

Wake, Cary and developers work together for new schools, parks

By Ron Page
Staff Writer

Some call it as an innovative approach to education. Others refer to it as a lesson in cooperation.

The overall reference is to the pooling of resources by the town of Cary and the Wake County Board of Education that will provide two new schools, each with park or recreation facilities, off Carpenter Church Road at the edge of the Preston. The site is north of High House Road.

Green Hope High School is presently under construction along with an adjacent 19-acre, town-owned multi-court tennis center, both of which will open next year. Soon to be started is a second building to be known as Green Hope Elementary School. It will join a 16-acre town-owned park.

These will be the first school buildings designed and packaged with adjoining park and recreation facilities.

"I think it makes a lot of sense," comments Cary Mayor Koka Booth, adding, "I hope it would be the pattern or template for future school and park development in Cary."

The high school, which will open its doors in 1999, will include a stadium with bleacher seating, press box, and public rest rooms. It will have an opening capacity for 1,248 students and 84 teachers, with space for an additional 312 students pending future funding.

The elementary school's opening capacity for students will be 542, with similar space pending funding.

Top notch tennis complex planned

The town of Cary plans a 32-court tennis complex to be shared between the Green Hope High School and the new Green Hope Elementary School site.

The courts, which will also feature an exhibition court with spectator seating and an administration building, are expected to draw state and regional tennis tournaments, as well as local leagues and lessons.

Up to 10 courts will be completed along with the high school, which is slated to open in the fall of 1999, said Cary Parks and Recreation Director Mary Barry. She said at least six would be built in time for the

school's opening. The courts would have a hard surface because it is easier to maintain, she said.

Phase two of the tennis complex will include an additional 10 courts, probably to be completed within the next two years. The bleachers and administrative building would be included in this phase.

The third phase would add the last dozen courts. No date has been set for the completion of those courts. "We plan to develop the program. When we have a need for the additional courts, some tournament opportunities, then we will look at building those," Ms. Barry said.

— By Mary Beth Phillips

been owned by the town for about five years and had previously been slated for development as a park.

The town realized that 18 acres wasn't enough land for both a school and a park, and decided more land was needed. The help in getting such land came from Preston Development, the company headed by Tim Smith that has developed most of the property in Preston.

Preston Development owned 20 adjoining acres to the school site that it planned to develop as an addition to Preston Village. It was flat land, well suited for either a school or park.

When the land came before the Town Council in late January, discussion started on the possibility of using it for a school/park project.

Preston Development offered 14 of the 20 acres it had for \$40,000 an acre, a total of \$560,000. The price is far below residential market rates in Cary, but Smith said he was satisfied as long as he got a few lots for housing.

Preston Development also donated two additional acres to Cary to enlarge the proposed park to 16 acres. Smith said the school and park were a definite asset for Preston Village, and for the town of Cary.



Green Hope High School in west Cary, near Carpenter, is still under construction. The school is scheduled to open by August 1999.

PHOTO BY MARY BETH PHILLIPS

Carpenter to grow by 125 single-family homes

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

A large, affordable housing complex proposed for the Carpenter community was tabled indefinitely on October 8, but another planned unit development is going ahead with about 125 single-family homes near the same site.

The annexation petition for an affordable housing development on 259 acres along Green Level to Durham Road west of NC 55 and south of Carpenter Fire Station Road next to the proposed Western Wake Expressway and north of Twyla Road, would have had between 800 and 1,000 homes cost-

ing about \$130,000 each. But Cary Council members decided that the two school sites the developer had offered totaling about 40 acres would not have been quite enough to build an elementary and a middle school, and expressed concerns about traffic on already-packed NC 55.

The Carpenter community lies within Cary's zoning jurisdiction, although it is not part of the town. Though the land is considered "county," Carpenter residents have Morrisville mailing addresses and many identify with Morrisville.

Developer First American Realty had also requested a rezoning from R-40 (about three units per acre) to R-8, which would allow for higher density development, so that the homes could be offered more cheaply. The average cost of a home in Cary is \$220,000.

The annexation request and rezoning petition came up at several board meetings between July and October, with plenty of public input, mostly negative. In tabling the request, the Cary board acted according to its recent slow-growth philosophy, which is based on a shortage of

Town Council member Glen Lang commented that the move not only ensures the town of school capacity, but also brings the schools into the community, not outside of it.

"This is the way it should work," he said. School board member Bill Fletcher of Cary called the site for the elementary school an appropriate location. "It's a very buildable piece of land," he added.

The town now plans to develop the 16 acres into a park with soccer and baseball and softball fields adjacent to the elementary school. Wake County's parks and recreation will co-develop the park with the town and contribute \$130,000 to the pro-

ject.

All those involved have shown enthusiasm for the joint ventures. Mary Barry, the town's director of parks, recreation and cultural resources, said that by working together the town, the county and the schools are going to get the best common use they could get out of the site.

David Carter, Wake County's director of parks and recreation, said at a meeting of the school board that the joint development makes more efficient use out of public funds. He cited savings on water, sewer and building costs when such an action takes place.

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Board appointments

Joe Huegy, a transportation planner with the Triangle Transit Authority, was appointed to the Morrisville Planning Board to take the place of longtime member and outgoing chairman Scott Beerman.

The remaining planning board members decided to stay on the board, including Margaret Broadwell, Esther Dunningan, Billy Hartness, and Ralph Watkins.

Liz Johnson was appointed as alternate and Hartness was appointed as chairman.

Beerman was presented a plaque in honor of 10 years of service, with only one absence. Beerman has been chairman of the planning board for nine years, helping the town forge its first land use plan, and serving on the Village Core commission to preserve the character of the older part of town, and also on the Historic Properties Commission. He has also been active in the Morrisville Chamber of Commerce, serving as chairman of the board of directors last year.

Preston Edmondston, who had been alternate on the board of adjustment, was moved to a full member with the resignation of Henry Hooks. Peter Martin, an account assistant for Duke University, was appointed as alternate. Members Raymond Broadwell, James Kochuk, and Jack Walton will remain on the board. Mack C. Baker of Church Street will serve as the ETJ representative. Kevin Skeen will remain as another alternate.

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