

## **Proposed Complex Up For Comment** Hearing To Be Held On Student Housing Project

**By JEREMY HUNT**  
*Daily News-Record*

**HARRISONBURG** — A proposed student-housing complex in Rockingham County that made some city officials queasy will be up for public comment this week.

The Board of Supervisors will hold a hearing Wednesday on a rezoning request for Aspen Heights, a planned 600-bed development off Port Republic Road just south of the Harrisonburg city limits. The public hearing portion of the meeting is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in the County Administration Center on North Main and Gay streets in Harrisonburg.

Named for the development company that's behind the project, Aspen Heights would be a 184-unit gated community consisting of a mixture of detached homes, duplexes and townhouses.

The Austin, Texas-based company aims to give its studenthousing developments the look and feel of a traditional neighborhood with the amenities of a luxury apartment complex, according to the firm. Its target audience is James Madison University students.

Members of Harrisonburg City Council have raised concerns about the project's impact to traffic on Port Republic Road, among other issues.

Representatives of Aspen Heights say the proposal would generate less traffic than if the property were developed with its current business and residential zoning designations.

The Rockingham County Planning Commission and county staff recommend approval of rezoning, saying the project is in line with the locality's comprehensive plan.

### **'Good' And 'Not So Good'**

A few adjoining property owners also have raised concerns about the project, including reservations about having JMU students as neighbors. College students, they point out, have been known to throw a wild party or two from time to time.

Company officials say private security would be provided on weekends to keep the complex quiet, and misbehavior also will be reported to parents who must sign leases.

District 4 Supervisor Bill Kyger, who represents the area, would not say whether he's inclined to support the project ahead of Wednesday's hearing.

"There are some good aspects to it, and there are some not- so- good aspects to it," he said. "But the board and I are going to have to weigh that at the public hearing." Kyger said he is concerned with transportation to and from the university and how it will be provided.

Company representatives previously said that a private shuttle service would be provided if Harrisonburg bus service can't be extended to the area.

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