

Town says unique planning approach will maintain Davidson's small-town charm

BY ALISSA IREI
Staff Writer

Sara-Lynne Levine, the head of the Town's Communication Office, believes that the development approval and planning processes in Davidson set the town apart.

The process of approving development in Davidson, according to Levine, is characterized by thoughtful consideration, deliberate decision-making and community involvement.

"Any non-residential project has to be approved [by the Design Review Board] to enforce the design regulations from the Town ordinance," Levine said. "The Town has a pretty detailed Planning Ordinance."

The general principles of the ordinance, according to Levine, include preserving the Town's status as a small town and making it a walkable community dedicated to preserving open space.

The Town's Planning Ordinance also includes measures to ensure that the facilities support growth increase along with development projects. As a result, community resources like parks, fire stations, police stations, utilities and roads must grow and improve proportionally to the size of the community.

Levine also hailed Davidson's charrette policy, which provides, "a chance for citizens to give their input."

"The developer has to send an invitation in the form of a letter to all of the neighbors within a certain distance [of the proposed development]," Levine said. "The charrette is a meeting in which citizens can voice any concerns they may have directly to the developer and discuss them in a public setting."

"That also means that it's going to go a little bit slower," she added. "A development project in Davidson is not going to happen very quickly."

But slower is okay with the town planners

and the Town Board, according to Planning Director Kris Krider.

Krider said that he and the Town Board do not hesitate to insist that developers agree to follow town guidelines or hit the highway. If developers do not want to comply with Davidson's planning ordinance and design demands, then, "I take pleasure in saying no to a developer, and I have the Board supporting me," Krider said. "If they don't like it, they can go on to the next exit; we don't really care... If we're going to grow, we're going to grow right. We have to look at it in terms of generations. If we mess it up now, we'll have to explain that to our grandkids."

Krider said, "Developers build and then leave in three to five years," so they have little incentive to build for long-term value.

In 1990, according to Krider, Davidson was twice the size of Cornelius and a little bigger than Huntersville. Now Davidson is by far the smallest town in the immediate area.

Krider estimates that Davidson's population will grow until it levels off at about 15,000 to 20,000, in the next five to 10 years.

He underscored what he sees as the differences between the Town's concerns, and those of other interests, such as the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

"We're doing things more sympathetically to the early 20th century," Krider said. "If it's going to grow, it should grow in a similar manner to what the Town looks like."

"Our goal is to bring it back to a more sustainable community," Krider said. He then described the resources he would like to see in town, including grocery store options, restaurants, affordable housing and entertainment venues like jazz clubs. Krider said that he believes that maintaining an eye toward community sustainability will keep Davidson from becoming just another "bedroom community," in which residents sleep while conducting all other business and leisure activities elsewhere.

When asked how his design plans for Davidson compare to a shopping community like Birkdale, Krider responded, "Birkdale is a trend. [Davidson] is more real than Birkdale...more eclectic." The owners of a center like Birkdale, Krider explained, usually have a grand master development plan for the entire community. Davidson, on the other hand, is and will be built "from the ground up."

In Davidson, Krider said that he and other town planners are working with 15-20 different developers, "each with their own development plans," which makes his job "almost like a seamstress." Krider has to make sure that "the public realm is functional, attractive and safe," while "knitting [everything] together, so it doesn't look like a hodgepodge, but it's more eclectic [than Birkdale-like developments]."

Krider said that he would ultimately like to see a more diverse environment in Davidson than is typical of the Lake Norman area.

"Where are the people between 25 and 40?" he asked. "Where are the people with alternative lifestyles? Where are the artists and musicians? Davidson's pretty conservative. It's pretty square. A lot of people like that, and we get a lot of pushback from people who move here and want us to lock the door and throw away the key."

"The developers are not as progressive as I would like to see, and they are not risk-takers," he said.

Despite these obstacles, Krider believes that there is room for more "eclectic" growth

in the Town of Davidson.

The intensive development around Exit 30, which has drawn some criticism in the Town—most notably in the recent mayoral election race—is part of the Town's overall plan for maintaining Davidson's character, according to Town Planner Laura Blackburn.

"The intent is to draw the development pressure to the exit," Blackburn said. He acknowledged that, "we are still getting a lot of infill in town anyway," but maintained that largely "[the plan] is working."

Krider, for his part, underscored the potential for public gain that accompanies the Exit 30 boom. "It's going to put a lot of money in the Town coffers," Krider said. The money can be used, he pointed out, to increase the Town's "greenways and open space."

Development around Exit 30 includes Davidson Day School, a Harris Teeter grocery store, 50 residential units, The Homewood Suites Hotel (set to open in March 2008), office buildings and retail shops. Davidson Day School is currently operative; it opened on September 4, 2007.

An extensive number of residential housing units and non-residential developments are scheduled to break ground in or around Davidson in the next year.

Ultimately, residents of Davidson and students at Davidson College can expect to see a lot of changes in the near future.

"Towns are either growing or they're dying," Krider said. "They're never staying the same."

