

Tamarack Trails Community Services Association, Inc.
Tamarack Trails West Place Workgroup
110 S Westfield Road • Madison, WI 53717

Date: March 8, 2019
To: Urban Design Commission
Cc: Alder Paul Skidmore
City of Madison Planning Department - Kevin Firchow and Sydney Prusak
Urban Assets - Melissa Huggins
From: Tamarack Trails West Place Workgroup
Janet Hirsch and Jean MacCubbin
RE: **7043 Tree Lane - Capri Senior Communities** - File # 54804
Urban Design Commission Meeting on Wednesday, March 13, 2019

These comments are in response to the Informational Application submitted by Capri Senior Communities in advance of the Urban Design Commission meeting on Wednesday, March 13, 2019. These comments have been compiled by a resident workgroup (Tamarack Trails West Place Workgroup) with the support of the Tamarack Trails Board of Directors.

BACKGROUND

Tamarack Trails Community Services Association, Inc. is immediately adjacent to West Place property. Our neighborhood consists of 320 homes in buildings of one to six units. Along with our clubhouse, maintenance buildings, community gardens, swimming pool and tennis courts, our common areas incorporate a well-maintained mature tree canopy. Our community standards are upheld by a very active Architectural Review Board, as well as various Board-appointed committees such as Maintenance and Amenities Committees.

Our Tamarack Trails West Place Workgroup was put in place by our Board of Directors in 2016 during the initial planning phases of the West Place property. As this site is developing, we have been able to present our thoughts and concerns to the Urban Design Commission and the Planning Department.

We want to thank the developers of the Capri Senior Communities for their willingness to engage in a dialogue with us. We appreciate their willingness to listen and address our concerns. We welcome them as a new addition to our neighborhood.

RESPONSE TO INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENTS

In previous meetings with the developers, we were presented with general footprints of the proposed building. We were able to review the orientation on the site and the relationship to the Tamarack property and the neighborhood. The drawings submitted for the Informational Presentation provide our first opportunity to review details. The Capri team has shown itself to be open to considering suggestions from neighborhood residents and flexible in accommodating concerns.

We generally support, with concerns, the senior housing proposed for 7043 Tree Lane and shown on the plans submitted to UDC on February 20, 2019.

CONTEXT OF THE SITE

Along the Tamarack property line, many of the residential homes overlook the site as the elevation from our property slopes down to the east. The site is currently an open space scattered with groupings of trees. It is a green antidote to the heavily trafficked Gammon and Mineral Point Roads and the concrete surface lots at West Towne, Memorial High School and the remainder of the West Place property. It provides an area for play, exercise and, this month, a great hill for sledding.

DESIGN CONCEPT

We approve of the angularity of the building footprint. Along the west side of the lot, the developer has carved out several areas that provide visual relief from what might otherwise be an overpowering structure. The current configuration clearly provides interesting views and spaces for future Capri residents as well as Tamarack residents whose condos overlook the development. We endorse the intent to provide a unique configuration.

Based on earlier conversations and examples of other Capri buildings, we are disappointed that the structure does not have a more residential appearance. We do not object to the flat roof. However, the façade is reminiscent of the Navitus office building at the commercial end of the site, rather than having a more residential appearance reflecting the closer proximity of Tamarack. It does not provide an easy transition to the residential homes at Tamarack or Wexford.

Tamarack Trails has design standards that we are sharing with the developers. Tamarack's architectural features include white horizontal trim boards, white fences, and deck railings. While the Capri building design does feature horizontal white trim that relates well to Tamarack residences, the strong white vertical trim boards on the façade accentuate the height of the building and tend to break it up into separate boxes as though it were a series of discrete retail establishments.

SITE AND BUILDING PLANS

We support a four-story building along with the minimal fifth story which is shown at the center of the building. The rooftop garden is an additional plus.

Earlier plans and conversations with the developers discussed retaining walls that would be necessary where the slope of the land along the property line will be cut away. We would like to minimize the destruction of the topography and ask that any retaining walls be kept to a minimum height and width and at a maximum distance from the Tamarack homes. For the safety of residents, it would be beneficial to avoid a precipitous drop in the elevation of the land.

As shown on the current drawings, the distance between the Tamarack homes and the new building is reduced. The closeness of the buildings will have a negative effect on daily routines of Tamarack residents as they use their patios, decks and living rooms.

Currently, there is a good number of trees and shrubs on the site. They provide a light and sound barrier, as well as visual privacy for the Tamarack homes. As construction moves forward, approximately 30 trees are designated for removal. This will diminish the buffer between the two properties. We would like ensure that additional greenery is incorporated into the site plans to replace the lost landscaping. This would provide privacy screening for residents of Capri and Tamarack.

OTHER INFORMATION

We are comfortable with the small number of additional units that have been added to the project.

**Distinctive Elements of
Tamarack Trail's Architectural Style
As Delineated by TC Lin of Strang, Inc.
April 24, 2012**

The overall effect of Tamarack's environment is an example of a "new urban community". The Tamarack Architectural Style most closely resembles a "sea ranch" style. The neighborhood is more pedestrian and less car oriented, with walking trails, generous green spaces and very little street parking. Landscaping is in keeping with such an environment and has been well maintained as it has matured. Unlike many other condominium associations, residents in Tamarack own their unit and they own a lot that is distinct from common space.

The important elements of Tamarack's Architectural Style are:

1. Roofs are a consistent 6/12 pitch with no overhangs.
2. Windows have strong white trim, especially above and below, and are not double hung.
3. Each building is unique with sight lines and landscaping rarely allowing a view from one building into another.
4. Siding colors are mostly from a limited pallet of understated pastels.
5. Decks and fences utilize strong white horizontal rails.
6. Density and size of units vary by phase, but are fairly consistent within a given phase. Phase 6 has a much higher density (six units per building) and a more rectangular overall appearance.

All elements of the style are vital and together they "unite" to create the unique characteristics of Tamarack's Architectural Style. Further discussion could determine whether some elements could evolve over time with careful oversight.

May 31, 2012