

Broken Fences

Town Council has made the decision to reject the rezoning of the Jordan Tract. Regardless of which side of the fence you were on, let us all recognize that in some ways we were all winners.

Future developers will plan better and take the pulse of surrounding community. Our town staff and zoning board will give more study to proposed changes. Our citizens will better educate themselves to the facts when they voice their opinions.

Now is the time to mend any broken fences and work together to keep Mt. Pleasant the best town in South Carolina.

Carlton Poulnot
Mt. Pleasant

Typical Politician

After the recent election for town council in Mt. Pleasant, I once again am left wondering why we bother electing public officials.

Is it not true that elected officials are supposed to be a voice of the people? If this is true how is an intelligent person supposed to decide who to vote for in an election? Most people try to meet the candidates or read about them to see what their views and opinions are on certain key issues. In this way we try to form an opinion about the candidates to determine which person would best represent them in public office.

However, once again, the elected official tells you one thing when they are running for office and then once elected do the exact opposite.

The most recent politician to change his mind once elected is Paul Gawrych, our newest town council member. Before the election Mr. Gawrych signed a petition opposing the Jordan Tract. This was one of the reasons I voted for the man. Boy was that a mistake! The very first thing Mr. Gawrych did as a public official was to vote for the Jordan Tract when it finally came to a vote of town council on December 12, 1995.

Now I am left wondering what the man's views really are on other issues important to the town of Mt. Pleasant.

**Kirk Poulnot
Mt. Pleasant**

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**The
waters**
and "Jumanji"

See page 14

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VOLUME 32 NUMBER 1

THIS WEEK'S CIRCULATION 16,000

DECEMBER 20 - DECEMBER 26, 1995

Disappointed

I was truly disappointed to see that the innovative development plan for the Jordan tract was not approved. As I reflected on the possible reasons for this defeat, I thought of our strong South Carolina traditions. Social change does not come quickly to South Carolina. When compared to the other 49 states, our state ranks as follows: #1 in low birth-weight babies, #2 in incarceration, #4 in infant mortality, #4 in food stamp recipients, #5 in violent crime, #8 in teen births, and #9 in less than 9th grade education.

Our state does not always rank so high in all areas coming in #49 in average life span, #45 in adults with 12+ years school, #42 in adults with a BA degree or higher, and #41 in expenditures per pupil for K-12. (Source document: Environment Scan 1994)

I attended the Mt. Pleasant town council meeting on December 11th and heard a number of vocal opponents speak out against the proposed Jordan tract development. As I reviewed the council members who voted against this plan the next day, I wondered "What was the constitutional make up of these members as well as those who spoke out so vehemently against this proposal?" Maybe they were low birth-weight babies, who has had a parent incarcerated, who had almost died when they were a child, who worried about their next meal, who were exposed to violent crime, were a product of a teen birth, did not receive very much education, and were currently worried that their quality of life might change as they did not have very long to live.

This would be in keeping with our South Carolina "traditions". Children often would eat paint when growing up. Maybe we should require serum lead levels of all our public officials.... they seem to be unable to think and plan clearly!

Sincerely,
Alex Morton
Snee Farm

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Police Blott

The strange crimes

See page 4

Restaurant Profile

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VOLUME 32 NUMBER 2

THIS WEEK'S CIRCULATION 16,000

DECEMBER 27, 1995 - JANUARY 3, 1996

1/14/97 - 2:05 pm

Jordan Tract anticipation

Well I see in the Moultrie News' current edition that the favored Jordan Tract development is back in the news. I just can't wait to get nice little letters about all the pros and cons. I especially look forward to seeing Ward's letter. I'm sure it will be quite interesting and quite delightful. Thank you and good-bye.

Anonymous - (adult male)

1/16/97 - 3:09 pm

Tradition and Community

The McNerny Family has lived on Sullivan's Island for 156 years. My father moved back to the island when I was seven (1950).

The first day I woke up at daybreak, walked down the stairs from the old home place (where my two aunts lived) onto the dirt and oyster shell road in my little blue pajamas (the ones with the little feet in the bottoms) went down one block, turned right and down one more block thereby laying my eyes on Miller's Creek. As the sun was rising up over the creek, I had to pinch myself to see if I was dreaming, for in front of my eyes there at the creek lay several wooden row boats and the keenest junk, just thrown into the marsh, that any kid had ever seen (this happened to just be the city dump).

I also fondly remember going to front beach and swimming in the ocean. I built this wonderful sand fort and sat in the middle fortifying it by piling more and more sand on its sides to prevent it from being taken back into the ocean by the tide.

Another fond memory was meeting Raymond Brownell, who had the neatest car my young eyes had ever seen. It was a stripped down Model A Ford. I was invited to go for a ride on the beach the very next day. I listened as the group talked about hanging onto a rope and riding an old ironing board through the gullies. I must admit, I could not sleep at all that night in anticipation at the prospect of this new adventure that awaited me the next day.

