



## Village Homes & Land Connections

### Description

#### Village Homes & Land, New Urbanism and Hot Springs Village Connections

On January 3, 2017, in the HSV Voice, Jeff Meek wrote **an article about HSV's real estate division, Village Homes and Land** where it was stated that this division was developed with the help of Stephanie Heffer, Director of Placemaking and Development.

#### Placemaking

Wikipedia defines the New Urbanism term "placemaking". **Placemaking** is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being. It is political due to the nature of place identity. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy that makes use of urban design principles. It can be either official and government led, or community driven grass roots tactical urbanism, such as extending sidewalks with chalk, paint, and planters, or open streets events such as Bogotá, Colombia's Ciclovía. Good placemaking makes use of underutilized space to enhance the urban experience at the pedestrian scale." Note to self: "pedestrian scale".

#### Place identity

"... it is argued that **place identity** has also been used to intervene social change and perpetuate oppression from a top-down approach by creating segregated spaces for marginalized communities." (Wikipedia)

#### Director of Placemaking & Development

Heffer is responsible for designing a proactive or take-charge placemaking and development strategy. She identifies strategies for ongoing community development and sustainable growth. In other words, she is the POA New Urbanism developer. Heffer works with department heads and stakeholders, "*to ensure any new value-add projects being considered support the overall development strategy and enterprise goals*

,” Heffer told the Voice. “*Examples of value-add projects would be the outdoor swimming pool, pickleball or community garden.*”

#### **Overlooking cost of projects, networking & team building**

It appears the outdoor swimming pool and pickleball courts support the New Urbanism development strategy. Heffer is responsible for helping to bring about this strategy. According to Wikipedia, **one of the concepts of New Urbanism is that money should not be a consideration for a new project. “If networking and team building have been executed correctly, public sentiment towards the project should be positive enough to overlook its monetary cost.”** Is that what the New Urbanism charettes were about, “team building”? Is that the purpose of the Forward Together Forums and the Meet with the Director’s, to encourage teambuilding and networking? Seems like these forums and meetings are more about pushing the New Urbanism concept and convincing us to get on board. It does seem as if the cost of projects is not a reason for abstention. Should cost be of no concern or not matter?

#### **Director of Sales and Marketing**

Village Homes and Land is now managed by Executive Broker and Director of Sales and Marketing, Cheryl Dunson. Village Homes and Lands is the sole listing agent for Builder’s Guild Homebuilders.

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**HSV Village Homes and Land Winter 2018/2019**

### **Builders Guild**

Builders Guild is comprised of independent home builders who have formed an alliance of sorts with HSV POA. They must list their HSV properties for sale with the HSV POA real estate division, Village Homes and Land.

At the time of this article, the POA alliance is with two Village Builders, Renaissance Homes, and J. D. Harrison Construction. Previously there were three builders which included Steve Acklin whose inaugural house was constructed at 14 Reclamo Place.

In an article in July 2, 2018, Village Voice, Homebuilder, Acklin stated that lot availability is difficult in Arkansas but he realized there are thousands of available lots in the Village. He is very *“pro Hot Springs Village.”*

*“We’re embracing the codes and restrictions placed upon us,”* Acklin told the Hot Springs Village Voice. *“We believe the oversight and direction help us build a better product. The tree conservation plans will make our new build fit into this neighborhood.”*

” New Urbanism is all about codes and restrictions.

Dunson, stated in this same article, that the HSV Builder’s Guild is “*one step above*” and is “*committed to a higher standard of construction*”. As of March 15, 2019, to the best of our knowledge, Acklin is no longer listed on the POA website as being in the Builders’ Guild.

### **Discovery Packages**

Village Homes and Land also handles the “[Discovery Packages](#)” which are sold to interested parties. This is so these parties may “discover” what the Village has to offer.

The Discovery Packages are priced at \$349 and \$299 per couple. The \$349 price includes accommodations of your choice from two locations. The first is [Garden Homes, Mount Carmel Community](#) at the Village. The second is at [The Arlington Resort Hotel and Spa](#) in Hot Springs.

For this low price, included is one round of golf, one dinner for two at one of our fine restaurants in the Village, access to the tennis and pickleball courts and the Village fitness center. An optional guided tour by one of the POA – Village Homes and Land real estate agents or a property owner is also included.

