



July 17, 2020

Southwood's Vision Finalized



A CENTRAL PARK an active use soccer field, play scape and tot lot surrounded by family homes

After years of work, the residents of Southwood Mobile Home Park have finalized their vision for phase one of Southwood's redevelopment into a mixed income community anchored by permanent housing for all of the current residents. The first site plan is set for final approval before the end of the summer and we plan to break ground on the \$250M project this fall.

[We invite you to follow this link for a sneak peak into the beautiful new community.](#)

For the architects who turned the residents' vision into the technical plans that are rendered in these illustrations, this has been an experience unlike any other.

"It's very clearly the most meaningful work I've done in my career," says Bruce Wardell, founder and Principal of [brwarchitects](#). "The process

of getting to know the folks in the neighborhood and developing along with other folks in our firm, and frankly being tutored and led by [Habitat's] staff, developing a process in which the residents have their hands on the steering wheel, that's been a really wonderful experience to watch."

As a founding board member of Habitat in 1991, Wardell was a natural choice to lead the Southwood design process along with Whitney McDermott, who is both an architect and a civil engineer at brwarchitects.

The process was collaborative from the start. Any Southwood resident who wanted to be involved in the planning

process was welcomed and a group of several dozen regulars have met weekly to design streets, sidewalks, parks, arrangement of homes and to determine housing types.



D CENTRAL SQUARE attractive gathering space adjacent to resident owned businesses

"One of the Board of Supervisors members said that what they produced was better than 95% of the professional work that he'd seen submitted to them."

"There have been several occasions where we would go in thinking that we have an assumption about an issue we were going to talk about that night, planning or neighborhood design, and just been surprised at the experience that the residents have already," McDermott says. "Their perspective would be different. They are experts in their own way. We came in thinking that we had a certain amount of technical knowledge, but they would just get it."

"One of the Board of Supervisors members said that what they produced was better than 95% of the professional work that he'd seen submitted to them," Wardell says. **"The residents are constantly impressing us with their understanding of what good neighborhoods are.** Their understanding of how their culture and community fit into a good neighborhood design. They understand the relationships between streets and pedestrians, open spaces, different housing types. They have a mature understanding of how these things work together. They put the roads together, the housing typologies together."



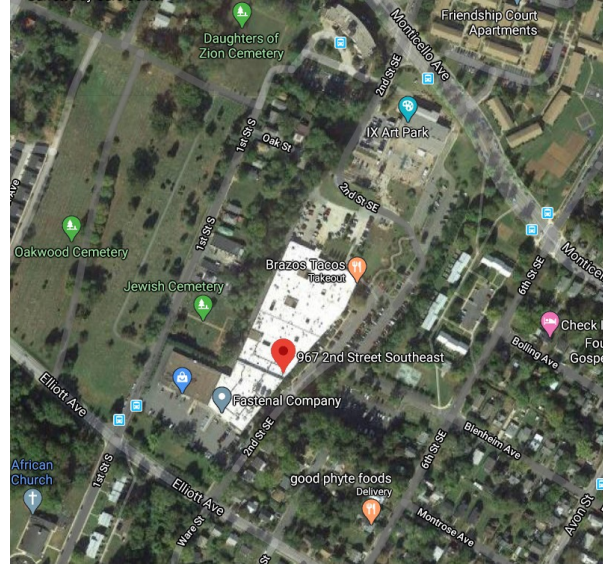
C POCKET PARKS rain gardens, perennial gardens and areas to gather in community together

McDermott's digital renderings show many common areas, including a central park, a public plaza, and a soccer field. The Southwood residents used a large physical model with miniature houses to experiment with moving design elements around until they settled on their final plan.

"Think of how many ways in which marginalized communities don't have control of many aspects of their lives," says Wardell. "Many of them don't have control over where they live, over their job security, who lives next to them, what kind of choices they have on a daily or weekly basis. There are so many ways in which people without a lot of resources get controlled or managed by other people. Some of those forces are benevolent, some aren't. ...**The ability of this to change here is fundamentally different than anything we've ever seen done in neighborhoods.**"

Groundbreaking for the first phase of new construction at Southwood is expected to take place in September.

Habitat Office Finds a New Home



Our main office is moving! Effective today, our main office formerly located on West Main Street will be moving to a new location in the IX Art Park Complex. Our new address is **967 2nd St SE Charlottesville, VA 22902**.

Free parking will be available in the lot across the street from our office between 2nd St. SE and 6th St. SE. There are also many bus stops nearby on 1st St. S at Elliot Ave. and Monticello Ave.

Please note that, due to COVID 19, the office is temporarily open to staff only. We hope to welcome in the general public as soon as we can do so safely.

Feel free to email info@cvillehabitat.org or call 434-293-9066 with questions.

Habitat Welcomes New Board Members

This month, Habitat is pleased to welcome four new individuals to its Board of Directors.

“We feel so fortunate to welcome an incredibly gifted and committed group,” said Habitat CEO/President Dan Rosensweig. “They bring a diversity of skills and experience. However, what connects them is a passion for the mission, for making Charlottesville a welcoming place of opportunity. We can’t wait to get them started.”

Connor Childress is an attorney with Scott/Kroner PC. He brings extensive expertise in complex real estate transactions and earned both his undergraduate degree and J.D. from the University of Virginia.



Mark Luellen has been the University of Virginia's Vice President for Advancement since 2016. Mark leads the multibillion dollar fundraising effort for the University, including planning for and directing the \$5B "Honor the Future" campaign. Mark, his wife Beth Ann and their two daughters live in Greene County.



Marilu Thomas has served as Associate Rector of Christ Church since 2014. She specializes in mission and service, leading trips to Honduras, participating in medical missions to Haiti and organizing the church's local missions including the PACEM Shelter, Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen and their work with Habitat. Marilu and her husband Stuart have two daughters and two grandchildren, all of whom live in Charlottesville.



Judy Tobin, Executive Director for the Sentara Medical Group, is also the chair of the Finance Committee for Hospice of the Piedmont and serves on the Board of Directors for the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development.

[Habitat's Work During Covid-19](#)

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Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville | 434-293-9066