We ended up not only going to Breach Inlet, but we sneaked across the bridge, mainly because the Model A didn't have tags, then down the beach to the north end of the Isle of Palms. There at the tip of the island awaited a virtual jungle of twisting and winding roads throughout sand dunes. The Model A performed magnificently, but I despaired a bit when we bogged down to the axles. My friend, Raymond, who was and is quite a man in body and in heart lifted it back onto the road.

I later remember riding my bicycle with my friends to eat ice cream at the Pitt Street Pharmacy, not to mention getting a glimpse of the pretty girls in and around the Village area. Eventually we talked to some of them. Emory Brown, Jay O'Neal and myself finally got invited by this beautiful group to go on a cruise on a yacht.

We were told to wear soft shoes and Bermuda shorts. This was one of the biggest decisions of our young lives as to whether or not to show up in these short pants. We discussed and argued over this for a full week. Finally, we decided to be socially accepted and gain the attention of the girls. We had to comply, so we showed up in this ridiculous attire.

We made several trips to Mt. Pleasant to camp out at Reshes Farm, Lake Woodlawn, and go skinny dipping in the lake. We also used to love to camp on little Goat Island and in the massive wilderness on the north end of the Isle of Palms.

At the age of 17, I joined the Sullivan's Island Volunteer Fire Department due to the fact that many members of the church I attended, like Mr. Johnny Dodds and Mr. Terrance McManus, whom I admired and respected very deeply, indicated that they needed some younger men to carry their work forward. I considered this an honor and privilege to be accepted into this fine group of men.

In 1971, I designed and constructed the very first business on Highway 17 in Mt. Pleasant, Time Out. In 1975, I designed and constructed the first in/out stack marina on the coast of South Carolina on Shem Creek; Ria Scott Marina. Three months into this project my 13 year old daughter, Ria, was killed in a car accident. My dear friend, Dr. James B. Edwards, canceled all his appointments and he and his wife, Ann,

came straight over to comfort me and my wife. This was quite an honor for he was our newly elected Governor. Dr. Roger Rowe spent virtually the whole day with us as well. This too was quite an honor for him to take this time away from his new practice.

I'm writing this from the depths of my heart to show events that dealt with people and places involving traditional, community values.

As you know, we no longer dump our trash in the marsh and we no longer drive automobiles on the beaches of Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms. That wonderful wilderness at the north end of the Isle of Palms that we loved is now Wild Dunes. The lake we skinny dipped in is now Wakendaw Lakes, which is where I reside now and have for 25 years. I also have a design studio.

Trying to stop things from changing is like trying to stop the tide from tearing away at my sand fort. We can only hope that those who are instruments of change have the compassion and wisdom, and the willingness to bring something forward that will be positive, yet preserve and maintain a tie to our traditional past.

When I heard of the development of the 243 acres on the Jordan Tract near my residence, I became concerned. I wanted to know who was doing this and what their intentions were.

I have investigated this person, Mr. Vince Graham, and have even traveled to Beaufort to personally look and photograph a similar development there. I have contacted friends who have dealt with Mr. Graham in Beaufort and not only received a favorable response but numerous compliments in his regards. Mr. Vince Graham himself is very much like the people mentioned in my letter. He is one of the most impressive young people I have met in years. He is truly a southern gentleman. I welcome him and his project to my neighborhood and those that take time to look at it in depth and go further to take a drive in the afternoon to Beaufort to walk through his fine development, Newpoint, will most assuredly get that warm southern feeling that truly recaptures the essence of the southern neighborhood.

**Respectfully yours,
Ed (Tinker) McNerny
Owner, Studio One Designs
Mount Pleasant**

In Defense of Apartment Dwellers

Dear Chuck - I attended the January Mount Pleasant Planning and Zoning Board meeting, and I was bothered by some of the comments made about apartments. The comments were made in regard to the proposed construction of 600 multifamily units rather than 300 houses near Belle Hall. Many of the people who spoke were opposed to the increased number of units the apartment complex would generate, but some people who spoke seemed to be concerned only about the fact that it was apartments that would be built. Of the proposed 100' buffer between the apartments and the nearest homes, one resident said that a 100' buffer "only means 100 feet of trash." A Planning and Zoning Board member said later that he agreed with that statement. I am proud to live in Paces Watch apartment complex, and I would put the beauty and landscaping of Paces Watch up against any neighborhood's "Yard of the Month."

