

## “Get your facts straight” or “Does he even live here?”

*-Chris Smithson, Southern Pines native, resident, and Councilmember*

I read with concern Wayne Walker’s letter (“A Bungle By Council”) in the March 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the Pilot. There were several factual errors in the letter, but there are other issues too.

His first error was claiming I “rejected” the Pine Needles Village project. I voted in favor of it. I guess he wasn’t there and didn’t read the Pilot or Fayetteville Observer or my website. I’m not even sure you could say the Council “rejected” the project. A majority voted in favor of it.

Secondly, he claimed I “continue” to “push for a moratorium.” I have been very clear in Council meetings and other forums such as my website and the Pilot’s that my primary concern in the matter is that public hearings be held on the subject. I stated when I voted in favor of holding a hearing that I was unsure of the right way to go but that the people deserved to be heard. Several members of the Council, past and present, have refused to vote in favor of even holding hearings on the subject of a moratorium. While we cannot hold public hearings on every minute aspect of running our Town, this is an issue that deserves public discussion.

Finally, I tried to find a phone number for Mr. Walker so I could give him a call. His letter says he lives in Southern Pines. As best I can tell, he is not listed in any local phone book, county personal property record, or even on the voter lists I have through last October. I finally found some information with the state Board of Elections that indicates he lives in Pinehurst and voted on a provisional ballot in the November election at a Pinehurst precinct. The address he gave to the Pilot is a commercial address on Pinehurst Avenue in Southern Pines. The phone number he gave was a business number. Unless he moved in the last couple of months, he still lives in Pinehurst in Lawn and Tennis. At minimum, he did not provide a residential address to the Pilot.

It may not seem like a big deal that he claimed to live in Southern Pines, but his last sentence makes it matter. He wrote, “Perhaps the town would be better served by a recall vote rather than a moratorium on building.” Now how would it have sounded if this letter suggesting a recall was properly attributed to a Pinehurst resident?

We need dialogue about the issues our community is facing. My home and work numbers are in the phone book. My website [www.ChrisSmithson.com](http://www.ChrisSmithson.com) not only contains contact information, it has a “Local Issues” page where I pretty clearly lay out my thoughts on a multitude of matters, including Pine Needles and the moratorium. I am just about the most accessible elected official out there. If you have questions, comments, or concerns please contact me. If you still want to write a letter to the editor, at least you’ll have your facts straight.

Chris Smithson

Southern Pines Resident and Voter