

LOCAL

Asheville apartment/townhome complex on Sweeten Creek OK'd; no affordable units proposed



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Key Points

Asheville City Council approved a 304-unit complex on Sweeten Creek Road in a 5-2 vote.

The project includes 280 apartments and 24 townhomes on an 18.6-acre site.

Neighbors raised concerns around increased congestion on already heavily traveled Sweeten Creek Road, especially with the road's multimillion dollar widening project decommitted in NCDOT's draft STIP.

The property is owned by North Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Moffitt.

ASHEVILLE - A complex of several hundred apartments and townhomes was approved Feb. 25 by City Council for a property off Sweeten Creek Road in South Asheville, where neighbors are already fearing the strain of new development on the heavily traveled road.

The project will bring 280 apartments and 24 townhomes to a 19-acre property at 3183 Sweeten Creek Road, owned by North Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Moffitt, the Citizen Times previously reported. It is nearby similar developments, including Kensington Place Apartments, the Carlyle Condominiums and Willoughby Townhomes.

Site plans show six townhome buildings — all three-bedroom — and five apartment buildings, with a mix of one- and two-bedroom units. It proposes 492 parking spaces, accessed by two new driveways onto Sweeten Creek Road and sidewalks. Plus, a clubhouse, pool, trails and several garage buildings.

There is no affordable housing proposed for the project.

More: Asheville City Council OKs entirely affordable 126-unit apartment complex off Brevard Road

Planning and Zoning recommended unanimous approval Jan. 22. Final say fell to Asheville City Council, which approved the project 5-2, with council members Sage Turner and Maggie Ullman opposing.

The site is currently home to 23 occupied residential units — including cottages, several mobile homes and a single-family house. Those living there now will be displaced by the project.

Derek Allen, an attorney representing the applicant, said tenants are month-to-month, were informed of the project and they have "been in touch" to offer available spots for people wishing to get into nearby, similarly situated housing.

The project is being developed by the Greensboro-based Sweeten Creek AVL, which is managed by developer Brian Wise, who has previously proposed "The Duke" at 226 Hilliard Ave., and projects in Buncombe County including the 687-unit "The Farm at Pond Road."

'Bumper to bumper'

Shawn Spruce, representing the Sweeten Creek neighborhood, spoke during public comment. While he acknowledged a need for more housing, he said the road is "already packed." The comment drew scattered applause from the audience.

"We just have so much traffic on that road and it's not letting up. We see more and more developments. This is just another one," Spruce said.

Concerns were escalated by the recent release of N.C. Department of Transportation's draft State Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP, which shows how and when transportation projects are expected to be funded over the next 10 years.

A long-awaited \$215 million Sweeten Creek Road widening project was among the decommitted or "defunded" projects in the draft STIP, according to a Feb. 20 presentation to the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization board.

"How are we going to deal with all this congestion?" Spruce said of the change. "It's already bumper to bumper along that road."

Council conversation also lingered there, with Mayor Esther Manheimer noting it was taken off the list of projects and council member Kim Roney urging people to get involved with the MPO.

"What I hear is we need housing and the infrastructure to support it and we don't have that balance matched yet," Roney said.

A public comment period for the draft STIP for years 2026-2035 is now open and runs through April 4. It will return to the MPO in August for adoption.

People can review the document and submit feedback online by visiting www.ncdot.gov.

Turner told the Citizen Times Feb. 26 her vote against the project was due to a combination of concerns over displacing 23 existing homes and families, not building any affordable units, a lack of existing transit options to the area and "increasing vehicle traffic on a state-owned road that NCDOT recently announced will not be expanded."

The project approval included new conditions related to solar design and electric vehicle charging, as well as a change to increase the sidewalks along Sweeten Creek Road from 5 feet to 8 feet, with an 8-foot grass strip buffer.

Council also added a condition of a bus stop easement on Sweeten Creek Road, to be determined based on staff planning working with the developer.

More: 304-unit Asheville complex proposed for site owned by Henderson County state senator

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