Anti-apartment comments were also made in 1995 against the Jordan Tract plan: "Apartments attract the wrong element. " and "The transitive nature of apartment living is inappropriate for a neighborhood." These statements are paranoid and incorrect. How the "transitive nature of apartment living" could negatively affect the lives of homeowners in a subdivision, I'll never know. People rent houses in subdivisions and it doesn't kill the neighborhood. A letter sent to Hobcaw residents in 1995 said, "Most of us have lived in apartments. That's why we understand the incompatibility of apartments in the middle of single-family neighborhoods." What does that mean? We were the wrong element then, but now we're O.K. ? How does moving into a house turn one into a superior human being?

One Planning and Zoning Board member expressed concern that the proposed Belle Hall apartments would abut

I-526 and therefore be the "first thing that visitors to Mount Pleasant would see. So what?! What is he afraid of? That people will see our town is so flawed that it actually contains apartments? God forbid! Where someone lives does not determine what kind of contribution he or she can make to the community. Certain residents in this town seem to have a bad case of elitism.

Ward Reynolds
Mt. Pleasant

What Direction, Mt. Pleasant?

Mt Pleasant Planning and Zoning Board members Ken Willingham, William Thomas, C.D. Hopkins, John Albrecht, Toni Hanshoe, George Waters and Jim Posda gave approval of the l'On Development at their meeting on January 22, 1997. The proposed development on the Jordan Tract of Mathis Ferry Road violates at least 25 Mt Pleasant codes!

GENERAL

There is no buffer zone between the Planned Development and the surrounding neighborhoods.

RESIDENTIAL

1. No designated offstreet parking as per code.
2. Lot sizes of 2700 sq ft - code minimum is 4000 sq ft for Patio Homes, the smallest single family dwelling allowed.
3. Lot shapes, length to width ratios of 3.7 - code limit is 2.5.
4. Lot width of 27 ft - code minimum is 40 ft.
5. Building height of 35 ft to the eaves - code is 35 ft total (2 1/2 stories).
6. Building set-backs as little as 0 ft - code requires front, side and rear set-backs.

COMMERCIAL

1. Granted spot zoning of commercial throughout. The code does not allow commercial in residential.
2. No buffers between commercial and residential as code requires.
3. No offstreet parking designated as required by code.
4. No use limits as to type of business as spelled out in the code.
5. Building heights exceed the code.
6. No setbacks as required by code.
7. Lot size does not meet minimum of code.
8. Lot shape does not meet the requirement of the code.
9. Lot width does not meet the minimum required by code.

STREET DESIGN

1. Right-of-way widths do not meet the code requirements of 50 and 60 ft. (They are as little as 25 ft.)
2. Paving widths of as little as 18 ft - code requires 28 ft.
3. Acute angles at street intersections not allowed by code.
4. Streets offset by as little as 50 ft - code requires 125 ft.
5. Turning radius of 10 and 15 ft maximums - code requires minimum of 20 ft.
6. No cul de sacs on approved plan that code requires on all dead end streets.
7. No curb and gutter as required by code.
8. Plan allows encroachments in the right-of-ways not allowed in code.
9. Approved plan allows private streets in violation of the code.

These variances in right-of-way and paving widths and curb & gutter result in over \$600,000 in construction cost savings to the developer at today's concrete and asphalt prices. The land area gained is the equivalent of 159 small lots valued at \$50,000 to \$60,000 each for an additional gain of at least \$7,950,000. Total: over EIGHT MILLION dollars!!!

For Mt Pleasant these variances for narrow streets would add substantially to the cost of garbage and trash collection and impede the movement of service and emergency vehicles. Safety is also a vital concern, particularly in the event of fire or medical emergency.

If you disapprove of this give-away to out-of-town developers by our Planning Board come the February 11th Town Council meeting where this monumental decision and change in direction of your future could take place.

Sincerely,
Carlton Poulnot
Mt. Pleasant

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Sharon Neal - Mt. Pleasant - 2/11/97 - 12:50 pm

Jordan Tract

I just read today's Moultrie News and I'd like to say "praise the Lord," Ward Reynolds has finally found an apartment complex he'd like to move into over there by Belle Hall. I'm sorry, Ward, that you won't be able to do that at the Jordan Tract. Goodbye.

Anonymous - (adult male) - 2/6/97 - 4:07 pm

Folks, due to the numerous letters to the editor, we're out of room. The remaining comments and any new ones will be published next week, I promise! - CD

Jordan Tract

Editor's Note:

(We received numerous letters regarding the impending Jordan Tract decision which will be made by Town Council on Feb. 18. In an attempt to be fair to both sides of the issue, we are printing all letters received regarding the Jordan Tract this week. None which were received were left out. We will also identify the area of town in which the writer lives. The letters are unedited with the exception of a single statement about an individual in one letter which is, to my knowledge, misleading and possibly untrue. Regardless, the minor edit did not affect the content of the letter.

