

More Student Housing Proposed In County

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HARRISONBURG — A new off-campus college student housing complex could be coming to Rockingham County.

The Planning Commission is set to hold a public hearing Tuesday on a request from KKB LLC to rezone a 6.1-acre parcel off Port Republic Road.

The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Rockingham County Administration Center, 20 E. Gay St.

The property is zoned general residential and would be rezoned planned multifamily district.

It is adjacent to Bojangles Famous Chicken 'n Biscuits and borders the county's first college student housing complex, Aspen Heights, which opened in August 2013 on Port Republic Road just outside the city limits.

KKB plans to create Altitude at Stone Port, which is described as an “upscale student housing residential community” in the rezoning request. KKB had the property rezoned in 2012. At the time, local developer Dain Hammond was the principal, but it could not be confirmed whether he is still involved with the LLC. The proposed complex will be developed as three buildings bordering Port Republic Road, Stone Port Boulevard and Apple Valley Road.

The central building will be a two- to three-story clubhouse with a rooftop deck at the northeast corner of the property. The building bordering Port Republic Road will be five stories, and the one bordering Stone Port Boulevard and Apple Valley Road would be four and five stories, due to topography.

The development would contain no more than 140 units with 425 beds and 402 parking spaces.

The property will be accessible via a right turn lane off Port Republic Road, and off Stone Port Boulevard.

KKB will also construct a shared use path along the perimeter of the development.

According to county documents, planning staff has recommended the commission table the request because the developer has not submitted a letter from the city of Harrisonburg saying public sewer is available for the development.

The request states Altitude will be developed to “facilitate pedestrian traffic,” possibly to the Bojangles, Wendy's and Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market nearby, leading to increased revenue for the county.

“It certainly would result in some increased revenue,” County Administrator Stephen King said. “But it would also result in some added expenses.”

Altitude could be one of two complexes to open in the county in the next few years.

In May, supervisors approved a rezoning request from Athens, Ga.-based LCD Acquisitions for 36.8 acres bordering the city on Reservoir Street.

The company, an affiliate of Landmark Properties, plans to build The Retreat at Harrisonburg.

The development will include 178 units of detached, duplex and quad housing totaling 715 bedrooms. It could be open for the 2017-18 school year. Like The Retreat, Altitude’s developers would need to arrange bus service to James Madison University.

The complexes could also stress the county’s already strained public safety services. “Obviously, any time you add that many people to an area, it will increase your call load,” Fire and Rescue Chief Jeremy Holloway said. “I know it’s going to affect us, but I don’t know to what extent yet.” Despite that, fire and rescue does not have any concerns with the proposal, county documents say.

The Rockingham County Sheriff’s Office, meanwhile, has raised concerns with its ability to respond to calls in the area.

Sheriff Bryan Hutcheson has said the area may be made into its own patrol sector.

“It ends up being that way just for calls for service alone,” Hutcheson said, adding that the change could come in the next few years. “It’s already to the point where that’s pretty much justified.”

To do so, he would need four additional deputies to have one on duty 24 hours a day in the sector.

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