

A new petition to Chapel Hill Town Council related to the 2217 Homestead Road development

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I find I must defend the value of my home and the quality of my life as it relates to the impact of 2217 Homestead Road development. This is the third petition that I have submitted to Town Council (02/09/2022; 06/08/2022) regarding this development.

I thought I understood what the Town of Chapel Hill would provide to me for my taxes. I think they can be summarized with the following phrase: You will protect my property from fire, and my personal safety. However, I also expect that you will protect the value of my home, including the trees within my property line. I believe all the trees that grow on the property behind my house (defined as up to my surveyed property line), should remain as part of the buffer between the two properties. This petition especially addresses the expectations that I have from the town. The main points of this petition follow.

1. Does Council stand for maximizing the saving of old growth trees in new developments?

I ask the Town Council to go on record as to whether Chapel Hill believes in preserving old growth trees instead of replacing them with new plantings. Accordingly, how will this position be used to establish a minimum buffer of 50 feet of existing trees between The Courtyards at Homestead Road (Courtyards) and 2217 Homestead Road (2217 HR).

2. Establish a 50-foot tree buffer between the two developments.

It is my understanding that there is an existing 18 feet of original growth trees that are on the Courtyards' owner's property. I remind Council about my active petition, submitted (02/09/2022), which requests that 50–100-feet of existing trees be left on the 2217 HR property that will butt up to Courtyards' trees. Have the builder submit a new plan that removes the clearcutting behind the last row of houses next to the Courtyards property line.

If the planned berm is removed and this area is not clearcut, there will be an additional 35 feet of existing trees remaining plus the existing 18 feet that Courtyards owns. This would result in an approximately 50-foot tree buffer and natural space for privacy between the two developments. It would also have to added benefit of preventing soil erosion.

3. Guarantee that the strongest trees will survive in this new development.

The developer should hire a tree surgeon to advise on tree health before construction starts. The developer and a representative from the Town should meet with the expert to establish which trees the Town wants saved. At this meeting yellow ribbons should be tied around these trees to prevent their destruction. An additional \$200,000 should be added to the developer's bond amount to help guarantee that the selected trees remain viable for at least 5 years after the development is completed. The builder would be assessed \$15,000 per tree that does not survive, based on the judgement of the same tree surgeon, and this amount deducted from the bond.

4. Construction techniques to minimize damage to trees to be saved.

To ensure tree viability, what measures will be taken to prevent heavy construction vehicles or digging near the existing roots of the remaining trees. I request that the Town requires the developer to erect orange construction fences 15 feet from the drip line of the saved trees closest toon the 2217 HR property (this is a good rule of thumb for the root systems of viable trees).

5. What is the purpose of the berms?

Are the berms for the builder's convenience as a place to dump the dirt that will accumulate during construction, so that he does not have to remove it from the site? Alternatively, the builder stated at the July 20, 2022, informational meeting that the purpose of berms is to act as the last defense against runoff. The berms should not be needed if a properly engineered runoff plan is created. A 50-foot buffer of existing trees would be a better solution. Removing the berms from this area from the plan will allow the 50-foot buffer to occur.

Additionally, I do not consider the rationale that berms with plantings on

top will provide privacy to the residents of Courtyards, as it will take 5-10 years to have enough growth to have any impact.

- 6. The proposed entrance to the 2217 Homestead Road.** I believe that proposed entrance will cause traffic problems as their residents enter or exit at a 90 degree angle. As you will remember, the Transportation Committee has frequently recommended 50-foot merge lanes on either side of these types of entrances. These merge lanes are on the applicant's land and are consistent with road quality construction. I remind of you of my second active petition (06/08/2022) that suggests the Town consider getting state funding for construction of a round-about at the intersection of Weaver Dairy Road Extension and Homestead Road, with the suggestion that access to 2217 HR be a spur off this round-about. The Planning Department, therefore, should consider moving the proposed entrance to 2217 HR and putting an easement on the development property for future important upgrades to Homestead Road. These improvements are needed due to the increased traffic expected due to the 3 new developments in this immediate section of Homestead Road.
- 7. Signage needed on both sides of the connector.**
Have appropriate DOT signage posted at each end of the connector between the developments that reads, "No vehicular traffic allowed. For emergency vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians only."
- 8. Require the developer to stake out the property line between the two developments as soon as possible.**
Require the developer to use their survey of the 2217 Homestead Road property to clearly mark their property line in common with Courtyards with metal stakes on the Greenway Lndg side of Courtyards.

I do not give my permission for any citizens of Chapel Hill to revise this petition.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey Charles