*I like to think the Moultrie News has remained unbiased throughout this controversy. I hope we have. It is likely that this issue will be decided by the time the next edition of our paper comes out. At that time, I hope pointless personal attacks, regardless of which side of the issue they originate, will cease. As Forrest Gump said, "That's all I have to say about that."
- Chuck Diggle, editor.)*

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- Chuck Diggle, editor.)*

Last week a letter appeared here that was perhaps the meanest and most pointless to appear yet on the subject of the Jordan Tract. Making not a single, substantive argument, it was nothing more than an

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to the Editor

ditor, Moultrie News, P.O. Box 2014,
t Pleasant, SC 29465.

attack on the Mathis Ferry Road Preservation Association, Inc. (MFRPA) using the weapons of rumor, innuendo and baseless accusations.

For the record, The Mathis Ferry Road Preservation Association (MFRPA) is a South Carolina incorporated, non-profit organization. It is not a membership organization as such, though it does have a very active membership - a great deal larger than when we started. Most members out of concern for their jobs choose to remain inconspicuous, the wisdom of which one of our number recently was reminded. We view the role of the MFRPA as one of speaking on behalf of Mathis Ferry Road residents, not for them. (That is more than a semantic difference). In other words, we don't make policy; we provide information to and convey the wishes of Mathis Ferry Road residents. Though its predecessor was formed to deal with the first Jordan Tract proposal, its successor acknowledges that a great deal of land available for future development exists along the length of Mathis Ferry Road. The Queen's Row development near Heron Point is a good example of what insensitive development can do on even a small piece of land. In the future, we hope to see the MFRPA become an "umbrella" organization composed of Mathis Ferry Road to help guide development in a way that will preserve this beautiful and unique area of Mt. Pleasant.

Last week's letter to your paper had two purposes. It was an attempt to discredit the work of the MFRPA and to disenfranchise 1900 of our neighbors. The writer hoped to create the ridiculous impression that only a single opponent remained. We suspect a letter to Town Council (they are open to the public) was his doing. It alleged that the MFRPA opposes any development of the Jordan Tract. Let's set that one to rest too. The petitions, which 1900 people gave us the privilege of presenting to Council, stated our clear support for the development of the Jordan Tract under its existing low-density zoning. Current zoning would prevent the excessive traffic that will result from the proposed development. Development under the current low-density zoning would not need the four proposed entrances connecting the development to Mathis Ferry Road - two more than in the 1995 proposal. Further, the beauty of Mathis Ferry Road could be maintained with as much as a 100 foot buffer, rather than the 25 feet proposed with a small exchange of R-2 lots (8000 vs current 10000 sq ft lots). There is no reason to see a house from Mathis Ferry Road if the land is developed low-density. These are just a few of the points that Town Council will hear on February 18.

We would have been happy to address the substance of last week's letter if it had any. Replaying the worn "disinformation" card, the writer went on to refute nothing or offer anything new. The letter we sent to Mathis Ferry Road the previous week had quite a bit of information that he might have addressed. He chose not to, though a last minute response from his group this week would not be a surprise.

Instead of a reasonable, detailed response to what was actually in the letter to Mathis Ferry Road residents, he got all upset about something that was not in our letter. He implied that we had portrayed the Grahams "evil villains" - clearly an emotional response on his part. All that was said was that their project's high-density is driven by the profit motive and will return millions more than if the land were developed as zoned, or like Newport, for instance. The Grahams are businessmen, not "missionaries" as an overwired writer from the "Post-Courier" dubbed them. Profit is their objective and that's fine. That is how the system works, but there are limits on profit. Profit cannot be allowed to take precedence over people's well-being. Further, those who risk should receive the reward. The people on Mathis Ferry Road get the risk and none of the reward.

The writer did pose one good question. He asked what happened to the notion of healing the community? He can start by looking in the mirror while holding up his letter. Then he can go to Town Hall and ask why they are undertaking such extraordinary and unprecedented efforts on behalf of these developers, forcing people to defend their neighborhoods a second time.

Perhaps the best answer to the question might be that no healing is needed if wounds are not inflicted in the first place. How? Put people ahead of development. When it will burden their lives make sure that there is a critical, compelling reason to approve it. If there is not, focus the power and authority of the town and the law to defend the people at risk. And we have to stop thinking like the writer. What happens in other neighborhoods is my concern and what happens is mine is my neighbors concern. We are all citizens of our town, not our neighborhoods.

Mathis Ferry Road Preservation Association, Inc.

I just finished reading a copy of the "Jordan Tract Update..." I wish that (the writers) had only seen fit to become so involved with the development of Rifle Range Road. Rifle Range Road is truly an example of development gone wrong. I can only assume that the responsible parties had no concept of "vegetative buffer" or "architectural significance."

Let us, the residents of this unique community of Mt. Pleasant, learn from the mistakes of "Rifle Range." Growth along the Mathis Ferry corridor is inevitable. Thank God that the Grahams have come along with such a proposal that allows the integrity of Mathis Ferry's beauty to remain intact.

