

SPECIAL MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD AND
BOARD OF ALDERMEN WORKSHOP
AUGUST 1, 2006
TUESDAY - 5:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL

The Planning Board held a special workshop meeting jointly with the Board of Aldermen on Tuesday, August 1, 2006. Planning Board Members present were Dan Wright, Rex Feichter, Lee Bouknight, Gary Sorrells, Marty Prevost, Patrick McDowell and Brooks Hale. Mayor Henry Foy, Alderman Gavin Brown, Alderman Gary Caldwell, Alderman Elizabeth Feichter, Alderman Kenneth Moore, Town Manager Lee Galloway, Town Attorney Woodrow Griffin, Planning Director Paul Benson, Land Development Administrator Byron Hickox and Deputy Town Clerk Freida Rhinehart were also present. Planning Board Chairman Rex Feichter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Proposed Amendments to Hyatt Creek Area Center Land Development Standards Section 154.117

Rex Feichter explained that the meeting is an informational meeting regarding the proposed development at the old Dayco site.

Mr. Feichter asked Mr. O’Nesti of Cedarwood Development if they would be able to come up with a plan that is innovative, resourceful and creative. Mr. O’Nesti then gave a general summary of where the developers are on the project. For the past year and a half they have been working with Town Staff on this large scale commercial project which is not in compliance with the current Land Development Standards. Cedarwood has tried to work with Town leaders to develop an appropriate plan within the framework of the Town’s ordinance.

Mayor Foy stated that all who worked on the Land Use Plan will agree that the biggest part of the plan is landscaping. Landscaping is what has improved the appearance of Waynesville over the last 25 years. Mayor Foy is also concerned about the size of the parking lot. The secret of this project will be the landscaping and the appearance of the development from South Main Street.

Mr. O’Nesti replied that the developers will be meeting with the Community Appearance Commission on Wednesday, August 2 to seek input on local design elements. They are working on preliminary landscape plans, stormwater management and utilities. They will work on making tree islands that will preserve ground level vegetation while creating parking for customers of the stores. Cedarwood will work with local architects and landscape architects.

Marty Prevost said she remembers when the WalMart opened at Lake Junaluska that it almost killed the real estate market in that area. Mr. O’Nesti referred to the heavy ground cover of trees behind the current site between Richland Creek and the 23-74 Bypass. There will also be a greenway behind the center. Ms. Prevost replied that there needs to be articulation and landscaping in the back. Mr. O’Nesti replied that will be taken into consideration.

Libba Feichter has concerns about safety in the parking lots both for pedestrians and drivers. Mr. O’Nesti said that parking areas will be marked properly and accesses will be clearly indicated. Lighting will provide safety at night. There is no parking in the rear of the center except for employees. There will be traffic control, signals, stop signs and all the things that are necessary to

move you around. Ms. Feicher asked about “pedestrian safe” areas. Mr. O’Nesti replied that there will be sidewalks from the front of the buildings all the way out to connecting sidewalks along the streets. There will be 6 inch raised sidewalks with trees planted on each side spaced according to the landscape plan.

Mayor Foy expressed concerns about people walking through the parking lot while drivers are attempting to back out of spaces. Mr. O’Nesti said there will be room to push carts on walkways and there will be cart corrals all over the parking lot.

Lee Bouknight asked about loading zones and delivery areas. Mr. O’Nesti replied that both of these areas will be available. Customer pick up areas will be covered.

Mr. O’Nesti continued that these stores have found ways to better facilitate access and serve customers. The developer’s job is to make sure that the site design is appropriate and that it is easy to get into and out of the stores. He asked for signals at both entrances.

Patrick McDowell asked about current standards for tree islands in parking lots. Mr. Benson replied that every parking space must be within 30' of a tree and the preliminary plan does meet that standard. The proposed 5' x 5' tree pits are a reduction from 8' tree pits currently required. Mr. McDowell asked if this will affect the size of tree that will be placed there and allow it to survive. Mr. Benson said that currently we specify 5' for our street trees and they seem to be thriving. Mr. McDowell also asked if the sidewalks meet Town standards. Mr. Benson replied that the ordinance is very vague about internal pedestrian ways in parking lots. The Board of Adjustment will make the final determination on the site plan based on the finding of fact whether the sidewalks are adequate for this project.

