

ZMA-1-24 Old Faison Place Planned Unit Development

March 20, 2025 Joint Public Hearing Questions & Comments

Council/LURB Questions/Comments:

1. Are there any roadway designs for the Mingo Bluff Boulevard extension that align with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan but also reduce the impact on the intervening parcel (254 Money Tree Lane) between the subject properties and the Mingo Creek neighborhood to the north?

RESPONSE: The following was discussed at the public hearing. The Comprehensive Plan shows a conceptual alignment of Mingo Bluff Blvd, which partially extends across several additional neighboring properties to the west and southwest. We do not own those properties, and therefore cannot extend the road onto those properties. The road extension will be expensive, and in order for our development to pay to construct the road extension, the road needs to pass through our property, and have townhouse lots on both sides of the extended road, so that the road serves our project. The conceptual road alignment shown on the Comprehensive Plan appears to be “sketch level”, and we understand it was not intended to inhibit advanced engineering design of the road. The conceptual road alignment shown on the Comprehensive Plan is not practical, because the road alignment would conflict with several neighboring houses, and it would conflict with the existing intersection of Money Tree Lane and Old Faison Road. NCDOT will not allow Mingo Bluff Blvd to intersect Old Faison Road in proximity to the existing intersection of Old Faison Road and Money Tree Lane. The proposed Mingo Bluff Blvd alignment has been reviewed and vetted now for several years with Town staff, NCDOT, and our traffic consultant, and none of them have requested any changes to the alignment. The proposed Mingo Bluff Blvd alignment complies with Town horizontal alignment design standards. No changes to the Mingo Bluff Blvd alignment (as shown on the Master Plan) are proposed. Please approve the alignment shown on our Master Plan.

- a. Could the roadway be designed to favor the eastern side of this property so that it reduces the impact to the existing use of the property?

RESPONSE: Mingo Bluff Blvd is on the west side of our property. Did you mean to say “west”? It is not possible to move Mingo Bluff Blvd onto the east neighbor’s property for multiple reasons. See above response.

- b. Staff recommend that this roadway connection be designed and shown on the next Master Plan submittal so that it is demonstrated that the road could be built, if the appropriate rights-of-way/easements are acquired to allow for this connection.

RESPONSE: The developer attempted several times to negotiate a deal with Mr Narron, but he did not accept the offer. The developer is willing to construct the offsite road connection, but only if the Town is able to acquire the land for the R/W

and temporary construction easement. The portion of potential offsite road, R/W and TCE are shown on the plan.

2. What is the use of the intervening parcel?

RESPONSE: The Town is asking us to extend Mingo Bluff Blvd through the neighboring parcel (Narron tract), and connect the road to our site. The Narron tract is partially wooded and has one single family residential house. The use is single family residential.

3. What is the rationale between the dichotomy of residential uses (12 single-family homes and 105 townhomes)? The proposed architecture in general is supported by one Councilor, but the fact that the neighborhood has been split up into distinct pods makes the neighborhood feel disjointed and not in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

RESPONSE: The following was discussed at the hearing. This is a residential developer specializing in townhouses. The developer initially wanted to construct all townhouses for this project, and when he purchased this property, the Town regulations in place at that time allowed for him to construct all townhouses. The Town has since revised its' regulations to "down-zone" the property. The Town requested the developer to build a mixed use project with a single family residential and a commercial component. As a compromise, the developer is willing to construct some single family houses and provide a commercial outparcel as shown on the Master Plan. However, the developer needs to maintain the townhouse unit count shown on the Master Plan, in order to pay for all of the infrastructure improvements required by the Town, so that he does not lose money on this project. Given that a single family lot takes up more land than a townhouse lot, the single family component is a significant percentage of the land on this project. The developer cannot afford to omit more townhouse units to replace them with a smaller quantity of single family house units, because that would cause this project to lose money.

As an additional compromise, the developer has agreed to replace some of the townhouses next to the park area with additional single family Charleston houses.

4. The Staff recommended Urban Main Street roadway design through the proposed development is generally supported;

RESPONSE: The Urban Main Street town cross section was a requirement from the Town Planning Department, only for portions of Mingo Bluff Blvd. It is a wide road right-of-way, including wide paved shoulders. The road section causes the project to have extra impervious surface and will be expensive to construct. This wide road and paved shoulders cross section was not the developer's preference. The developer made a compromise to provide this, as required by the Town.

However, Council inquired if the orientation of the proposed townhome units on the eastern side of Mingo Bluff Boulevard extension (proposed Urban Main Street) can be rotated 90 degrees so that those units front the collector road (Mingo Bluff Boulevard extension)?