Anyone that would question the Grahams' intentions should venture to Beaufort and see Newport in all its glory! Granted, the Grahams are extremely successful businessmen, and rightly so, due to their high standards and expectations. We should consider ourselves fortunate that they would show such confidence in our community's future by staking their venture in our midst. Newport's success, which has been commended in not only "Southern Accents," but also "The Wall Street Journal," is proof that Vince and Tom Graham are real estate developers with a conscience and a deep commitment to maintaining our unique Low Country lifestyle.

I feel confident that the intelligent people of Mt. Pleasant will reject the histrionics and propaganda of the MFRPA as led by Mr. Brock and research the facts for themselves.

Most sincerely,
Andrea H. Glenn - Coleman Blvd.

First of all, let me state that I am not a part of any group formed to oppose the I'On (Jordan) Tract. I am just a very concerned citizen. I am extremely disappointed in the decision by the Town of Mt. Pleasant's Board of Planning and Zoning to change the zoning on the I'On (Jordan) Tract. As I see it, the board members are completely ignoring their obligation to the thousands of citizens that use Mathis Ferry Road (for no compelling reason, except to please and enhance by millions of dollars, a very few developers and Realtors). I can understand that money drives the Graham (developer) equation, but I cannot understand what drives the Board of Planning, to ignore their responsibility to the thousands of citizens that will be adversely affected by unnecessary traffic congestion for the rest of their lives.

By leaving the Jordan tract zoning R-1, you will not do an injustice to the owner of the land at all. It has been zoned R-1 for many years. The prospective purchasers know that. They are just asking for a \$14,000,000 hand out from the Town of Mt. Pleasant at the expense of thousands of its citizens.

I have absolutely no problem with anyone developing the property under the present zoning of R-1. I'm just against increasing the number of lots by more than 50% in excess of the present zoning to please a few, at the detriment of many. There will be an substantial increase in traffic flow from the 260 additional lots you allow with this zoning change to Planned Unit Development.

I have 10,000 very good authority from several other experienced developers, that if the tract at R-1 zoning, were built out following all of the guide lines under that R-1 designation, the number of lots would be between 450 and 525. The basic figures of 3.5 lots per acre, times 243 acres, equals a total of 850 lots, but when you allow for the 3 ponds, cemetery, streets, recreation area, marsh and 90' wide, 10,000 sq. ft. lots, specified under R-1 zoning, you are a lot closer to 2 lots per acre, therefore the 450 to 525 lot estimate. I will be more than fair in my calculations by using a higher than average figure of 500 lots. Every change that the developers are asking for at this point, ends up making it more profitable for them by a minimum of \$14,000,000. This figure comes from using an averaged figure of 500 lots under R-1 and subtracting that from the 759 lots that they are requesting times a minimum value of \$50,000. per lot, plus the value of 30,000 sq. of commercial property which they are also requesting.

If the Grahams are so intent on developing a Neo-Traditional subdivision, and are not driven by money, let them develop the entire tract in a Neo-Traditional way, but limit the number of houses to the maximum that R-1 would allow.

The Jordan (I'On) tract is sandwiched between the waters of Hobcaw Creek and Mathis Ferry Road, a scenic highway, which can never be widened. The traffic on Mathis Ferry is already heavy and it's only going to get heavier. NONE of the major existing subdivisions along Mathis Ferry Road, including one of the oldest, Hobcaw Point, is completely "built out."

In addition to the expected increases as they become more fully developed, the Jordan Tract under R-1 will add about 500 houses, but the developers want an additional 259 lots!

Location, location, location. If this project were on a three or four lane road or highway that was not already overburdened with traffic, there would not be a problem. Let's not throw caution to the wind or fuel on the fire by adding 259 more lots unnecessarily. What is wrong with expecting the developer to abide by the present zoning? Everyone knew that the tract was zoned R-1 from their first inquiry. We will be living with heavier traffic as it is if the tract is developed under R-1 zoning, so why compound the problem further by allowing 259 additional lots? It is ridiculous to keep adding to the traffic problem and not recognize that it's not going to fix itself.

As the Board of Planning and Zoning, and also Mt. Pleasant Town Council members, you are entrusted with the task of foreseeing such difficulties and establishing the policies to protect our community. You have a moral and quite possibly a legal obligation to us as citizens of Mt. Pleasant. You made the right decision last time. At the very least, if you vote to change from R-1, this issue should be added to the "Brickyard" referendum to save the Town's money, by having only one referendum rather than two.

The Town of Mt. Pleasant has no obligation to any developer to change our zoning for their financial gain especially at the detriment and expense of the citizens. Every developer from here on out will have the right to expect the same favors, and every citizen in Mt. Pleasant can expect to start worrying if they will be the next to be adversely affected by the Board of Planning and Zoning. If it can happen to thousands, it can certainly happen to you.

