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Southampton High-Rise Has Neighborhood in Uproar

By Kate Bolen

Southampton and Boulevard Oaks residents, angered over news that former neighbors planned to build a 23-story high rise apartment building in their tree-shaded neighborhood of single-family homes, packed into Poe

Elementary School Thursday night to learn what they could do to stop what some called a

“monstrosity.” The Southampton Civic Club and the Boulevard Oaks Civic Association called the emergency meeting at Poe Elementary School Thursday after discovering Buckhead Investment Partners Inc. had purchased Maryland Manor Apartments with intentions of developing a 23 story mixed use high-rise on the property.

The property, 1717 Bissonnet, is at the corner of Bissonnet and Ashby.

Southampton Civic Club president Erik Eriksson said the meeting was called in order to let the citizens know how much of an impact this “monstrosity” would have on

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City Council Member and Southampton Resident Anne Clutterbuck

both neighborhoods and to develop a plan to prevent the project from moving forward.

“They are trying to piggyback on our hard work,” said Eriksson. “We need to work with the city to get ordinances in place so we never have to fight something like this again.”

Proposed plans from the public included taking up a

collection to buy out developers, Matthew Morgan and Kevin Kirton, as well as placing a moratorium on the project until new ordinances can be put in place to hinder construction.

Bolsover resident James Calloway said citizens should picket as well as arrange sit-ins and protests, in hopes of driving Morgan and Kirton away, once construction begins.

Council member Anne Clutterbuck, who attended the meeting, said she has spoken to Kirton and has urged him to build something smaller that will work with the neighborhood.

Clutterbuck said Kirton and Morgan have already invested \$500,000.00 to expand the sewer. Construction on the sewers has already been completed, she said.

Many citizens spoke out against council members, which also included Sue Lovell and Peter Brown, as to why they were letting this happen.

“We do not have the legal authority to stop them because we don’t like it,” Clutterbuck said.

Citizens also brought parking and traffic issues up at the meeting.

Pam Higgins who lives on Albans said she believes parking from the high-rise will more than

likely spill out onto the streets.

“Everyone of us has more than one car and so do people who live in million dollar condos,” Higgins said.

The Ashby high-rise parking garage is set to hold 460 vehicles for both residents and visitors.

Katie Johnson, who resides at the intersection of South Boulevard and Dunlavy, said when playing with her daughter and new puppy in her backyard the other day, she realized her family’s days of privacy will come to an end once the high-rise is completed.

“They made it personal. They are going to bring in 23 stories of strangers into my backyard, looking at my daughter. They went over the line,” Johnson said.

Southampton resident Sharon Dryer said not only will the high-rise prevent sunlight from entering homes due to its large shadow, it will also damage the cherished oaks of the community.

“What is the shade going to do to those beautiful old oaks? God help those trees,” Dryer said.

Southampton Civic Club and BOCA provided citizens with a petition as well as letters addressed to both Kirton and Morgan, urging them to rethink the development.

The developers’ home addresses and phone numbers were also given to meeting attendees.