

## **Mirror Lake Development Hello.**

My name is Michael Young and I am the Villa Rica City Council Member for Ward 4 or the bulk of Mirror Lake. I'm sorry to have taken so long to respond but I have been in Savannah for training since yesterday.

I appreciate to opportunity to help clarify some of the misconceptions held about the newly announced development in the Mirror Lake PUD (Planned Unit Development).

For residents that moved to Mirror Lake before the housing bubble crashed it was a well-known fact that only half of Mirror Lake had been developed and another half of about the same size was coming. After the housing crash, you didn't hear much about the other half of Mirror Lake anymore. I can see where many residents may not have known about "the rest of Mirror Lake" if it wasn't a common subject. But the plans were still there, still on file with the city and still valid.

One of the two primary reasons for the Alteration of the Rezoning Application was to modify how many residential units were permitted. The old plan called for a total of 1,265 multi-family units (apartments) of which 250 had been constructed. That left 1,015 multi-family units still approved for construction. I along with most of you, I feel that that is way too many apartments. So the zoning application was modified to 517 multi-family units through negotiations with the representative of the property owner(s). The reduction in multi-family units was offset to some degree with an increase in the number of single family detached units (one lot, one house). The Alteration to the Rezoning Application now allows the Property Owner or Developer to construct 790 single family detached homes and 517 multi-family units and puts a cap on the total number of each type of unit within the entire Mirror Lake PUD. These units are spread across 10 different developments and while they are in the Mirror Lake Planned Unit Development (PUD) not all of the units will be incorporated into the Mirror Lake HOA. All 517 multi-family units will be excluded from the Mirror Lake HOA. 172 single family detached homes will be excluded from the Mirror Lake HOA. That means just 618 single family homes will be added to the HOA.

The other reason for the Alteration of the Rezoning Application was to incorporate design standards and minimums into the new zoning. I have attached 2 documents here. The first is the concept map for the new development and the second is a set of agreed upon minimum standards for each of the 10 developments. The map is very much just a concept as it does not portray required buffers and setbacks as an engineering diagram will show. It does not reflect areas where rock and wetlands might prevent construction. Rock may even cause the roads shown to take a different path. The Master Plan places minimums on the lots and homes to encourage the individual builders to produce homes comparable to the existing homes in adjacent areas. Even in existing homes the size of the lots varies significantly, and the square footage of homes varies in a similar manner. Since it is meaningless to set maximums, setting minimums helps protect surrounding homeowners.

One of the issues I have heard is why are apartments being built in Watermist. If you look at the concept map, the entrance to Watermist III is a considerable distance East of Mirror Lake Parkway. Between Watermist IIB and Watermist III there is a creek that will require significant buffer zones on each side and the creek has the usual tree and shrubbery growth that provides

a respectable barrier between the two developments. I hope they call the apartments something other than Watermist III but I don't control that.

The other apartment development is South of Connors Road in Tract One which is right beside Hawthorne at Mirror Lake, another apartment development.

The homes in Tract four and five are the 172 single family detached homes that will not be included in the HOA.

I have also heard there will be lots of cluster homes. Not true. Cluster housing consists of closely grouped homes. They are usually smaller than the average dwelling and built on downsized lots. Fairway 16 has 66 homes that are styled after the current Reflections subdivision and will be marketed to "Seniors" just like Reflections. The number of homes is also similar to the home count in Reflections. I don't think many people would claim that Reflections has hurt home values in Mirror Lake since there is a waiting list to buy homes in that subdivision. It may even have its own Community Association while also being part of the HOA just like Reflections.

I also heard this was pushed through because "someone" (presumably in the city) was profiting from it. Not true. The timing was simply due to the ease of negotiating a large, complex development with a single person (the investor's representative) rather than waiting to negotiate with each individual builder as they applied for building permits. The city has gone to great lengths to negotiate a better development plan than just using the remainder of the old 1997 PUD. The developer did not have to agree to fewer apartments or additional amenities since they were not in the 1997 plan. This new plan is much better than just running with the plan that was on the books and already approved back in 1997.

I heard the city violated Georgia law by not notifying residents about the P&Z meeting. Not true. The law allows a city to simply post notice in the "newspaper of record" when a zoning change is submitted by the city itself. Villa Rica has used the Times Georgian newspaper for as long as I have been here as the "newspaper of record" and probably much longer. The city did exactly the same thing when the city revamped the entire zoning ordinance.

I understand many feel like this was sprung on you. And for those that joined Mirror Lake after the housing bubble collapse and the discussions about the rest of Mirror Lake died, you could be right. I've been in Mirror Lake since 2001 and completing the development of Mirror Lake was a fact of life that just hadn't happened yet but would happen at some point. It just was. I promise you that there was no intent to hide or conceal anything regarding the development. The city acted in the same manner it would normally act when a property owner wants to develop their property. The city will strive to make the best possible negotiated agreement and then sending the agreement to P&Z starts the public information process.

I hope this added some clarity to the mass of commentary swirling around the Mirror Lake development issue. If you have additional questions or comments, please reach out to me.

Michael Young  
Mayor Pro-Tem  
City Council Member Ward 4  
678-787-0398  
myoung@villarica.gov