We will be fighting this increased traffic problem forever, or you can correct it now very simply, by just voting to leave the zoning R-1.

Vincent D. Adams - Hobcaw Point

Mt. Pleasant is a high quality community that deserves high quality development. That's why I support I'On, the proposed development for the Jordan Tract.

The few remaining critics continue to say that I'On is a "high density" development. This claim is false. Here are the facts:

1. Vince Graham, the developer, wants to build 759 single family homes - no apartments, no townhouses.
2. Over the years, there have been many plans for the property, envisioning anywhere from 385 to 774 single family lots. The current plan falls within this range.
3. If Mr. Graham proposed a completely conventional cul-de-sac subdivision, Mt. Pleasant's Master Plan allows as many as 850 houses on this property.
4. The Master Plan recommends that traditional neighborhood developments, like I'On, get the right to build more houses (a "density bonus"). The current proposal does not ask for such a bonus.
5. As a result, the proposed development has a density of 3.12 houses per acre. The Town's Master Plan defines "low density" as anything below 3.5 houses per acre.

In sum, the proposed development for the Jordan Tract is a "low density" project.

If the Town approves this "low density" project, we will get green space along the waterfront, civic sites, 1200 street trees, and a restored oak canopy along Mathis Ferry Road. Furthermore, there will only be six docks along the 2.1 miles of marsh and water frontage rather than the 25+ that would end up there under a conventional R-1 development. And a final point, in Mr. Graham we will get a developer with a track record of sensitivity to the environment whose projects have garnered many awards including the highest Stewardship Award from the SC Department of Natural Resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to set the record straight.

Yours truly,

John Lesemann - Hobcaw Point

When I first heard about the Grahams' plans to develop the Jordan Tract, I wasn't sure what I thought. I liked the concept of the traditional neighborhood, but there did seem to be some traffic and density issues that needed to be resolved. With the most recent modifications, it certainly appears that the Grahams have adequately addressed such concerns. It's a good sign that the Planning Board, after getting a chance to look over the details, approved the project by a 7 to 1 vote. After all the talk and revision, it seems to be time for Town Council to vote for the project and let the Grahams show us what award winning developers are made of.

Frank S. McDade - Hobcaw Point
(More letters on page eight)

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More Letters

continued from page two

The history of literature, art and architecture is defined by countless examples of positive changes in direction from the status quo that propel an author, an artist or an architect to the forefront of progressive thought. The cultural benefits of such insightful thinkers lends credence to the old saying that "rules are made to be broken."

I thought of that cliché when I read the recent letter regarding the Jordan Tract. The writer claims, quite accurately I am sure, that Vince Graham's development proposal breaks 25 of Mt. Pleasant's zoning rules. The question I think we need to ask ourselves is whether Mr. Graham is a charlatan selling snake oil or a man with a vision beyond the status quo? Judging from his award-

winning developments in Beaufort County, Vince Graham is a man with a positive vision; a vision of a traditional walking neighborhood that achieves its goals in part because it does not follow the "normal" zoning rules. Of course, Mr. Graham proposes to replace the "normal" rules with a new set of rules, to which he will be held accountable by the Town and by the demand of the market. Mr. Graham is taking the risk. His zoning rule changes affect only the future residents of I'On, and they will be fully aware of these deviations.

Rules establish a lowest common denominator of behavior. With a record of achievement under his belt, Vince Graham wants to raise the standard a notch or two with his development of the Jordan Tract. This is a case where the "rules" should be recast.

Sincerely,
Charles S. Muldrow, AIA
Hobcaw Point

canopy of live oak trees. It will take some time for the trees to mature from SCE&G's past pruning, but you have to start sometime.

As you may have guessed, I support the Grahams' efforts to develop the Jordan Tract. I think their architectural standards are superb and, as a nearby resident, I will be among the first to make use of the many wonderful amenities that are in their plan (e.g., waterfront park). I also believe that any developer has the obligation to minimize any external impacts caused by their project. Also, I think a good developer is always willing to freely give something to Mt. Pleasant in the exchange for the right to build here. The Grahams meet this standard with room to spare. The connector road and the beautification of Mathis Ferry Road will be big (and free) improvements to our town.

Sincerely,
Penny Parker
Hobcaw Point

Even though I really didn't want to write a letter this go-around about the Jordan Tract development (which the Grahams plan to call "I'On"), I felt I had to respond to Carlton Poulnot's letter from last week as well as the info sent out by the Mathis Ferry Road Gang.

First, I certainly respect Mr. Poulnot's opinion. He is entitled to disliking the Graham's plan and I hope he respects my opinion for liking it. However, in reading his letter, I believe he has forgotten one very important issue - he does not have to move to I'On! Mr. Poulnot listed a number of things that don't meet to his approval, and that is fine, he simply is not a candidate to move to this style of neighborhood. I lived in Hobcaw for 22 years and happen to like Hobcaw. I now live in Wakendaw and like this neighborhood. But, I also like neighborhoods such as the one that is planned and would like to stay on Mathis Ferry Road since I have lived off this road for my entire 34 years.

