MEMORANDUM

August 28th, 2024

To: Planning Board
From: Planning Staff

RE: Rezoning Application R24-04
Portion of: Dan Hunsucker Property
3709 Rock Barn Rd (Catawba County PIN 375206378536)
Applicant: M/I Homes of Charlotte
Application date: 6/19/2024

Background:

Name: Hunsucker Townhomes

Acreage: 23.05 +/- acres

Current Zoning District: R-20 (Catawba County Residential).

Current property use: Vacant, agricultural

Uses allowed in R-20 (Catawba County Residential) district:

Agriculture & accessory uses, residential and accessory uses on half acre minimum lots including single-family homes, duplexes, mobile home park (restricted), churches, schools, family childcare homes, adult care homes, limited outdoor recreational uses

Zoning and use of surrounding properties:

This property is entirely surrounded by R-20 (Catawba County – Residential) zoning.

Additional District Information:

The property is in a Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD). On VADs, Catawba County says: *"The agricultural district program is a voluntary opportunity for farmers to have their land identified as a farming district. By having land designated as a district, the farmer lets the community know that he is actively engaged in farming and to expect the various types of activities which are associated with a farm. This program is not zoning nor is it a regulatory process."*

This property is also located in a Watershed Protected Area (WSPA), which limits the maximum amount of development allowed to occur on the site.

Streets & utilities:

The site has access to city water along Rock Barn Rd. The nearest sewer connection is along Rock Barn Rd, approximately 1200' southwest of the intersection with St. John's Church Rd.

The most recent traffic count for Rock Barn Rd east of St. John's Church Rd is 4,400 trips/day. The count for west of St. John's Church Rd. is 5,600 trips/ day.

There are currently no City maintained streets in this area.

Environmental impacts:

The property is entirely open farmland. The property is highest along St. John's Church Rd. and slopes gently to the NE and SE.

Future land use map designation:

The Land Development Plan (LDP) map shows future land use for this property as medium to high density residential development.

Requested zoning map amendment:

Requested zoning district:

NR-CD (Neighborhood Residential – Conditional District)

Proposed use:

99 townhomes (attached dwellings).

Uses allowed in new district:

NR allows single family homes, as well as multi-family (with Conditional Zoning approval), churches, schools, family care homes, family child care, parks, libraries and government uses.

Is there a community need for this zone/uses in the zone?

The City currently has a need for more housing options. Most of the developments that the City has approved are townhome/attached dwellings of varying densities or single family homes on small lots (Wagner Glen). The development under this zoning would likely be similar to the recently approved Shuford Village development between Rock Barn Rd. and Conover Blvd E.

Potential impact of new uses on surrounding property owners:

The current zoning of this property would allow a maximum residential development density of somewhere below two dwellings/acre. The proposed zoning would allow for a maximum density of just over four dwellings/acre,

There are ten residences immediately adjacent to the property under consideration.

Given that there are no streams or flood zone areas on this property, the fact that it is in WSPA, and will require stormwater controls for development, impacts to water quality should be minimized.

The primary impact on the general public will be increased traffic. The developer has submitted a TIA to NCDOT. Based on the submitted design, NCDOT will not require widening or turn lanes for this proposal.

Potential impact of new uses on city utilities and streets:

The City has both water and sewer capacity to serve a residential development of this size. The installation of sewer service will require that the developer install a pump station on the south side of the property just north of I-40. City Police, Fire and Sanitation already traverse Rock Barn Rd. on a regular basis to access the Rock Barn Golf Club, and, at some point, the future Rockhaven subdivision, Obviously, the construction of new streets and homes will necessitate more trips in this area, but it is not an area that would force necessarily longer trips outside the City's current service sphere.

Staff Recommendation:

The NR district is part of the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) portion of the Zoning Code. This code, in part, aims to have denser, walkable communities in proximity to services such as shopping, dining, work, etc. Although this area is on the outskirts of the City, it would be located between and less than a mile from two interstate exits, making access by car convenient.

The primary access for this development would be off Rock Barn Rd. with a secondary access on St. John's Church Rd. The developer has already submitted a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) based on a preliminary design that includes this property, property to the south which is being treated as a separate zoning request and the property in Claremont's jurisdiction. NCDOT has provided preliminary design requirements for improvements to the developer.

The proposal is actually somewhat lower density than shown on the LDP Future Landuse Map. The demand for housing is still high and this is one of the few areas that Conover has to expand where the City already has services available. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the rezoning to the Planning Board.