Class fights AIDS with condom piñata

BY MONICA JAMOUNEAU
News Editor

Biology 361, an upper-level biology seminar taught by Professor of Biology David Wessner, is conducting a gift drive on Nov. 28 to support MetroJina AIDS's annual Christmas party.

For the week leading up to the Saturday of World AIDS Day, also the day of Warner's

Red and Black AIDS ball, the class will have a display for the current HIV/AIDS situation. It will be collecting gifts all week in a drop box in the Union. Gifts for children ages 18 are the most needed.

On Nov. 28, the Wednesday before World AIDS day, the class invites the public to help fight AIDS by hitting piñatas in the shape of HIV molecules. The piñatas will be filled with candy and condoms.



Students celebrate the Festival of Light in front of Duke Dormitory on Sunday.

Diwali, from page 1

College Chaplain Dr. Rob Spach had a very direct relationship to the festivities on campus.

"I think that people are eager to learn about others and experience their traditions," Spach said. "There has been a consistently high level of interest amongst students. The first Diwali festival took place five years ago and it was a small affair, but it has really grown since then. The Chaplain's Office is eager to cosponsor these events financially because they are an important addition to the religious life of the College. Furthermore, I personally experience Diwali as a very beautiful and joyful celebration."

Alisha Damodaran '08 grew up in India and was another one of the leaders behind last weekend's events.

"Diwali is definitely the biggest holiday [in India]," she said. "Everyone celebrates it, irrespective of whether you are Hindu or not. My family never prayed on Diwali. However, the entire neighborhood would get

together and play with fireworks sparklers, which is the essence of the social aspect of Diwali."

"We tried to bring that aspect here at Davidson, however," she said, "as you can imagine, getting permission for something like that was impossible!"

Events such as the Diwali Festival often serve as a reminder, to students of the variety of cultures outside of the Davidson bubble with which students seldom come in contact.

Isa said that, while she was very happy with attendance at the Diwali festival, it often seems that many of the same students attend all of the religious and cultural events on campus. There is still significant room for more open-mindedness among Davidson students.

On the same topic, Damodaran said, "The easiest way to be more aware or involved is to simply attend the events. Students put a lot of effort into planning these cultural events so the best way to show support is to actually go to them."

CAMPUS POLICE BLOTTER

11/05/07 7:58 p.m. Fire RLO Office

Officer received a call from dispatch, advising that somebody had to extinguish a small fire in the RLO area of Belk Dormitory. Officer arrived on the scene and observed that the fire was out and that all parties were safe. There was no report of any major injury and damage to real property appeared minimal. A witness reported that the fire started when someone accidentally put a Styrofoam plate too close to the heating tray flame. The person learned his lesson, and Physical Plant replaced the used extinguisher.

11/07/07 10:25 a.m. Hot Water. Union Cafe

Officer was contacted in reference to a subject who was burned by hot water at the cafe. Upon arrival, Officer met with the College student. The student stated that she believed that while she was picking up her cup of hot water, the lid came off, dropping the cup and water over her hand and onto her left leg. Officer checked the temperature setting on the machine and found it to be 205 degrees. Upon discussion with the Cafe Manager, the officer determined that the temperature fell within state guidelines and had been inspected and approved by the Mecklenburg County health inspector. Officer transported the student to the student health center for treatment.

11/07/07 8:49 p.m. Suspicious Person Martin Court B

Officer responded to Martin Court B in reference to a suspicious person. Officer approached the subject fitting the description and asked him why he was on campus. The suspicious person subsequently informed the officer that he was a Davidson College student. He advised the officer that he was helping his friend locate a missing bicycle. After checking the student's college identification, the officer advised the student that he and his friend had the option of filing a report for the missing bike if they were unable to locate it.

11/07/07 11:17 p.m. Noise Complaint SAE

Officer received a phone call concerning a noise complaint. Subject advised the officer that he was able to hear loud music coming from Patterson Court Circle. The officer stated that officers were en route to Sigma Alpha Epsilon to advise students about the noise. The officer spoke with both house members who reported that the party was registered until 1:00 am. Reporting officer advised the students to turn down the music.

11/09/07 12:30 a.m. Trailer Trouble Satellite Parking Lot

Officer was patrolling the satellite parking lot and located one of the storage trailers' roll-up door partially open. Officer observed several pieces of office furniture inside the trailer, but could not determine if anything was missing. Officer then closed door, but was unable to lock the door due to the lack of a lock.

Natsios s

Natsios

and they

unstable c

The spa

certain ch

gram has

United Sta

One of

"ungovern

ing and in

Bin Lad

structure in

and becau

to pull off

Another

areas shar

ing. In som

vesting oc

the stolen

transplants

Widespr

arms or a

characteri

Natsios sa

He also

developme

which the

increased

its phras

American

ment is bo

Some co

as ungewe

Often, the

itating po

despite int

areas, the

In these

economic

been force

Sudan.

In failed

death from

epidemics.

ment auth

With the

civil confl

abundant,

force, as in

"So how

Kell

Hilton K

of educati

is the ne

Education

Sharpsbur

to campus

several ye

of the Sou

Kelly rec

Charlotte.

He then

sociology

at Amher

Denison U

Kelly cu

Crow," a