stanat's Place proposal

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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From: Geoffrey F. Green <geoff@stuebegreen.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:14 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Comments on Stanat's Place proposal

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Mayor and members of Town Council:

The construction of the Estes Drive bicycle and pedestrian facilities has put in stark relief one of the Town's major mistakes of the last few decades—our failure to develop a connected network of streets that accommodates pedestrian, bicycle and, yes, vehicular traffic. With construction limiting Estes Drive to eastbound-only travel, neighborhoods north of Estes between MLK Jr. Blvd. and Franklin Street lack reasonable alternatives to destinations towards the west. Huntington Drive runs close to Piney Mountain Road, which connects to MLK. Jr. Blvd., but there's no way to walk, bike, or drive between the two, and not for any good reason. If you live on Kensington Drive and want to get to the YMCA located to the south and west, you

need to take a roundabout route to the east and north to get there. And of course, walking or bicycling is not an option with the Estes Drive sidewalk blocked. The whole area is a morass of dead-ends which has severely impacted the resiliency and accessibility of that part of town.

That's why it is so important that future developments be connected to allow multiple ways to access destinations. The traditional Chapel Hill policy of loading all vehicular traffic onto main roads has been a failure, and our town's lack of anything resembling a street grid has been a real determinant to our efforts to facilitate travel through our town.

At your meeting Wednesday, you will be hearing public comment on the proposal for the townhouse development at Stanat's Place. My understanding is that the developer has agreed to support a bollard-restricted emergency connection between the new townhouse development and the existing townhouse development at Vineyard Square. The Council should reject this offer and, as strongly recommended by staff and overwhelmingly supported by the Planning Commission and the Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board, approve the development only on the condition that it include a fully unobstructed vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connection between the two developments.

Here are some of the reasons why:

- It is important to provide options for residents of Stanat's Place to get to Weaver Dairy Road Extension, and for residents of Vineyard Square who need to drive to Homestead Park or get to Homestead Road, and they are the people who, realistically, are most likely to use the connection. But it also provides options for Stanat's Place residents who are going to New Parkside and other neighborhoods that are connected internally, without requiring the use of main roads.
- The narrow roads in Vineyard Square, which the homeowners point to as a reason why there should not be a connection, naturally slow traffic and will limit the danger posed by the minimal number of cars that the traffic modeling shows will use the connection. While connectivity can be challenging on roadways with wide pavement and no sidewalks, that's not the case on Cabernet Drive.
- As development continues along Homestead Road, there will be a greater need for more ways to access destinations in the area, even if it's just for a few people. Every little bit of connectivity helps. It is important that each development not dump all traffic onto one road. Developments on each side of the road should connect to each other. Providing additional accessibility is a good thing.

It's instructive to consider a counterfactual. Imagine if the townhouses at Vineyard Square and the townhouses at Stanat's Place had been built all at once. No one would have possibly suggested blocking Cabernet Road in the middle, just as when Vineyard Square was developed, Berlinger Place (in the middle of Vineyard Square) wasn't artificially split in two. It would be absurd to have done so. Why would we do this now? It is also interesting to note that Vineyard Square itself connects to preexisting development at Christine Court, a road which likely came to a dead end before Vineyard Square was constructed.

Back in the 1990s, when the Meadowmont development where I now live was under consideration, residents of The Oaks were apoplectic about the proposal to connect Meadowmont to the Oaks through an extension of Pinehurst Drive. They claimed the health and safety of residents would be put at risk, with children most in jeopardy, and that the connector would hurt their property values. A number of residents even sued the town and the developers.

Thank goodness that Town Council didn't buy into the fear-mongering. It is hard to imagine the traffic chaos that would have been caused had Pinehurst Drive been artificially divided, with all traffic through Meadowmont to the Rashkis Elementary School and to Harris Teeter forced to divert to NC 54/Raleigh Road, and all traffic from Meadowmont to Blue Hill and Ephesus Church Road forced to use NC 54/Raleigh Road and US 15-501/Fordham Boulevard. Moreover, anyone who has traveled along Pinehurst Drive in the last decade can testify to the fact that the road connection has not devastated anyone's quality of life, caused any significant injuries, or had a noticeable impact on property values. Making the connection was controversial at the time, but you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone today who would want the connection cut.

