



Citizens for Brentwood Green Space

*Dedicated to Supporting and Stimulating Community Action
to Preserve Open Space in Brentwood*

Subject: Letter To The Editor: Brentwood Rezoning

Date: Fri, 9 Nov 2007 17:30:58 +0000

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc. is a volunteer citizens group organized as a non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation. Our mission is to preserve open space in the form of parks, trails, historic sites and flood plains while being sensitive to the rights of landowners and developers.

Green space defines Brentwood. Our scenic woods, rolling, tree covered hills, open fields and sweeping vistas are the chief jewels in Brentwood's crown. It's what we love about our city. It's why we live here.

Community trends confirm just how important green space is to our residents:

The 2004 referendum had the highest voter turn out in Brentwood's history. Almost half the voters in this City were willing to have their taxes raised in order to save some of the remaining open space in Brentwood.

The 2020 Plan Update commissioned by the City clearly identified that "strong public interest continues in the idea of public acquisition of open space". The study showed that 81% of our citizens believe the city's focus on preservation of open space should be a mid to high priority. The study also called for "the creation of an advisory board to the City Commission to promote the identification, preservation, dedication, acquisition, and use of additional public and private open space for Brentwood in a cost effective manner."

The preservation of green space has been one of the biggest campaign issues during the recent elections. All of the candidates at our forums spoke in favor of preserving green space.

We believe it's equally important to stress the historic elements of the land. According to City Historian Vance Little, Mr. Cooper's family traces their roots back to James Crockett. The land is still in the hands of the family who received the original North Carolina land grant after the Revolutionary War. This is one of the few (probably two or three) tracts of land in Tennessee still in the hands of the original owners. We think that's a pretty big deal!

Under the current proposal, over 29 acres will be set aside as open space, including a 24 acre gift to the City in exchange for the rezoning. That represents 53% of the site! All open space!

Perhaps lost in the debate is the fact that, under the existing zoning, Mr. Cooper can ALREADY put up 2 buildings equally 198,600 square feet AND 34 homes, possibly many more if there was a rezoning to OSRD-IP for example, and that could include town homes.

Other key points are:

- The park and open space will be passive in nature preserving the natural assets of the property. No ball fields.
- The park/property is being gifted to the City and Mr. Cooper is paying for the improvements (i.e., trails, seating areas, etc.)
- The park provides a land use buffer between the adjacent neighborhood and Maryland Farms.

There are few remaining tracts of land of this size in Brentwood that can still be preserved. We would love to think that the City would just out and out find a way to acquire this land in its entirety and preserve it forever, but that's probably just a pipe dream.

Owners have the right to develop their land within the structure of the City's zoning laws. Development of this corridor is inevitable. If this plan fails, there will be no gifted acreage and it will eventually be developed into office space and more "McMansions".

Now is the time to act if some of the remaining green space in Brentwood is to be saved. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. This project is one of the few remaining "once in a lifetime opportunities" left in Brentwood to preserve green space.

We endorse the project. It strikes an equitable balance of the City's environmental, social and economic considerations.

Yes, there will be more traffic, as comes along with any new development, but at least a significant portion of this beautiful land will be preserved for future generation to enjoy. The prospect of a park at Virginia Way and Granny White Pike is far more preferable than the additional office space and residential neighborhoods that will be built there anyway.

We think that is a fair compromise.

Sincerely,

Gil Hutchinson

On Behalf Of the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc.
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(A Tennessee non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation)*