

To: Lyons Board of Trustees
From: Lyons Ecology Advisory Board
Subject: Lyons Valley Park Zoning
Date: October 18, 2024

The Lyons Ecology Advisory Board recently had the opportunity to review the LVP / Town rezoning proposal. The following issues were discussed at our October 15th meeting:

1. The “triangle lot” (now-empty lot on McConnell Drive by bridge) is approximately one half in Lyons’ flood hazard zone (floodway, 1% floodplain, .2% floodplain). It is zoned for Business use and town staff proposes rezoning the parcel to high density residential, with two triplexes: three stories tall (see below). One of the two proposed structures (structure on the right) is depicted as being within the flood hazard zone: At a minimum, further elevation would be required to create a building footprint out of the flood zone which will increase construction costs and substantially increases the potential for site erosion. Building heights (even without increased elevation) would be incompatible with the existing neighborhood and would likely exceed the 30 ft limit of R3. Additionally, the Town has experienced compliance issues in the recent past with contractors building ‘affordable’ housing, failing to meet very basic state-mandated storm water management plan (SWMP) best management practices (BMPs). Ignoring SWMP BMPs would prove to be extremely detrimental to abutting waterways (ponds and river) in this sensitive area.

EAB recommendation Rezone parcel / lot #1 to MUN or POS. Or leave as is. This allows for possible future use as park land, or for mass transit park-and-ride, event parking, as future town facilities, or community demonstration / pollination garden or for other municipal uses (e.g. pavilion for educational programs and/or interpretation). Additionally, it’s extremely important to provide more buffering not less in such areas in order to ensure adequate resilience near waterways. In light of recent catastrophic flooding events in North Carolina it would be irresponsible to build in areas such as this. Many neighboring communities (such as Longmont) are working to increase buffer zones abutting waterways; not reduce them. Consequently, the Town of Lyons shouldn’t predetermine most desirable use as high-density residential (especially in this area). There is no benefit for meeting town’s other affordable housing commitment(s) at this sensitive location. Doing so not only puts these parcels at greater risk, but it also increases construction costs and also could likely contribute to the potential degradation of critical habitat in and around the existing ponds. The town staff has worked very hard over the past decade to increase water quality here.

2. The other residential parcel in question for zoning (lot #2 on map currently zoned R-1) should potentially be re-zoned A-1 Agriculture District to match adjacent A-1 parcels. If A-1 zoning isn’t desirable, Parks Open Space POS could also be acceptable zoning for this lot due to the fact that accessibility for residential development is not feasible. This zoning will

continue to provide for buffering around the existing LVP subdivision and better more subtle transition to existing open space areas.



