

## **Statement from Mark Hart, East Shore South LLC - Regarding Request for IG Review**

We welcome Senator Alexander's request for an Inspector General review of the Newry Mill project.

From day one, we've sought transparency and a fair public process—which is why we discussed our project with the County in numerous meetings for almost two years. It's also why we agreed to the County's request to pursue a Planned Development District (PDD) rather than develop under the existing Control Free District (CFD) zoning. We were told that the PDD process provides far greater community input and certainty.

Unfortunately, some have intentionally and persistently spread false information and erroneous documents. These actions have caused real economic harm—not just to our ability to move forward responsibly, but to the reputations and livelihoods of many people in Oconee County and the Upstate.

For example, some have repeated the fake claim that we proposed 5,200 homes. Our actual draft PDD that we provided to Oconee County in April of last year shows a maximum of 3,154 residential units (page attached) phased in over many years. This isn't a minor discrepancy—it's a 40% exaggeration designed to stoke fears about traffic, schools, and infrastructure costs. Also, copies of an old Master Plan of the property have been published which was known to be from the prior owners, to intentionally mislead the public.

Worse still, obsessions with personal attacks have distracted from the important mandates of Federal Opportunity Zone legislation, the need for middle class housing, and the improvement of Oconee County.

Additional falsehoods have circulated regarding our relationship with Clemson University and UHG and the early discussions involving Oconee County, the Commerce Department and the University. The facts are straightforward and publicly documented, yet speculation and conspiracy theories have drowned them out in some corners.

An independent Inspector General review will separate fact from fiction. We look forward to cooperating fully and to finally setting the record straight.