

**Housing plan is still in dispute  
Development in Walkertown stirs up residents, developer**

By Wesley Young  
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WALKERTOWN

A developer and some residents argued last week about Whitehall Village, a housing development planned for N.C. 66 near the town's center.

Developer George Sowers complained to the town council about some residents' comments at an earlier session - that Sowers had backed out of Whitehall Village and turned the development over to Keystone Group Inc., a Greensboro builder.

Not so, Sowers said during the council meeting.

"From the very beginning of the project I told you I had a contractual agreement with Keystone Homes," Sowers told the council. "Nothing has changed from the very beginning."

Sowers said he mentioned the Keystone connection in 2005 when he went to the council to discuss the project. Critics of the project are taking aim at another assertion- that the homes in the development will be built to sell at \$200,000.

Marilyn Martin, who had criticized Sowers at the earlier meeting, said she sent an e-mail to Keystone asking about the prices of the homes in the proposed development.

A company official replied to Martin in an e-mail, saying that there would be entry-level homes selling from about \$120,000 to \$160,000 and moderate homes priced "somewhat higher," along with a "mid-level townhome" that would start in the \$120,000 range.

Mary Ann Appleton-Miller, the director of sales and marketing for Keystone Group, said she did not mention any \$200,000 houses in the e-mail. Appleton-Miller declined further comment, referring questions to the company's president, Scott Wallace.

Wallace did not return a phone call Monday seeking a comment.

Martin spoke to the council after Sowers. She said she discovered that Sowers had mentioned Keystone as the builder in 2005.

Martin said she is still concerned about the development because of the e-mail from Appleton-Miller. She said she would withhold her judgment on the project until the houses are built.

"I'm not trying to give the man a hard time," Martin said about Sowers. "All I want him to do is what he said he was going to do. I don't see how he can, since he is not the owner of the property now."

Sowers said that what is proposed for the development is the same as what he talked about in 2005. He said that when "amenities" are included with a \$170,000 house, the asking

price would approach \$200,000. "I will protect my reputation," Sowers said. He said that Martin and another resident who had criticized the plans, Enos Jumper, have "a lot of time on their hands."

But Martin and Jumper rejected that criticism. Jumper told the council that he and some town residents see themselves as "guardians" who can help the council by being on the lookout for the town's affairs.

"We take time to show interest in our town," Jumper said.

Martin agreed with Jumper.

"I choose to use what little extra time I have because I am concerned for Walkertown," she said.

The council decided to spend \$10,000 toward the cost of widening N.C. 66 near the Whitehall Village site.

Council Member Brenda Mabe voted against the proposal, saying she did not like a provision that requires the town to move utility poles along one side of the road.

Town officials say they do not believe that Walkertown would have to move any poles.

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**Town panel put on notice: Loss of \$100,000 donation is possible**

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**WALKERTOWN**

Town officials still have not decided how to spend a \$100,000 donation on recreation, as an attorney warned them that they may lose money.

When Spencer Waggoner died in January 2005, he left \$100,000 to the town to spend on recreation. More than 18 months later, the money is drawing interest and town officials have no plan to spend it.

Officials said last week that they want to develop a plan to use the money. An attorney handling the Waggoner estate warned the Walkertown Town Council that the money could disappear if it is not spent.

"If the money wasn't spent on parks and recreation, it was to go to the Winston-Salem Foundation instead," Town Manager Ron Bell told the council.

Bell talked about his meeting with Jeff Larrimore, a member of the town's recreational advisory committee, and Elizabeth Quick, the attorney representing the Waggoner estate.

The recreational advisory committee was formed in October 2005, but Larrimore said that it has met only a few times.

The council decided last week to expand the committee by adding representatives of the various civic clubs. But Larrimore said that the committee needs younger people who can represent the needs of the families moving into houses being built in the Walkertown area.

"There are several developments going in that could be as many as 400 houses in the next several years," Larrimore said. "And all these houses could have kids. We just wanted to do something nice for the town." The town could raise \$400,000 to \$500,000 if it received matching grants for the project, Larrimore said.

"Some of the older people wanted to do a recreational center," Larrimore said. "That is good and fine, but it doesn't address the younger people or the kids at all."

Bell said that the recreation committee needs to look at long- and short-range needs, and the town needs a timetable for spending the money.

Council Member Brenda Mabe said that the money can be quickly spent once priorities are set.

"There is too much in this town that has gone undone for too long," Mabe said.

A local Pop Warner football team and a spokesman for the town's elderly residents wanted the council to consider when the money is spent.

Chad Brown, an organizer with the Walkertown Wolfpack, said that town can spend \$4,700 to provide the football program with the equipment it needs "to stay competitive with the other teams."

The program will need a new playing field if a proposed middle/high school is built in Walkertown, he said. The National Football League has a grant program that will increase the value of any town contribution.

Arlyn Wilson, a member of the recreation committee, told the council to remember the needs of senior citizens.

Wilson said that Walkertown Community Park - a county-owned park - needs improvements that would make heated restrooms available in the winter, along with an earlier opening time of the park gate to serve seniors who arrive early to walk.

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