### **Discovery Packages great in theory**

For non-golfers, the price is \$299 per couple. This package includes everything in the \$349 package, except for golf. These prices include all taxes and fees. Either package is a very good deal for a fun and inexpensive three-day getaway to what we consider to be the most beautiful and pristine location in the country. As we reside in Hot Springs Village, we know this community is a jewel and think the Discovery Packages are a great idea in theory. There does seem to be a concern about Return on Investment (ROI). Village Homes and Land is selling a mini vacation package of sorts in hopes they will attract buyers.

We recommend the tour, even if you are not interested in buying a property here right now because the Village has a lot to offer. “Discovering” all of it on your own would be difficult unless you have a week or more as we have 12 lakes, 9 golf courses, 30 miles of hiking trails and so much more. In addition, we also believe when you see what a jewel we are, you will want to return.

It would be great if the Discovery Packages could be offered by the entire HSV real estate community. Doing this would be beneficial to both the Village POA and the local realtors.

### **New Urban Connections**

The POA worked two years to get the real estate division, Village Homes and Land, up and running. In order to accomplish this they put in place geographic information system data, (GIS). The “POA is also working closely with New Urban Connections, a Virginia-based company that works with communities wanting a sales force and a model business plan.”

According to Heffer, in January 2017, New Urban Connections was/is our marketing company. They provide a marketing and sales plan which is specifically designed to the individual customer. New

Urban Connections also plans, budgets and executes the marketing and sales plan.

New Urban Connections is a New Urbanism company that works with New Urbanism communities to develop a marketing and sales strategy, plan and budget. From their website, “Connecting people to great Main Street neighborhoods is the role of New Urban Connections, a sales and marketing consulting service for developers that specialize in creating special places based on the principles of New Urbanism.”

#### **Connecting the dots**

New Urban Connections helped create places like [Storrs Center](#), Mansfield, Connecticut and [The Village at Hendrix](#), Conway, Arkansas. Dunson previously worked with New Urban Connections in The Village at Hendrix. The Village at Hendrix is a DPZ project. DPZ is named for Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, a husband and wife New Urbanism team. According to the [Atlantic](#), Duany is “the father of New Urbanism”.

New Urban Connections worked with Max LeMarchant, real estate Developer, at New Amherst. New Amherst is located in the historic town of Coburg, Ontario, Canada. LeMarchant, a proponent of New Urbanism worked closely with DPZ to design New Amherst. Furthermore, he attended the DPZ charettes here in HSV and owns 4 properties in HSV. LeMarchant appears to be working with the CEO. His email to the CEO alluded to this. Possibly, LeMarchant was in the Village as early as 2015 and met with David Twiggs and Heffer. Twiggs handed over HSV to Nalley saying “*he cannot be a developer and a general manager.*”

#### **Sparkfire Branding**

**Sparkfire Branding** developed the website for National Town Builders Association. They designed the [HSV POA website](#), “[Explore the Village](#)” and our “pocket” marketing brochures. Sparkfire Branding is a member of NTBA. Heffer is quoted on Sparkfire Branding website, “*The team at SparkFire have been amazing partners, and provided a unique insight for marketing and rebranding Hot Springs Village to be competitive in the private community real estate market. We couldn’t have asked for a more professional and patient marketing firm to support us in our rebranding.*”

[National Town Builders Association](#) (NTBA) is a New Urbanism organization. Furthermore, Nalley, LeMarchant, Heffer, DPZ, and Sparkfire Branding are members. NTBA is a “town and urban developer association that encourages the development of town centers. They promote retail development in “New Urban Environments: Planning for Success through Good Design, Place-Making, and the Right Tenant Mix.”

#### **Proposed amendment changes**

There are many connections with New Urbanism and Hot Springs Village. One example of this is Village Homes and Land. Director of Placemaking and Development is another example. New Urbanism appears to be strongly woven in the fabric of the Village. CCI was a fly in the ointment to the New Urbanism development plans with those “pesky” easements. The proposed amendment changes were needed to fully implement their plan and take away CCI’s rights as HSV Developer. And now you know.

(Edited to add as there seems to be some confusion. CCI is the DEVELOPER OF HSV.)

Written by [Cheryl Dowden](#), March 15, 2019

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