

August 27, 2013

Special Meeting of Pine Ridge Civic Association
Re: Expansion Plans of Naples Equestrian Challenge
Place: Crossroads Community Church

The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm. President Peter Pytlik called the meeting to order. Approximately 50 people were in attendance. President Pytlik introduced Wayne Arnold, Professional Designer for Grady Minor Associates to explain the conditional use site plan.

Mr. Arnold explained the history behind the lots of NEC. The initial conditional use came in 2000 for lot 21 for a therapeutic riding program. Lot 20 was later purchased and now lot 19 is being purchased. NEC is asking for conditional use of lots 19 and 20, not rezoning. They are asking for instruction and stabling. They are proposing paddocks and parking on lot 20 and a new stable, training room and covered riding on lot 19. All buildings will be single story.

After a neighborhood meeting a month ago, the conceptual Site plan was changed so that access to Ridge Drive was eliminated except for emergencies and parking was reduced on lot 120.

Mr. Arnold explained that there will be the first public meeting before the Collier County Planning Commission next Thursday and then it will go to the Board of County Commissioners in October for a vote. 4 out of 5 County Commissioners must approve the conditional use in order for this change to occur.

President Pytlik opened up the discussion to questions.

There was a question regarding the riding ring on lot 19 regarding an amplified sound system, as the sound system on lot 21 is rather loud. There will be no amplified sound system on this lot. The hours of operation will remain the same 8-8 with special events approved to 11 pm.

Many neighbors who live in the adjacent area were very concerned about this expansion due to noise, more traffic and possibility of bringing home prices down in Pine Ridge.

Joseph Martino showed concern of the amount of parking spaces and the additional enclosed buildings on lot 19.

Dr. Michael Finkle said that he has had patients who participated and feels that this should be supported by the residents.

A question was posed regarding the amount of traffic coming in and out of the entrance. Kim Minarich, NEC Executive Director, conducted a 2 hour study during high traffic and said that there were 18 vehicle trips. Residents did not feel that this was accurate since parents, staff and volunteers were in and out quite a bit.

Questions were raised about approving this conditional use which could lead to setting a precedent. Mr. Arnold stated that each request is looked at separately.

A question was raised regarding landscaping and Mr. Arnold said that there was no landscaping plan yet.

A question was asked about how much total enclosed buildings would be on all lots. Mr. Arnold said that it would be approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of enclosed buildings not including the riding arena. The cottage on lot 21 will also be removed for better ingress/egress accessibility on to Center Street.

Caroline Martino stated that she has been supporting NEC for 15 years and said that the mission has been changed and that they are supporting many more individuals than the original mission. She asked Missy Saracino, NEC Program Director to elaborate about what they are currently doing and how the programs have grown.

Missy stated that they are currently serving 423 people with special needs, including David Lawrence Center and they added a veterans program in January. They also have equine facilitative learning programs. They currently have 10 horses and that would expand to 14 horses. When asked about the funding, she stated that the funding is through HUD and they would have up to 5 years to break ground. They would begin fundraising campaigns but she did not have any details on how they were going to raise the funds needed to do so.

President Pytlik closed the meeting at 8:05 pm and thanked all of the residents for coming to the meeting and encouraged them to go to the meeting next Thursday to voice their concerns.