

Public Records Request #3527

The following materials have been gathered in response to public records request #3527. These materials include:

- Letter to City Council

This information was provided as a response to a public records request on 4/6/20 and is current to that date. There is a possibility of more current information and/or documents related to the stated subject matter.

Further Information

For further information about this request or the Citywide Records Program, please contact:

Cheyenne Flotree
Citywide Records Program Manager
City of Charlotte/City Clerk's Office
600 East 4th Street, 7th Floor
Charlotte, NC 28202
Cheyenne.Flotree@charlottenc.gov

Amelia Knight
Public Records Specialist
City of Charlotte/City Clerk's Office
600 East 4th Street, 7th Floor
Charlotte, NC 28202
Amelia.Knight@charlottenc.gov

To: Mayor Lyles and members of the City Council

Re: Ballantyne Reimagined development proposal

From: OneMECK

OneMECK is a coalition of individuals and nonprofit organizations dedicated to promoting neighborhoods and schools with fair economic and racial diversity. We write to express our concern that the Ballantyne proposal lacks sufficient affordable rental housing to justify the city's investment.

Please consider the history of the city's involvement in Ballantyne. When the original developer sought the city's rezoning and infrastructure assistance, the community had recognized its deficit of affordable housing and lack of diversity in the CMS schools in South Charlotte. The city got only a generic promise that some "affordable housing" would be included in Ballantyne. However, there was no definition of "affordable," and no housing was dedicated to serve low-income service workers and others at 50% AMI and below. The city lost its first opportunity for fairness and diversity in Ballantyne.

The second opportunity for affordable housing came through CMS, which recognized the need for economic and racial diversity in Ballantyne. CMS acquired extra land around its new school site in Ballantyne and reserved it for potential affordable housing. Once CMS declared this contiguous land as surplus, it offered it to the city pursuant to local custom. The city squandered an opportunity to buy or lease this strategic land for redevelopment as affordable housing, which it could have sought at a discount pursuant to NC General Statute 160A-274. CMS sold the land to a for-profit developer. The city lost another important, rare opportunity.

The current proposal may present the last substantial opportunity for affordable housing in Ballantyne. The current developer seeks significant regulatory and financial aid for its redevelopment of the neighborhood. Yet, the developer is offering no meaningful commitment of housing to serve part-time and low-wage service workers. The city should utilize its leverage to get clear, enforceable, long-term affordability of at least thirty (30) years for at least 15% for those earning 60% AMI and 5% for those earning 30% AMI. That goal should be achievable because the area can command very high market rents and sales prices for the new housing, which can offset the costs of affordable housing.

The city participated in the Leading on Opportunity study and adopted the goals of its report. We know that in order to propel Charlotte-Mecklenburg from our basement position of 50th in opportunity for vulnerable citizens seeking economic mobility, the city cannot afford to lose this third opportunity in Ballantyne. Once again, we're being presented with the fundamental question - what is our community's soul and character?

For OneMECK:

Justin Perry, Co-Founder, OneMECK

Mike O'Sullivan, Chair, OneMECK Affordable Housing Committee

Rosalyn Allison-Jacobs

Brittenay Causieestko-Lee, YWCA Central Carolinas

Steve Cohen

Ted Fillette

Angie Forde, St Martin's Episcopal Church

Janet Ganoung

Rick Pfeiffer

Bob Simmons

Lisa Stockton Howell

Sam Todd