

December 14, 2014



Crozet Community Advisory Council
c/o Meg Holden, Chair

RE: Response to CCAC Resolution dated June 16, 2014 on Barnes Lumber Redevelopment ZMA and SUP Applications.

First, we'd like to express our thanks and appreciation to the CCAC members for the countless hours of review and deliberation on our zoning application and special use permit. You volunteered your time and effort to draft the resolution in less than two weeks to meet our schedule obligations and for that we are most grateful. While we subsequently decided to put the applications on hold, the CCAC's resolution provides a valuable foundation for future dialog and progress toward community-supported redevelopment of the Barnes Lumber and CSX properties.

Our decision to interrupt the rezoning and special use permit review process was motivated, in large part, by recognition that our efforts to redevelop Barnes Lumber and downtown Crozet can only be successful with the enthusiastic support of the Community. To garner that support, we'll need to explore the issues raised in your resolution with the help of qualified consultants and other resources that are credible to the Community and identify strategies that are both economically feasible and consistent with the goals of the master plan. This process would not have been possible under previous purchase contract timeline. Consequently, we've decided to purchase the property without appropriate zoning or special use permits to allow for a more constructive dialog with the community and the County. Aside from working to address what we perceive as deficiencies in the current zoning and proffer policies of the County, we're intent on working with the community to identify and implement solutions for several important challenges that are hindering successful redevelopment in downtown Crozet:

1. VSR 240 Access: We believe there is a need for vehicular access to downtown from VSR 240, preferably at the east end of the Barnes Lumber property. This will create the necessary transportation linkages and network for a vibrant downtown. Access may be possible but the development of 20 acres will not support the likely cost of such access.
2. DCD Central Parking Plan: There is a need for a long term parking plan for downtown to address the parking needs that won't be satisfied by the compact urban development forms and densities contemplated in the Downtown Crozet District zoning code. This type of development will ultimately necessitate parking structures and typically these are funded by some combination of public and private investment.



3. DCD Civic Space: The community has been vocal about its desire for meaningful civic/park space in downtown and we are in agreement. The civic space contemplated will serve Crozet at large and not just the 20 acres at Barnes Lumber. Our plan suggests a location and general form for such space, but we don't own all the land needed to create the space and don't have the financial means to create the quality of civic space that the community deserves and we think is necessary to draw people into downtown.
4. DCD Employment: There has been broad consensus on the need to attract employment to Crozet and downtown, in particular, but there is no clear understanding of the range of employment options that are possible and how to make them happen. The County has taken the first step forward by funding an economic development director and we are hopeful that this will lead to the development of real tools to attract the kinds of businesses that we want and deserve. However, Crozet will compete with other areas of the County and we'll need to actively lobby the Board to get the attention that downtown Crozet needs to be an employment center.
5. Barnes Residential and Commercial Densities: There seems to be a consensus that some residential uses are appropriate at the eastern end of the Barnes property, but concern over the amount we proposed in our SUP application due to apparent conflicts with the Crozet Master Plan. There is also uncertainty over the amount of commercial and retail that downtown can support today and in the future. Our application plan was based on our understanding of the market and our assessment of what's economically viable in the next 20 years. We believe it's important for the County and the Community to have independent consultants evaluate the master plan and the market and develop practical, short, medium and long term, implementation strategies for the redevelopment of the entire DCD.

I hope we can all agree that these challenges are best addressed through a partnership that includes the Crozet community, County government, landowners and developers. Together we can identify realistic strategies and solutions that help stimulate more investment and development, not just on the Barnes site, but in all of downtown Crozet. We're excited by opportunity and look forward to working together with the CCAC.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Stoner IV, Managing Member
Crozet New Town Associates, LLC
Milestone Partners, LLC

