

Trying for a good fit

Parkside Development's Parish Park tries to proper size houses, not just downsize

BY MINDY TATE
EDITOR

Home builder Randy Chastain sees it not as downsizing, but proper sizing as he makes plans to build Parish Park, a 52-home subdivision on a 23-acre site on Downs Boulevard.

The homes in the development will be 1,600 to 1,700 square feet and will all be LEED certified, meaning the homes will be built and operated using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.

This program requires extensive energy and water conservation measures by promoting a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

"Our homes are all front porch traditional architecture. All these homes are LEED certified, so to me as I am a builder, planner and designer ... I have customers in Franklin, Nashville, Mt. Juliet and Huntsville that are all facing the same dilemma. Material costs are all going up much higher than people's salaries and cost of energy is going up a lot faster than people's salaries," said Chastain of Parkside Homes.

"So the livability and the threat to our lifestyle is significant," he said. "What we have to do is take those realities and say how do we design a product in a community that number one, satisfies the city of Franklin and our customer, in terms of aesthetic design and number two, substantiates and improves value in the neighborhood and then third, try to connect it and have interconnectivity and a sense of place that is even stronger than a simple subdivision."

His company has designed copyrighted floor plans that meld energy efficiency with

space planning to offer homes ranging from the mid \$200s to mid \$300,000 range. From there, the company builds all the homes in the subdivision and handles the sale, keeping the bottom line for Parkside, but also the buyer, in line. He is building a similar project, Cambridge Park, on Barnes Road in south Nashville.

Most of his floor plans feature three bedrooms, 2.5 baths, master down with a study loft for 1,700 or 1800 square feet.

"We have worked for two years on the design and it maximizes every inch, so that our customer doesn't waste a single dollar he doesn't have to waste," Chastain said. "Additionally, we are trying to find sites that are always within 15 minutes of where they work, so rather than having to drive to the south end of Maury County to qualify for a home that is in the \$200s to the low \$300s, we want to be able to put them in Franklin so they can be close to Cool Springs or their office in downtown Franklin."

"Our project, Cambridge Park, is 15 minutes from Maryland Farms," he said. Parkside is building the same product in Mt. Juliet at Providence where homeowners can walk to 800,000 square feet of retail or one mile down the road is the Music City Star train station which can bring them into downtown Nashville without getting in their cars.

"What we are trying to do is look at the total costs of home ownership, so it is not just the square foot cost of the house," Chastain said, adding the process has a little bit of social engineering mixed into it.

The site plan for Parish Park includes more than 8 acres for a church and a site for Franklin Classical School, Chastain said, with village greens and open space throughout the development of detached single-family homes.

"We take rising costs of con-



struction, rising costs of energy and take all these costs and we force people into attached products or we say how can we still design a home that satisfies the neighborhood, substantiates value and is able to bring customers into a price point they have been squeezed out of in Franklin? That's our goal. This product was designed specifically to solve those dilemmas," Chastain said.

"What I realized is that all the forces that deal with the price and livability of a home were going against the broad middle and upper-middle class," said Chastain, who feels his development will appeal to a broad range of buyers.

"The immediate users of this

are going to be the Generation X buyer who is very educated ... and is going to respond to the impact of reducing their carbon footprint. They may just be getting married and having household formation or has been living in an apartment complex and doesn't want the same old, same old box somewhere, but can't afford \$800,000 or \$500,000," he said.

"The other buyer, because we have a number of master-down products, we are going to have Boomers who want to control their expenditures and want to say how can I downsize because downsizing is the key word for the next five years. We are downsizing what we eat, what

Parish Park

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we drive. Probably the proper term is propersizing and that is what these homes do," he said.

"This product is nowhere in our marketplace and this product is the most needed," Chastain said. "What my hope is is that we are able to get this project built and executed and everybody sits back and says, 'Man that is pretty good looking stuff.' It is satisfying, it is sustainable, there is an energy builder that is socially responsible and it supports the value of everything around it."

But for Chastain, who has been building homes in Middle Tennessee and other locales for more than 20 years, it is more than just meeting a market demand or a checklist of requirements. He thinks what he has planned at Parish Park is where homebuilding is headed, whether others have to be dragged there kicking and screaming or wake up like he did.

A July 10 community meeting has been set for adjoining property owners to continue to air any concerns they may have, Chastain said. He should know the neighborhood — he lives in nearby Willow Springs and helped develop the first three phases of that subdivision.

"I am very familiar with what their desires are," Chastain said. "We are just going to find a common ground be-

tween what the city wants and our neighbors want. We want it to be aesthetically pleasing.

"I believe that our community is going to really exceed the aesthetics of even Willow Springs. In Franklin, there are several things we have to solve. Number one, we have to solve the neighbors' concern of buffer and traffic, those are all high point issues."

Sudoku Puzzle #1014-M



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