



The Blue Grass Trust
for Historic Preservation

October 8, 2013

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Vice Mayor Linda Gorton
LFUCG Urban County Council
200 E. Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

RE: 0908-13 – *An Ordinance changing the zone from an Agricultural Urban (A-U) zone to a Planned Neighborhood Residential (R-3) zone, for 24.88 net (27.71 gross) acres, for property located at 4500 and 4524 Old Schoolhouse Ln. (Ball Homes, LLC; Council District 10). Conditional Approval 11-0 OBJECTORS (To Be Heard By October 23, 2013) [Div. of Planning, King].*

Dear Vice Mayor Gorton,

On behalf of the board of directors of the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issue before you tonight. Founded in 1955, the Blue Grass Trust is the leading and oldest nonprofit preservation advocate in Central Kentucky. Our mission is education, service and advocacy for the Bluegrass' historic resources, including sites, structures and landscapes.

This letter is to express concern that the proposed Ball Homes development at 4500 and 4524 Old Schoolhouse Lane threatens multiple historic sites. These sites include the old schoolhouse (for which the Lane is named), a 300-year-old bur oak, and documented burial mounds. These threatened sites merit the Council's careful attention as they consider Ball Home's proposed development.

The first two sites are well-documented. Ball Homes has noted that the historic schoolhouse will not be demolished, yet the Blue Grass Trust contends that surrounding the structure with this development drastically changes its historic context. The centuries-old bur oak has been the source of much discussion, and many Lexingtonians are concerned of the threat this development poses. This famous tree, if left alone, could well outlive any house built by Ball Homes.

When this proposed development was before the LFUCG Planning Commission, it was noted that the issue of burial mounds was a recent development. So recent, in fact, that they did not have a report prior to the meeting. A report by Cultural Resource Analysts (CRA), contracted by Ball Homes to survey the area, was distributed at the meeting. That report noted that CRA had walked the site and noted no evidence of a burial mound, although state records differ. Erosion and nearby farming can easily obscure the landscape, making any ground survey difficult.

The Blue Grass Trust asks that the Urban County Council deny this zone change request because of the threat it poses to multiple important historic sites. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jason Sloan
Historic Preservation Specialist

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