If Mr. Poulnot plans to remain in Hobcaw, what possible difference could it make to him that a "building height of 35 ft to the eaves" (although, the actual plan calls for 30 feet to the eaves, but I won't dwell on that point) is what will be in the proposed development versus the current code of 35 ft total? I don't believe anyone has asked for this to be extended into Hobcaw. And what difference does it make to Mr. Poulnot if someone in I'On were to want a 0 foot setback? Again, I don't think there are any plans to require houses in Hobcaw to be moved up to the street.

A few people keep coming up with excuse after excuse why

this project shouldn't go through and I wish they would finally just admit it - they don't want anything built on that piece of land! And to be honest, I could respect that! However, to continue to say they don't like that type of neighborhood and therefore it shouldn't be built just starts to get old after a while.

The two issues that the Mathis Ferry Road Gang keeps bringing up revolves around the traffic and the buffer zone. As to traffic, I am no traffic engineer so must rely on the experts. If you don't want to believe the experts, that is fine, but that is all I have to rely on. According to the experts (whose findings have been confirmed by the town's traffic consultant), with all the elements of the proposed traffic additions, the Graham's development will not cause the horrendous problems the Mathis Ferry Road Gang predicts. I must admit I don't understand all the findings and language, but I must rely on those who study traffic for a living. I wonder how many years of traffic study the leader of the Mathis Ferry Road Gang has?

As to the buffer zone, what was not said in the recent flyer by the Mathis Ferry Road Gang was that the proposed vegetative buffer will be a minimum of 25 feet. In fact, the buffer ranges up to 128 feet in depth with an average depth of 50 feet. So, once again the writer of the "Jordan Tract Update" put out by the Mathis Ferry Road Gang was misleading.

And finally, to those who have relied on the Mathis Ferry Road Gang for all your information, I would suggest that you please contact Vince Graham to discuss the true facts. I'm sure he would be more than happy to discuss your concerns with you. This would at least give you both sides of the issue rather than just the one from the Mathis Ferry Road Gang.

Jimmy Plair - Wakendaw

letter also later uses the expression: "The vast number of houses..." For the actual density the Grahams propose, that statement is unfounded.

2. "The Mayor and Councilman Tanis... want this project. They control the Planning Department which is once again acting as the developer's advocate..."

This statement is offensive and obviously inaccurate. Throughout the life of this issue, I have observed how our town government works, and I have been impressed. Mount Pleasant has one of the best planning departments in the state, composed of very dedicated and intelligent individuals who do their job well. They are not involved in some conspiracy as the puppets of the Mayor, Tom Tanis, and the Grahams.

3. "The high density requires on-street parking on roads..."

On-street parking has nothing to do with density. It is a cornerstone of neo-traditional development - parked cars serve as protective buffers between moving cars and pedestrians.

4. "Images of Charleston and the Old Village (are) irrelevant..."

They are very relevant. Downtown Charleston has narrow streets with on-street parking in residential neighborhoods, residences built close together, residences built close to the street, and corner stores and offices in the middle of neighborhoods. Mr. Carlton Poulnot said in a letter that the Grahams' project violates 25 codes. Neighborhoods in downtown Charleston would also be found in violation of all 25 and they have prospered for generations.

5. "Traffic remains intense - double what we would experience under current zoning..."

There is no basis for this statement. It apparently assumes that the connecting road the Grahams propose to

build will be built anyway. It won't. Mr. Jordan has owned the land for over 20 years and has shown no inclination to build a road. State lawmakers won't give us money for a new Cooper River bridge, so why would they give us money to build the connecting road? And 50% of the lots on Anna Knapp Boulevard and Lowcountry Boulevard are either undeveloped or unleased, so commercial developers have no incentive to buy the land and build the road for commercial development.


6. "The press has become an unwitting participant in the developers' marketing strategy..."

This statement even insults one of the committee's own members, Mr. Brock. It implies that the members of the local press are stupid, easily fooled, and have fallen under some spell of the Grahams. We have excellent newspapers and TV news teams in Mount Pleasant and Charleston. The reporters and editors are intelligent, know their jobs, and they do them well.

The MFRC letter also seems to enlist support from Brickyard residents, as if the two issues were the same. They aren't. The type of commercial development that the Grahams are planning is exactly what many Brickyard residents were led to believe would be built next to their neighborhood. Instead Brickyard is faced with the proposed large shopping center.

I want the residents of Mount Pleasant who are concerned about the Jordan Tract issue to at least have the correct information with which to make up their minds. If the Grahams' project is so flawed, why does the MFRC have to produce false information to prove their case?

