

# South Knoll Area Neighborhood Plan

## Neighborhood Resource Team Discussion Notes

### Meeting # 7– May 7, 2013

**Neighborhood Integrity and Community Character** – The intent of the meeting is to discuss the draft goal, strategies and action statements related to neighborhood integrity and community character in the South Knoll Area.

**NEXT MEETING:** May 21, 2013

Additional comment to add to Parks discussion at the last meeting: Gabbard Park – could rubber be used instead of gravel underneath equipment? Could a shade structure be provided over equipment? Aerator of pond not working – needs to be fixed.

Specific changes to goals from last meeting:

- Add “single” before family.
- A lot of rentals in area and some have been changed significantly. Would be difficult to attract a single-family to purchase home. My interpretation – a mother, father, and children. Retired person or couple. Certainly not a group of students. Could this be a goal? Don’t know how homes could be changed, though.
- Most of neighborhoods is R-1 Single-Family housing. Has word SINGLE in it; not R-4 Multi-Family. Important to get single-family concept in there. Starts at the base of the zoning criteria that is trying to be preserved.
- Not a goal, but a strategy – suggest to go down from 4 to 2 or 3.
- Recommendation – parts of neighborhood to request an overlay to reduce number of unrelated?
  - o A blanket overlay of South Knoll Area Neighborhood?
  - o City of Bryan has it done by street-by-street, maybe this is a possibility. Have to have a majority agree upon restriction.
    - Could do this as an HOA? (*because of number of rentals in neighborhood, could be difficult to enforce this with a smaller number of owner-occupied homes*)
- Who’s going to want to buy an owner-occupied home after family is redefined? No one will be able to rent.
- Area is already student-impacted. Can’t drive it back the other way. What happens to the value of property?
- Not everyone wants to live in Pebble Creek; want walkability and larger lots.
- Grandfathering – Changing from 4 to 2 – when home is sold, can the new owners be required to have only 2? (*if grandfathered, goes with land and not person*)
- Instead of grandfathering, have a grace period of 5 or so years.
- Problem is not that there are rentals, it’s that rentals aren’t taken care of

- Have to be willing to give up something to make a change (ie: give up the ability to sell for rental, give up the right to pave your whole yard, give up your ability to park all of your cars in the street).
- The harm of defining “family” in this plan is that it is a single, decisive issue that defines whole plan. Council may not adopt all of the other great stuff in the plan because of this one statement.
- Three tiers of possibility: Restrict number of students per house; make the neighborhood less desirable for renters (ie – over-night parking restrictions). Try to solve day-to-day symptoms (ie – code enforcement).
- Three issues: 1. Address code; 2. Owners should be responsible for maintenance of property; 3. Someone pointed out that if someone has enough money to buy a home or qualify for a loan, are they going to buy an older home with an old school or go to a newer neighborhood? Wouldn't it be cool if we had no more rentals and had only HUD in the neighborhood because they were the only ones who could afford it?
- How do we get owners to maintain home? Can't force people to take care of it. (*Owners are responsible, but maybe not to the level that is expected.*)
- There are changes needed to the Code – unkemptness is what we're trying to prevent. No matter who owns it or who lives there, can have however many people living there and it could be unmaintained.
- **Action/Recommendation: Urge that the Code be strengthened for appearance and what is allowed? (*Could be a strategy*)**
  - o **Need something more than just “strengthen” – example – stuff in the yard, debris in the yard, broken furniture (things that belong inside and not outside?).**
    - **Key in definition.**
    - **Call Code when an issue is seen.**
- Welcome packet to new residents? (*HOAs have these, Code can pass them out if requested.*)
  - o **Recommendation – create a digital Welcome Packet**

## GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

**Goal** – split goal out into bullet points and add in the Eastgate statements (except the last one). Staff will wordsmith and send a revised goal statement out via email.

