

The Capital South County

County planners approve Shady Side homes

By E.B. FURGURSON III, Staff Writer

County planners are allowing a plan for homes in Shady Side to proceed, but just how many would be built on the waterfront parcel remains unclear.

Following her June 25 conditional sketch plan approval, county planner Kelly Krinetz questioned whether Sturbridge Associates could really fit 33 single-family homes on the 112-acre site, known as the Holder property, fronting South Creek.

The company originally submitted a plan for 38 homes, then scaled it back after the county last year told Sturbridge to exclude wetlands on the property before calculating how many houses would be allowed.

"What this says is we agree with the notion there will be a development, but we will settle the number of lots as they proceed with engineering and everything else," Ms. Krinetz said.

Gina DeStefano, project manager for Sturbridge, said 33 houses should be allowed.

"It comes down to the definition of swamp," she said yesterday. "We need to convince (Ms. Krinetz that) wetland and swamp are not the same thing."

Local residents worry that development on the parcel would exacerbate the poor water quality of the West River.

More than 50 percent of the site draining into South Creek is categorized as a Resource Conservation Area, the most restrictive of the county's Critical Area zones. One home is planned on that part of the property.

The developer will have to meet other conditions before the plan is approved, such as building a second entrance on West River Road and establishing a connection to Scott Town Road on the southern end of the property.

"We were adamant about that issue because it does not make sense to put all the burden on one small road," said Linda Andreasen, president of the Shady Side Peninsula Association.

The letter also said school capacity limits won't thwart the project, though a bill the County Council is considering would close development in areas where schools, including Shady Side Elementary, have been labeled overcrowded.

"When we issued this conditional approval, I checked and (the project was) OK," Ms. Krinetz said.

Ms. Andreasen said her organization had hoped to see unresolved issues laid to rest before the development was allowed to proceed any further.

"On the one hand, we are disappointed," she said. "But it is good to know the county is sticking to its guns on the issues."

Published July 14, 2004, The Capital, Annapolis, Md.

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