Mr. McDowell then asked if the only things the Planning Board need to consider are the reduction in size of tree pits and moving parking from the rear to the front. Mr. Benson added that the sign ordinance amendment needs to be considered as well and there is the request that internal lanes not be considered as streets. Internal lanes are not normally considered as streets.

Libba Feichter added that parking on the side would be beneficial. Mr. McDowell agreed. Ms. Feichter is concerned about the amount of parking in front of the buildings because it begins to look like all the other big box developments.

Gavin Brown pointed out that there will be outparcels of construction along South Main Street. He said that these buildings with articulation and landscaping will protect the view from South Main Street.

Mayor Foy questioned the size of the 5' x 5' tree pits. Patrick McDowell responded that he would like to see the quantity of tree pits increased rather than the size because this would be more conducive to providing a canopy to cover the asphalt. Mr. Foy said that is why we need a landscape architect to determine the proper distribution of trees.

Marty Prevost asked about how the proposed amendment for a “brownfield” site would affect the decisions to be made. Gavin Brown responded that the “brownfield” designation means that there are certain problems related to contamination that need to be dealt with. Gary O’Nesti added that this will also dictate where buildings can be placed.

Gavin Brown expressed the need to keep South Main Street pedestrian friendly. He is concerned that the construction on the outparcels of this development might interfere with that concept.

Patrick McDowell agreed that he would like to see this corridor develop into a pedestrian friendly setting. He thinks this project is very important, will be an asset to Waynesville and will indicate a vibrant community but it needs to stay in character with the Town’s standards.

Mr. Brown asked why we would want to revise the standards for South Main Street. Paul Benson responded that it is very difficult for buildings outside the Central Business District to meet pedestrian scale articulation. He feels that a 2" change in depth of facade every 4' is rather extreme for large buildings. Probably automobile scale would be more appropriate. Highway scale requires articulation but does not have any specific distance standard so he thinks this might be more flexible. If the buildings seem to lack articulation, we could consider automobile scale as a compromise.

Patrick McDowell asked about the automobile articulation. Mr. Benson responded that automobile articulation requires objects such as windows or a change in the massing of the building every 20'. Mr. Benson further stated that most buildings do not meet the pedestrian standard. Byron Hickox pointed out that articulation every 4' would be too extreme.

Gavin Brown also stated that he does not see the necessity for the proposed large signs. Signs at the entryways are sufficient, but other signs should be much smaller.

Rex Feichter pointed out that we might need to extend the ETJ further up Hyatt Creek.

Mr. Brown also asked if the property across the creek between this development and the by-pass would be land locked if it were purchased. Mr. O’Nesti said there is currently access to this property from Hyatt Creek. Paul Benson stated that the Land Development Standards do support connectivity. It does connect to property to the north. The only thing that has been submitted for review are the text amendments. Mr. O’Nesti said there are number of drawbacks to that piece of property, primarily the fact that it is in the floodway.

Gavin Brown asked about the amendments and why we want to change our standards. Byron Hickox responded that purposely leaving the standards vague allows the Board of Adjustment some discretionary authority to change requirements if necessary. Mr. Brown suggested that developers should probably know exactly what is expected.

Mr. O’Nesti explained that we have a well written ordinance but it is primarily developed around a pedestrian friendly environment. There will need to be some compromise since the issues of large development are not covered in the current Land Development Standards. High quality design elements will be suggested by the Community Appearance Commission.

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Marty Prevost and Libba Feichter both stressed the importance of tying in this development with the rest of the South Main Street District. Mr. O'Nesti agreed. He pointed out that they were attempting to allow green space and are trying to work with the developers and the Town to have this piece of property meet our standards as closely as possible.

Mr. O'Nesti explained that representatives from both Home Depot and WalMart will present their possible designs to Community Appearance Commission to receive input on what the stores should look like.

Brooks Hale asked about trees in front of stores. Part of the design will include trees but they might not be right next to the buildings in order to allow for pedestrian and drop off access to the buildings.