(Taken from Eastgate bullet points) NI & CC 1:

- o Strengthen Code and/or modify ordinances to negative character/undesirable impact.
- o Preservation of existing larger lot size.
- o Preserve area architecture.
- o Preserve single-family pattern.
- Support and encourage neighborhood organizations.
- Restore single-family neighborhood.

**Action - Properties not meeting Code to do proactive enforcement/Strengthen Code.**

- Put something in the zoning ordinance about defining family.
- “Reduce undesirable impact of rental housing in the neighborhood.”

**Action - HOA new digital resident packets.**

- How is it given to students? (*through owner*)
- Advertise through the Battalion, Big Event – identify problems
- Provided online when new resident signs up for utilities. “Welcome to CS, want it to be a wonderful place to live – in order to keep it that way, here’s the Code.”
- Nice to have a physical packet with something like recycle bags. Maybe a URL or QR Code? Have something consistent. Also provide Parks & Recreation info.

**Action - Other ways to promote See-Click-Fix**

**NI & CC 2 (Parking):**

- Change to “...lessen the impact of **high-density** housing...”
- What do we mean by **visual** impact? More than just what you see. Safety, ...
  - o Address the impact of parking to less the impact of high-density housing on the character and integrity of the SKANP.
- 50% area for additional parking? Sliding scale.
  - o Could it be a specified square footage of concrete? Cars’ sizes haven’t changed much.
    - If a number is picked, could be someone’s WHOLE front yard, though.
    - Could be an either or?
- One space per bedroom with new construction.
  - o Why max of 4 required? Could have 8 spaces!
    - (*Homes are single-family and FAMILIES with 6 kids could live there with their own rooms*).
- ENFORCEMENT. We don’t enforce ordinances we have now.
  - o Require that rental registration include the names of the individuals living on the property in the lease. If lease is falsified, legal infraction. Landlord could get in a lot of trouble.
- Parking screening from neighbor to neighbor.

**NI & CC 3 (Land Use and Character):**

**NI & CC 4 (Historic Properties):**

- What is required to be a historic area or home? (*further study based on the Quimby McCoy Historic Resources Survey*)
  - o 2 homes – Laura Lane and Glade homes
  - o Orr & Winding area

**NI & CC 5 (Rezoning):**

### **NI & CC 6 (HOAs and Neighborhood Associations):**

- Like to encourage neighbors to get to know each other and students. A “Welcome Back” group. Lemonade Stand idea. National Night Out. Two activities have gained steam and are more successful. Have to try to get participation.
- A&M Student Life picks a neighborhood about what it means to be a good neighbor.

### **Community Gardens**

- Cross-reference with Public Facilities & Services chapter. Has potential for neighborhood bonding.
- Garden at South Knoll Elementary. Maybe we could expand on that?

**Concerns with how we maintain our streets in College Station.** Staff did not feel that this item was appropriate for a neighborhood plan. Contact City Council.

### **Back to the discussion on the NUMBER OF UNRELATED living in a home:**

**NRT Recommendation: Plan should urge the Council to consider the effects of single-family homes converting to high density – parking, traffic, trash, level of police service, effects on local school, infrastructure...**

**NRT Recommendation: Council should allow the opportunity for smaller areas of the neighborhood to request an overlay reducing the number of unrelated similar to the ordinance that the city of Bryan has.**

### Possible Solutions/Goals/Actions/Strategies:

- Overlay (rezone small area to limit to 2 or 3) – like City of Bryan
- Grandfathering clause/grace period
- Redefine family (exceptions clause) for whole city
- Urge City Council to consider implications of high-density rentals.
  - Problems:
  - Transient population;
  - Boyfriends/girlfriends/significant others/guests in general adding to the parking problem;
  - Unresponsive landlords;
  - Code Enforcement not implementing ordinances;
  - Not taking responsibility for property/just doing enough to not violate Code;
  - Nothing to require home owners to water yard or provide a certain type of landscaping