

Planners give green light to battlefield plan

Development would be built on a portion of the Chancellorsville battlefield

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHANCELLORSVILLE — County planners voted Thursday to recommend approval of a massive housing and retail development on a portion of the Chancellorsville battlefield.

The 5-2 vote by the Spotsylvania County Planning Commission drew boos and hisses from some of the hundreds of people who crowded into a meeting on the plan.

The county Board of Supervisors will have final say on the "new town" proposed for the historic Civil War battlefield. A hearing date on that step in the process has not been scheduled.

The planning vote followed hours of often emotional comments by residents.

"You've given us a black eye around the world," one resident, Dorothy Miller, said. "You're thinking of desecrating the site of the South's greatest victory. Nobody wants to see a national treasure turned into Disneyland."

Dogwood Development Group of Reston wants to build 1,995 homes and up to 2.2 million square feet of stores and offices on nearly 800 acres of rolling farmland off State Route 3.

Civil War battlefield preservation groups oppose the development because it includes the site of the Battle of Chancellorsville's first-day fighting and would border 1,600

acres of the National Park Service's Chancellorsville battlefield.

Eleven local and national preservation groups have banded together as the Coalition to Save Chancellorsville Battlefield.

Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust, stressed that his group is not against all development.

"We are anti-development where it's going to destroy some of our precious resources," he said. "This battlefield belongs to all Americans."

Dogwood President Ray Smith said his project, when finished in 12 years, would generate a surplus of \$10 million a year to the county.

THE WASHINGTON POST

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Development on Battlefield Supported

A proposal to build a planned community on a privately owned piece of the Chancellorsville Battlefield near Fredericksburg moved forward yesterday when the Spotsylvania County Planning Commission voted 5 to 2 to support a plan presented by the Dogwood Development Group, according to commission manager Raymond Utz.

Utz said the proposal will be presented to the county Board of Supervisors, which has the final say on the plan. No hearing date has been set.

The proposed development, called the Village of Chancellorsville, would have nearly 2,000 houses and about 500,000 square feet of commercial space and be built on about 800 acres of farmland where troops clashed on May 1, 1863.