Ward Reynolds
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2/15/97 - 2:27 pm

Jordan Tract

Chuck, I've never called before now, but I just read this shockingly hateful letter attacking the Mathis Ferry Road Association. I feel that whoever wrote this letter must be an angry and unhappy person in their own life and they really contribute nothing positive at all to this. It seems to me that supporters of the Grahams should spend their time speaking about the development itself, rather than making personal attacks on someone who simply has a different point of view. Comments like his serve no purpose and only fan the flame of this already heated controversy. It's one that needs to be resolved for good and hopefully will be soon. In the meantime, I, as a resident of Mathis Ferry Road, appreciate what this association has done to keep us informed and I wish them well. Because if they lose, we all lose. Thanks for listening.

Anonymous - (adult female)

2/9/97 - 4:34 pm

I'm calling in response to the Jordan Tract. And this is just me personally, but I'm sure other people feel the same way. Ask the developers what sort of atmosphere they live in. Where do they live? They live sheltered lives. They live in places they can hide from folks, because they have that kind of money. Homeowners and the people in Mt. Pleasant, most of them, do not have those kinds of lives. Therefore, (the developers) propose to put up and use pieces of property and land and ruin parts of Mt. Pleasant. In every city its the same. They want to ruin a piece of land and make it tar and pavement and housing for the good of themselves and Mt. Pleasant. Because Mt. Pleasant's going to get a kickback if they put it in. I feel strongly enough that people in Mt. Pleasant who are politicians will make money off the deal in their own pockets as well as officials and other folks. So that's why they strongly vote on it and want it. I think if its voted on one time and doesn't pass, that's the end of the project and they should close it up and say "No, you can't do it." I appreciate the kind thoughts and words in the column you have. Thank you.

Anonymous - (adult male)

2/13/97 - 10:07 pm

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VOLUME 33 NUMBER 7

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FEBRUARY 19 - 25, 1997

Jordan Tract

Dear Chuck,

Let's say a baseball player is a free agent. He approaches a team that he would like to play for and offers his services in return for a three-year contract worth 12.4 million dollars. The team replies "Thank you, but no - it wouldn't be worth it." After lowering his offer a few times, he comes back with a final offer of 7.2 million, and they accept. Would that scenario be so hard to believe? Of course not, he has made concessions, lowered his cost to the team, and they now think he is worth it.

The above is a perfect analogy for the whole Jordan Tract battle: The Grahams came to our town council, proposed to build a neo-traditional neighborhood on Mathis Ferry Road containing 1240 units, and were turned down. They altered their plan, reduced the number of units to 720, and town council approved their project. Yet Mr. Brock, in his latest "Jordan Tract Update," acts as if the vote is inexplicable.

After insulting Mayor Woods-Flowers and Councilman Tanis a few weeks ago in a letter, Mr. Brock insults Council members McManus, Browder, and Kerr in his latest letter. (All three voted against the Jordan Tract project in 1995 and in favor of the Grahams' new plan.) He says, "We believe all three have been provided very selective information that led to their decision and that they have been misinformed about our feelings on the project. " Council members have been dealing with this issue for eighteen months and have received reams of information from both sides. They have the ability to determine what is fact and what is fiction. Mr. McManus even made the point during the town council meeting that he had personally studied the issue of density and traditional neighborhoods intensely during the past year. These people are highly regarded citizens of Mount Pleasant and were elected to town council because we respect their judgment. They each concluded that the Grahams' new plan was


an improvement over their 1995 proposal, and that enough concessions had been made to vote in favor this time. And Mr. Brock has always made it perfectly clear how the Mathis Ferry Road Committee feels about the project. Our council members are not misinformed.


It really bothers me that a professional newsman would deliberately present false or misleading information. His latest letter is full of it, literally. One example: "With its vote, Council gave away the least dense zoning category, R-1, trading it for the most dense - Planned Unit Development. That means (we) will bear the burden of more traffic than would result from current zoning." He conveniently forgets to mention that the density of the Grahams' new plan is now below what is required for R-1, the "least dense zoning category." He also mentions the 1900 signatures against the project in 1995. The wording of the petition was against changing zoning from R-1, but I think most of the people who signed were concerned with the 1240 proposed units. The fact that there was much less opposition this time around tells me that, for most people, 720 units is a number they can live with. When citing traffic figures, Mr. Brock continues to ignore the connecting road to Highway 17 that the Grahams will build. He also implies that anyone supporting the project must have ulterior motives: Supporters "have a strong financial motive to support the project," and are "a who's who of development, real estate, banking, and associated interests." For the record Mr. Brock, I do not work in finance or real estate. I have nothing financial to gain, I just like the project and would like to live there. Why is that so hard to believe?

Ward Reynolds
Paces Watch Apts.
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