

Condo project planned at Durham Central Park

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92 planned units would start in the mid-\$200,000s

By Jim Wise

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DURHAM More living space is on the horizon for the Durham Central Park district, a condominium project at Foster and Corporation streets, adjoining the park itself.

Called "539 Foster," the condominiums would stand across Foster Street from the 246-apartment

Liberty Warehouse project currently under construction, and within three blocks of the 24-unit Central Park Cohousing condominiums and the Parkside condominiums planned at Morris Ridge on Morris Street.

According to the project's website, nando.com/ice, 539 Foster will have 92 condominium units, "starting in the mid-\$200,000s," with private balconies and hardwood floors, plus six "three-story terrace homes," on six floors above a two-level parking garage. Durham Central Park president

Morgan Haynes said the park board has been in "close communication" with developer BH-AG Durham Foster LLC of Chapel Hill, and the board thinks the project "will improve the park space."

The developer bought three lots, covering 0.9 acre, at the Foster-Corporation corner from former owner Denny Clark on June 1, paying \$1.65 million according to Durham County deeds. The current tax value is \$542,899, including the 10,000-square foot Muzze Building. Durham Foster has also nego-

tiated to buy several easements on city-owned park property, totaling 9,906.9 square feet, for \$41,788.76.

That money would go to the city parks and recreation department for use at Durham Central Park, said Councilwoman Diane Catotti, a member of the park board.

Durham Foster LLC also intends to close the stub of Roney Street and convert it into a pedestrian greenway. Most of Roney Street was closed when the park

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was developed, but the stub was left for access to Farmers' Market Pavilion which landscape architect Dan Jewell said would be retained after conversion.

The easement sale is scheduled for a vote at the City Council's June 15 meeting, though some council members had raised concerns during work sessions last week and Monday.

"It's a neat project for Durham Central Park," said Councilman Don Moffitt, but he wanted assurance that 539 Foster's security staff understand "what they can and can't do, where they can and can't do it."

"I want to be really sensitive to the fact that this is right on the park," Moffitt said.

Councilman Steve Scheivel said the city "should be thinking about this as an opportunity for supporting af-

fordable housing.

"I think it's going to be a great development," Scheivel said, "but once again there's no affordable housing in this development. ... We ought to be thinking about trying to negotiate for that," he said.

In response, Durham Foster attorney Patrick Baker said the firm would make a \$41,788.76 donation to Habitat for Humanity.

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