For like reasons, and for the reasons staff states in its report, you should stay firm to the principles of connectivity and ensure that the new townhouses at Stanat's Place have a full connection to Cabernet Drive,

and not create another disconnected community. This is important precedent and will help create a connected and fully accessible Chapel Hill.

- geoff

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2022 4:50 PM
To: Sarah Vinas; Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; James Baker; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: FW: for tonight prior to Stanat Place agenda item
Attachments: 2022.09.14 to Town.docx

Forgot the attachment

Jeanette Coffin
Office Assistant
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Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
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-----Original Message-----

From: susannassar energistics.com <susannassar@energistics.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2022 2:56 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Cc: Amy Harvey <aharvey@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: for tonight prior to Stanat Place agenda item

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As I said on the phone Amy, it's about townhome communities in general and I think Stanat Place will be the first on the agenda.

Susan

September 14, 2022

RE: Townhome Communities in Chapel Hill— Quality of Life Considerations

Dear Mayor and Town Council,

I apologize for not writing sooner. I have been composing this letter in my head for at least a year now. It is intended only with the best intention and appreciation for your work and dedication to our Town.

I get the impression that the Mayor and Council (as well as Planning staff and the volunteers on the Commissions) do not live in a multi-family neighborhood. (With the exception of Tai who rents at Vineyard Square.) So this letter is intended to present the ideals and realities of such neighborhoods from someone who has lived in one for 17 years.

We have owned two single-family homes in Chapel Hill and one large custom condominium in Winston-Salem, prior to buying at Vineyard Square in 2005. Plus I have been on the Vineyard Square HOA Board for most of the time so I am pretty involved and perceptive. I love living here and want to share what makes Vineyard Square so wonderful to provide insights as you consider future townhome communities.

The theme here is what makes a development desirable and pleasant to live in. People focused. Quality of life focused. I mean after all isn't that why we live here?

• **We prefer our garages on the front and do not see them as an eyesore.**

It leaves us with the maximum private outdoor space in the back.

It allows us to actually see neighbors coming and going... And sometimes when I am out front on my driveway they stop as they are driving or walking by for a quick hello.

It leaves more trees in place and/or the opportunity to plant more, including screening trees.

It reduces the amount of impervious surface. (Enough said about that.)

I have heard the CDC and others express their dislike for garage-centric homes. But in fact they are less visually obtrusive than they look in drawings. A pergola on top is a good idea. Also a trellis up the sides would encourage homeowners to plant vines (in the ground or in pots) that could climb and soften the look. I personally had PVC trellises custom-made such that they would be sturdy AND blend into the facade. I of course submitted an Architectural Request Form first to the HOA Board for approval.

• **Backyards should be private.**

Not backed up to another neighbor's backyard.

Not backed up to a common "park" area or public walking path.

If we did not want some outdoor living space we would live in a downtown apartment or in a condo.

We CHERISH the private rears of our homes. The fronts are for building community and neighborhood relations. The backs are for building family and gardening- doing yoga- mediating- eating al fresco-etc.

- **A playground is a must unless it's a 55+ community.**

At Vineyard Square we have two playgrounds. When we re-did them a couple of years ago (at the cost of \$50,000+) we designed one for younger children and one for older children. It happens that on one side of our neighborhood there are more young children and on the other side they tend to be older so that worked out well.

If you drive by at 5:00 p.m. both playground structures are literally covered with kids. It's adorable.

It also gives parents a place to meet up and get to know other parents. There are benches. Sometimes they hold potlucks there. And sometimes people without kids hang out there too with their neighbors, cocktail in hand.

Ideally the playground area would be large enough for some shade trees— the sun is brutal of course in the summer— but that's probably a pipe-dream. We DID install an umbrella atop the second re-do which helps a little.

Now imagine children coming out of the woodwork around 5 p.m. or earlier and streaming across streets to reach the playground which leads to my next point.

- **We desire safe streets with minimal traffic.**

I cannot say enough about this. Remember when one waxed nostalgic about a quiet tree-lined street?

