The information presented is my interpretation of discussions with Mark Weatherford, Clifton Baker and Philip Williams.

Some of the information may not reflect the opinions of all these individuals.

Mark and Clifton developed the Chimney Rock Conservation Development in Flower Mound and Philip developed Montgomery Farms in Allen.
Chimney Rock

At Chimney Rock Estates, your children will attend Lewisville ISD schools rated "exemplary" by the Texas Education Agency. For business executives, Chimney Rock Estates offers a short work commute to the office. A number of corporate centers such as Las Colinas in Irving and DFW and Alliance airports are within easy reach of the community.

Recreation abounds with eight golf courses, three equestrian centers and the water sports of Lake Grapevine just minutes away. And there is no end to the upscale shopping and dining options that await you.

Visit soon and reserve one of our spectacular prime homesites early.

Located in Flower Mound, the community is central to major corporate centers and the Metroplex’s best shopping, dining and entertainment districts.
Chimney Rock

- Developed in 2001 in Flower Mound.
- 200 acre residential development with 100 acres for homes and 100 acres for passive, natural space.
- The Home Owners Association pays an annual assessment for maintenance and the natural area is in a conservation easement which is managed by the Connemara Conservancy.
Montgomery Farms
Montgomery Farms

- Started in 2002 in Allen. 75% built out.
- 1200 acre development with 500 acres of passive open space in a conservation easement managed by the Connemara Conservancy.
Questions

What issues do you consider in evaluating a tract of land for a conservation development?

- Local building and drainage code set the table. None of the developers would consider a tract of land for conservation development, even if the landscape is beautiful, if that kind of development is not supported by local code.
- For Chimney Rock, Flower Mound allowed an area zoned for 2 acre lots to be 1 acre lots with the remainder dedicated to green space.
- The available landscape with the vegetation and topography that is appealing and worth conserving.
- And, a market for a development with a higher home price.
Questions

- What factors do you consider in evaluating the profitability of a conservation development?
  - Land value, development costs, margin and market price.
  - Land value, speed of sale, uniqueness of conservation development, supply and demand.
  - Land price, lot count, market price. Conservation developments make sense when you can maintain the lot count and provide green space.
  - Are there buyers that value natural, passive space as opposed to a more managed landscape like a golf course?
How do profile homeowners that want green space in their developments?
  – Everybody wants green space.
  – The real issue is what green space people can afford and natural areas are attractive in this sense because of low maintenance costs.
  – For example, golf course communities are becoming less common developments because of the expense required to operate golf courses.
Questions

- What are the likes and dislikes of homeowners in conservation developments?
  - There aren’t many dislikes although some homeowners take longer to get used to their neighbors in the natural areas - the snakes, skunks and opossums.
  - Oddly enough, because of their attachment to natural areas in their development, they sometimes oppose the development of nearby conservation developments as encroachment.
Questions

- Is maintenance of conservation developments a hassle?
  - No, the HOAs pay an annual assessment for the maintenance of common areas and it hasn’t been an issue at Chimney Rock for 12 years.
  - Natural areas don’t require a lot of maintenance. Storm water is managed on-site by infiltration and conveyance in the natural drainage system.
Questions

Is there equity among developments that are built to accommodate on-site storm water management and off-site conveyance that is within the hydraulic capacity of natural channels and developments that are designed to quickly convey storm water off-site with pipes?

- No, the risk of flooding in the future from constructed storm water conveyance is higher because of the uncertainty of hydraulic impacts in combination with future development in a watershed and the fact that on-site management in conservation developments is essentially biological treatment that improves water quality.
Questions - Equity

- In addition, the two approaches are not equal for providing quality of life for the reasons listed in the first presentation and because developments with green space have stood the test of time through generations.

- Moreover, developments with smaller lots and more common green space are probably more adaptable to the changing demographics in the future with an increasingly older population and proportionally fewer young homeowners with 2.3 children, a dog and 2 cars.
Questions

Would you support local code that encouraged on-site storm water management and in lieu payments for developments that could not provide a baseline level of on-site management?

- The payments would be used to secure green belts, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas that serve the purpose of passive, natural areas and storm water management.
- Conservation easements of the natural areas could be managed by existing Conservation Trusts which would limit the administration cost of this approach by local government.
- Yes, because of the environmental and quality of life benefits of protecting natural areas that would be gained by the community at large.
Another suggestion -
- Development a voluntary association between developers and municipalities and Denton County to use native plants in landscaping.
- Sell it as water saving just like home builders are selling double and triple pane windows as energy savings.
Green space is as much a quality of life benefit as it is an environmental benefit.

The quality of life benefit can help the local economy by attracting an affluent work force and retirees to live in your community.

A voluntary association of local government and builders could advance the use of water-wise landscapes.

Local code sets the table for developers. Local code that encourages on-site storm water management is needed for broader application of these practices.

Adoption of the code by all or most communities in the Lewisville Lake watershed will drive down the cost of and increase the efficiency of implementation.

Protecting more green space in the Lewisville Lake watershed will help to protect the water quality of the lake and its yield capacity as a water supply.
Discussion