RESPONSE: The developer proposes an alternative idea in order to achieve the intent of this comment from the Council. The west ends of the townhouse buildings, which front on the east side of Mingo Bluff Blvd have been architecturally enhanced to look more like a front of the townhouse buildings, and include architectural features, an entrance and sidewalk connection from the door to Mingo Bluff Blvd. Please refer to the revised, enhanced side building elevations at the back of the Master Plan set.

5. The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the importance of Placemaking. Council reiterated the importance of this and recommended this be considered when evaluating if the orientation of townhomes along the Urban Main Street portion of the development can be rotated to front that corridor.

RESPONSE: See above response. The enhanced end units will have enhanced building elevations with primary entrances facing Mingo Bluff Blvd, which achieves the goal of the adjacent townhouses along Mingo facing Mingo Bluff Blvd. We believe that these enhanced end units will be some of the most desirable units in the project, and provide enhanced curb appeal along Mingo Bluff Blvd.

6. Does the design of the proposed Local Street with On-Street Parking result in one-way vehicular travel along those designated roadways?

RESPONSE: No. There are not any one-way streets on this project. All proposed streets and alleys are proposed as two-way streets and are designed per the Town's road and alley standards.

7. How can the proposal implement recommendations of Affordable Knightdale, and how do those proposed changes interplay with the Water Allocation Policy?

RESPONSE:

The Old Faison Place will be consistent with many of the guiding principles of the Affordable Knightdale Plan (the "Affordable Plan"). This development proposes 94 townhomes, 24 single-family detached homes. 9 of the single family detached homes are Charleston-style homes **in close proximity to an activity center.**

As a part of the River District and by offering a Town park and walking trails, this development **promotes opportunities to experience the natural environment and to be involved in parks and recreation.** By offering road improvements, bike lanes and walking trails, the development **promotes integrated transportation systems.** By developing a significant number of smaller townhouse units with a well connected offering of recreational amenities, it **provides compact and efficient development, which still taps into the uniquely Knightdale vibe.** The reservation of a parcel for future commercial development **will promote economic vitality by facilitating the development of sustainable businesses** with a built-in customer base--the residents of the neighborhood. The townhomes will be lower in price and will thus be more affordable than the single-family homes or many other single-family homes within Knightdale. Homes which require less land area and which share walls are decidedly less expensive than single-family detached homes.

Providing new townhomes will address the need for Missing Middle housing, as recommended by the Knightdale Plan. With several different housing types, there will be a range of purchase prices and thus, the neighborhood will likely develop as a mixed income neighborhood, as recommended by the Affordable Plan and will serve the Affordable Knightdale goal of **expanding housing choices**.

This range of choices also addresses the Affordable Plan recommendation to expand housing options by offering at least four different housing products with different price points. The Old Faison project will offer many recreational amenities which will allow homeowners to play pickeball and walk or run on the many walking trails in the neighborhood and bike on the new bike lanes. There's also a playfield for other sports, as well as a dog park. With these recreational amenities, residents can save the cost of fuel to drive to similar recreational areas. Such amenities address the Affordable Plan recommendations supporting walking and biking and deemphasizing the car.

In addition, the project reserves a .75-acre parcel for future commercial development which will provide an amenity to residents in the neighborhood. The Affordable Plan specifies that a neighborhood with amenities and or a mixed-used development provides a more inclusive and livable town. Providing Park space to the whole of Knightdale will also contribute to and make Knightdale a more livable connected and inclusive community and will address the Affordable Knightdale objective of **improving quality of life and promoting community facilities for all Knightdale residents**. Finally, the inclusion of a retail parcel will provide a future small-scale neighborhood serving commercial development as recommended in the Affordable Plan.

8. One LURB member noted concerns with parking availability if the recreational open spaces are dedicated to the Town as a public park.

RESPONSE: The proposed open space amenities are primarily intended to support this project and fulfill the Town's UDO requirements for this residential project. The open space amenities can be accessed by the residents via pedestrian sidewalks. A limited offstreet amenity parking lot is provided at the mail kiosk. The project includes extensive on-street public parking, which could also be used both by residents and park visitors. Given the geometry and size of the open space land, there is not room to add more amenity area parking. We suggest that the Town review the parking shown on the Master Plan to determine if acceptable to the Town. If the Town believes that the quantity of parking does not meet the Town's needs, then the "public park" would need to be removed from the plan. The amenities and open space would remain on the plan as shown, but instead of a "public park", it would be simply labelled as open space.

9. River District placemaking is important. Special signage has been proposed in the past to emphasize that the development is in this special District.
 - a. How does this proposal align with the River District Small Area Plan?

