

## **A Community Update for Oaks Villas and Oaks 3:**

### **Development Proposal Underway for the Land at the End of Lancaster Drive**

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Epcon Communities, a national developer, is currently working on a plan to develop the DuBose property at the east end of Lancaster Drive. This parcel, shown below, is just over 47 acres and extends east to George King Road. It is also just to the east of properties within Oaks Villas and the southern end of Oaks 3.



#### **Who is this Developer?**

Epcon Communities has already developed or has underway more than 70 “low maintenance” communities, including 20 in North Carolina. Culp Arbor was the first Epcon development in Durham County. Typically, the lots are very small, with roughly 5 ft side yards and 10 to 15 ft front and rear yards. They are advertised as low maintenance because a homeowner fee covers all lawn and landscape maintenance. Depending on total site acreage, Epcon will build up to 200 homes in a community.

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A sales representative for Epcon has said that they expect to be selling lots in this new development adjacent to us in 2022. The home prices are expected to range, approximately, between \$500,00 and \$900,000.

At the end of this document are illustrations of two Epcon Communities in the greater area, with links to the brochures for them. For their complete list, go to <https://www.epconcommunities.com/communities/>.

### **Where are they in the planning process?**

Epcon representatives met with the Durham City-County land use department about this parcel over a year ago, and again on September 2 for a zoning/annexation pre-submittal conference. It is anticipated that Epcon will be notifying residents surrounding this property of a public informational meeting within the next few weeks. (Such meetings are required).

We do not yet know for certain what type of development Epcon will propose, but it is expected to be a dense development of single family residences similar to other communities they have developed.

### **Possible Challenges Ahead for the Developer**

There are numerous hurdles the developer will have to overcome. Some, however, may have already been addressed in recent months.

- The parcel will have to be annexed by the City of Durham, so that water, sewer, trash collection, etc. can be provided.
- The portion of George King used to access this development will have to be brought up to City/NCDOT standards. This road is currently a State Department of Transportation Road, and the State will likely also have requirements.
- George King Road may not currently have the necessary right-of-way along the sides, so for any portions of the road to be widened, agreements may have to be reached with current landowners.
- City sewage treatment capacity will have to be increased for this area. That work is underway and is expected to be completed in the near future.

### **City of Durham Requirements that Impact Oaks Villas and Oaks 3**

We were told that Lancaster must be extended and connected to George King. However, the City will not require it to be a direct connection, and may support residents' request that it be a circuitous connection with one or more stop signs, to minimize the traffic between Oaks Villas (and the rest of the Oaks) and this new development. Also, the City will require that the 2

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stubbed roads off of Helmsdale, Dundalk and Hebrides, be connected into this new development.

The City of Durham requirement for undisturbed buffer between our current property lines and lots within this development (width of land left in current state) is zero feet; however, the City does require a planted buffer of at least 20 feet and at least 40% opacity. To meet this, for example, a developer may propose to plant trees of various kinds, spaced such that the 40% opacity requirement is met, and then the lots for the new houses can be just 20 feet away from existing lots. We understand that obtaining a much wider undisturbed buffer is a top priority for our communities. (see Appendix A)

Also, there are requirements concerning stream buffers (there are 2 on this parcel) and tree coverage preservation. The Board's subcommittee will share more details about the impacts of these requirements as we move forward.

### **What's Next, and How Can You Help?**

There are a number of issues that need further research prior to Epcon's neighborhood meeting. If you have expertise in any of the following areas and would be willing to assist, please send an email with your name, cell phone and areas of expertise/interest to [oaks.villas@gmail.com](mailto:oaks.villas@gmail.com).

- City of Durham buffer and tree preservation restrictions for developments similar to this
- Floodplains and stream buffer requirements
- NC DOT road improvement requirements and City of Durham road standards
- Environmental regulations and NC Natural Heritage Lands implications
- Transportation impact studies
- Land use law

### **How to Stay Informed**

The **Oaks Villas and Oaks 3** Boards will periodically send email notifications about the project, and plans are being developed for a joint community information meeting. Please tentatively hold the evening of October 13, and we will send a final date and details soon.

*For Oaks Villas residents, please be sure to add [oaks.villas@gmail.com](mailto:oaks.villas@gmail.com) to your Contacts, or these emails could be sent to your spam folder or trash.*

We also plan to work with others in the area to achieve our goals.

## Epcon Communities in the Area

For more information about the company, go to  
<https://www.epconcommunities.com/communities/>

### The Courtyards on Holt (Apex)

Brochure: [https://www.epconcommunities.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Holt-10-21-20\\_LR.pdf](https://www.epconcommunities.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Holt-10-21-20_LR.pdf)





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## The Courtyards at Southpoint

Brochure: [https://www.epconcommunities.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Southpoint\\_11-14-19\\_LR.pdf](https://www.epconcommunities.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Southpoint_11-14-19_LR.pdf)