Rex Feichter asked about the greenway project. Both the major retailers are in favor of allowing a greenway space. A good deal of cleanup will have to be done and the site will have to be graded. An easement will be granted and some sort of greenway will be established. The developers are talking with Haywood Waterways about allowing access to the stream.

Patrick McDowell asked how the Aldermen feel about the signs. Gary Caldwell stated that he is in favor of allowing some signage on a smaller scale. He does not want huge signs that can be seen from the bypass. Kenneth Moore said he feels that signs are necessary but does not want to see such large signs since it might present a safety hazard. Mayor Foy said that the buildings will be highly visible so he agrees with Mr. Brown and Ms. Feichter that signs will not be necessary.

Mr. O'Nesti said that signs are always an issue which involve compromise. Waynesville has no requirements for pylon signs. There will be landscaping around such signs and they will be designed in an attractive manner. Mr. O'Nesti indicated that signs are an important part of the design and the developers want the Town's consideration on this matter.

Mr. McDowell then asked Mr. Benson if the businesses on the out parcels would be allowed signage. Mr. Benson responded that his interpretation is that any recorded lot would be allowed to have one freestanding sign. If there is more than one business on a lot, they will have to share one sign. For the internal businesses, they could not have a sign on the road since this would be considered an off premise sign.

Mr. O'Nesti said the reason they have asked for pylon signs is so that the various businesses could be listed on one sign. The pylon signs would be at the two entrances.

Patrick McDowell also asked about signage on buildings. Mr. Benson replied that the requirements in the Hyatt Creek Area Center allows signage to cover no more than 30% of the face of the building.

Joann Pressley asked if there would be a time for public input. Paul Benson responded that there will be at least two other formal public hearings in this process. The Planning Board will make recommendations on text amendments to the Town Board of Aldermen for a public hearing fairly soon. In the near future a site plan will be submitted to go through a public review process also. This Planning Board/Board of Aldermen Workshop Minutes

site plan will go first to the Community Appearance Commission in a public meeting where comments are accepted, then on to the Planning Board at which comments will be taken. Finally the plan will go to a formal meeting of the Board of Adjustment in a public hearing.

Margaret Osondo asked how a store such as WalMart will impact the community and how will the Town address issues such as the increase in poverty, loss of social leaders and local entrepreneurs.

Rex Feichter pointed out that there has been a very marked economic evolution on Main Street over the past 15 years.

Patrick McDowell explained that it is the job of the Planning Board to consider how property is developed rather than to consider what tenants move in.

Becky Johnson asked if we can count on having tenants for the outlying parcels to serve as a buffer for South Main Street. Mr. O’Nesti responded that the developers are still working with occupants for outlying parcels. He is informing tenants that this is a brownfield site and there are restrictions as to where buildings can be constructed.

Roscoe Wells asked if we can get better drawings so that the audience can see what is being proposed.

Mib Medford asked if the developers have traveled outside of Waynesville to see what other communities have done. Some of the new construction in Asheville has many of the features we are looking for here.

A gentleman in the audience asked about the pre-existing contamination of the property. Is there some mandate that it be cleaned. Mr. O’Nesti responded that the developers are working with Haywood Advancement Foundation, the current property owner, and the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources and the water quality people to develop a brownfield agreement. There are a couple of areas that will require mitigation. The responsible party will be involved in this process.

Another individual asked what effect the construction of this new WalMart will have on the current WalMart and other businesses at Lake Junaluska. Mr. O’Nesti said that a large developer owns that site and will most likely re-develop that property.

Philan Medford asked about access to the property from Hyatt Creek Road and South Main. Mr. O’Nesti replied that a traffic study has been done and traffic signalization has been recommended by NCDOT engineers for both intersections. Ms. Medford said that a roundabout would be more efficient.

Rex Feichter asked Mayor Foy if this construction might hasten the widening of South Main Street into Town which has been placed on the Transportation Improvement Plan. Mayor Foy said that he certainly hopes it will. The Town has asked for 3 lanes with a nature strip and sidewalk.

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Adjournment

With no further business, Marty Prevost moved, seconded by Gary Sorrells that the meeting be adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Rex Feichter
Chairman

Freida F. Rhinehart
Secretary