RESPONSE: This project achieves the following goals of the River District Small Area Plan. A 10' wide sidepath will be constructed along Old Faison Road. Mingo Bluff Blvd will be constructed through the site, and will include additional 10' wide multi-use paths on both

sides for pedestrians and cyclists. Additional walking trails will be constructed through the development. The Master Plan includes pedestrian connections to the north, south, west, and east. A bike lane will be constructed within Old Faison Road. The proposed wet detention stormwater pond will be constructed to NCDEQ standards. This pond will capture both onsite and onsite stormwater runoff, and treat the stormwater for nitrogen and phosphorus removal to protect the Neuse River. The proposed building elevations show a variety of materials and architectural features, which are consistent with the River District Small Area Plan.

10. Are there any planned roadway improvements along Old Faison Road, whether they be tied to this proposed project, or any other recently approved or under construction developments in the area?

RESPONSE: The proposed road improvements for this project are shown on the Master Plan, which includes a turn lane on Old Faison Road. According to the NCDOT website, there are no planned NCDOT TIP widening projects in this area. Suggest you check with the Town Engineer to see if they can answer your question about other potential road projects in the Town.

11. What is the reasoning behind proposing the commercial outparcel chosen over utilizing the land area for an HOA amenity center?

RESPONSE: The Town Planning Dept has been reviewing this project for the past 2 years. During that time, they emphasized that the new UDO requires a mixed use component for this project, and indicated that the Council would likely not approve this project unless it had a mixed use component. For this reason, the commercial outparcel was added.

The Council has not asked the developer to omit the commercial outparcel to replace it with a different use.

The Master Plan does show many amenity areas for this project, including open spaces, pickleball courts, playground, multi-use field, walking trails, fire pit, picnic shelter, bocce ball, and a dog park. All of those facilities are intended to be used by the project residents. The developer has offered those areas to the Town as a public park to be operated and maintained by the Town. The developer is not proposing any additional changes to the open space areas. The UDO does not require an HOA amenity center building, and no amenity center building is proposed.

12. Who would maintain the recreational open spaces if they were offered to the Town? What amenities are being offered to the Town for ownership and maintenance?

RESPONSE: If the Town agrees to the open space areas as a Town public park, then the Town would be responsible for operation and perpetual maintenance of those park areas. See above responses for a list of amenities shown on the Master Plan.

13. One Councilor recommended that the SCM area is amenitized if it is to receive open space credits, additional outdoor living spaces on all units is added, and a greater mix of housing types is necessary. In addition, the Mingo Bluff Boulevard connection remains extremely important to the Town and the Developer should exhaust all options before requesting eminent domain to be exercised by the Town.

RESPONSE: In response to this request, the plans have been revised to enhance the wet detention pond in the following ways. A proposed walking trail is shown around the entire pond, so that pedestrians can enjoy this area for exercise. A pedestrian footbridge will be constructed over the spillway, which will add to the aesthetics. The pond includes a proposed fountain. The developer proposes to create an outdoor seating area with benches around portions of the pond. There is a landscape buffer proposed along the north perimeter of the pond. The Town UDO does allow for stormwater SCMs to be counted as open space, and the pond with fountain is listed as an approved amenity in the Town's water allocation policy.

14. In terms of the recent Water Allocation Policy amendment (December 2024), specifically related to architectural standards, the Developer's attorney contends that this application could, and should, be permitted to exercise Permit Choice, as a way to comply with the Water Allocation Policy as it existed prior to December 2024 (i.e. receive bonus points for proposing architectural standards).

- a. Staff requests that the Development Team submit in writing the rationale behind why the Developer feels that they are entitled to proceed under the Water Allocation Policy in effect upon Master Plan submittal.

RESPONSE: Based on the above information, the developer proposes that the Town accept the Water Allocation Points shown on the current Master Plan. We will increase the internal walking trail width to ten feet per the Town's request. However, all other water allocation points will remain the same. Please accept the below narrative as justification for this.

Justification to abide by previous Water Allocation Points Policy:

In our experience, most municipalities allow the developer the option to follow certain Town regulations, which are in place at the time of the initial plan submittal. Over the past two years, our design team has worked with the Town Planner to establish some attractive architectural standards, in order to comply with the Water Allocation Policy in place prior to the January 2025 changes. The previous policy included points for enhanced architectural standards and on-street parking. The developer is requesting that the Town allow this project to keep using the architectural standards and on-street parking and that this project receive credit for those features under the previous policy. Our land use attorney, Isabel Mattox, has advised that the NC legislature's intent was to make future land development projects easier by not requiring architectural standards and on-street parking for water allocation. However, the NC legislature's intent was to not penalize ongoing projects with that policy change by taking away credit for those features. The developer requests that the Town accept his choice to follow the Water

Allocation Policy, which was effective at the time of the initial plan submittal. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Gideon since emailed us to inform us that after the attorneys spoke, it was agreed that this project would be allowed to receive water allocation credit under the old rules, which were in place when this project started. Thank you.