Townhome communities are by nature very dense. So you have a driveway every few feet which involves 1-3 cars. So just the vehicular traffic from one's own neighborhood is more than ideal. Such a dense neighborhood should not be imposed on to absorb neighboring traffic unless there is a REAL (not just ideological) need for connectivity.

We have children and pets IN the street. Sometimes we stand IN the street to talk to our neighbor across the street. When there is not a sidewalk neighbors and their dogs walk and run IN the street. The street is part of the community. As a result we are much closer and friendly than when I lived in single-family homes on Seminole Drive in North Forest Hills and North Lakeshore Drive in Lake Forest. The latter of which by the way was such a busy short-cut thoroughfare that I considered increasing my life insurance every time I stepped into the roadway to take my mail.

- **Ideally there would be a sidewalk in front of all homes.**

You meet our neighbors when they are walking their dogs on the sidewalk right in front of our home. Or headed to the mailbox.

When there is not a sidewalk, which is the case on a couple of blocks at Vineyard, people walk IN the street. Or cross back and forth.

- **In reality, our driveways only accommodate ONE car.**

I would like to debunk all this parking misinformation about 2-car garages.

First of all, a 19-foot garage is considered a “small 2-car garage.” Once you include our trash carts and HUGE blue recycling carts there is only room for one car.

Secondly, people own STUFF and the reason we can live in a home where no outside storage is allowed is because of our garages. Yes, our garages are part of our living space. Most of the people I see parking in their garages are single and own only one car.

Thirdly, our driveways are not really large enough for 2 cars since they also serve as access to the front door. My driveway is 16 feet wide which leaves just enough room to walk between the 2 cars. But it's only 19 feet long. The mini van can be parked right up against the garage door without encroaching on the sidewalk. But on the other side we cannot pull all the way up because we need to access our sidewalk leading to our front porch/door. So I park my shorter PT Cruiser there pulled as close to the garage as I can while still being able to open the driver door before the hedge. That leaves my personal sidewalk accessible, but my car encroaches on over half the public sidewalk. Which means the children on their tricycles and scooters have to move into the street.

• Frankly the Town should not approve neighborhoods with no on-street parking. It's the antithesis to livable.

I would never live in a neighborhood with no on-street parking and most of my neighbors here feel the same.

Sometimes a concept plan requires too many compromises for livability and should be rejected.

• If the Town really wants to increase mid-level price housing for our local employees then the Covenants should require that all homes be owner-occupied.

Already half of Vineyard Square owners work outside of Chapel Hill and choose to live here 1) because Chapel Hill is a great place to live and 2) for the schools.

But at least they make great neighbors and enhance the neighborhood and Town.

The real problem is the investors who swoop up such “affordable housing” and that is a huge issue up and down the east coast for all homes that could be affordable to first-time buyers. Before the Covid price bubble I would see them driving through Vineyard Square looking for For Sale signs. And when a neighborhood is almost built out the developer offers fire-sale prices which their own employees and local Realtors jump on for investment purposes.

• There is a huge misunderstanding about what an HOA is so please don't assume “Oh, the HOA will take care of it.”

The reason there is an HOA is because there are commonly owned pieces of land and in our case, expensive accouterments that the Town and County require us to have such as a Stormwater Pond and Fire Sprinkler System. Many homeowners assume that because they pay dues they are entitled to care-free living.

(This is not helped by the fact that Realtors advertise condos and town homes as carefree living.)

The HOA Board is a handful of volunteers maligned and under-appreciated (which as giving community members I'm sure you can identify with.)

If not for our FREE work, dues would be much higher. And oh my gosh, increase the dues and there is anarchy.

Which reminds me to beg, for the sake of future HOAs, that you do not add to their burden by insisting on a club house. Not only does it add to the maintenance and management/insurance costs, it raises the dues. It's one thing if you have a social 55+ community full of smart retired professionals standing in line to be on the Board. It's another thing if you are a younger (and also less affluent) community where work + family responsibilities prohibit one from volunteering to be on the Board and dues can be a burden.

Most sincerely,

Susan Nassar
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