

REGULAR MEETING  
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE  
PLANNING BOARD  
AUGUST 17, 2009  
MONDAY - 5:30 P.M.  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING - 16 S. MAIN STREET

The Planning Board held a regular meeting on Monday, August 17, 2009. Members present were Don Stephenson, Dan Wright, Lee Bouknight, Marty Prevost, Jim Francis and Jon Feichter. Also present were Planning Director Paul Benson and Deputy Town Clerk Freida Rhinehart. Vice Chairman Lee Bouknight called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of June 15, 2009

Dan Wright moved, seconded by Jim Francis, to approve the minutes of June 15, 2009 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Text Amendment - Waynesville Land Development Standards Section 154.131(B)(8)(d)1 - to allow drive-thru facilities for banking operations - Walnut Street Neighborhood District (WS-ND)

Staff Report:

Background:

The Walnut Street Neighborhood District is intended to be an area with a strong residential core surrounded by appropriately designed service and business uses along Walnut and North Main Streets. The district standards are designed to preserve a residential scale, with sidewalks and tree canopy to differentiate the district from surrounding districts which are more urban and commercial.

Requested Amendment:

Basically the applicant is requesting that the wording "Drive-thru facilities are not permitted with any use" be changed to "Drive-thru facilities are permitted only with business, professional and personal service uses".

Business, professional and personal service uses are allowed in the WS-ND only on lots abutting Walnut, North Main or West Marshall Streets. This category of uses includes 35 specific uses listed in Section 154.131(C)(5). Examples of uses in this category that commonly include drive-thru facilities are: banks, dry cleaning services and photofinishing labs.

Staff Recommendation:

There is no specific explanation in the Land Development Standards as to why drive-thru facilities are not permitted in the WS-ND, although the vision/goal statement for that district talks about the preservation of residential character and walkability within the district. Drive-thru facilities do not fit this goal because they tend to promote auto use at the disadvantage of pedestrian access. They encourage people to remain in their automobiles, while at the same time discouraging pedestrian access by increasing the opportunity for pedestrian/auto conflicts making pedestrian access less comfortable and more dangerous.

The staff therefore recommends that the ordinance remain unchanged.

Bob Proctor of Proctor-Hodge Architecture of Cherokee spoke on behalf of Champion Credit Union and Bill Norris, owner of the property in the Walnut Street Neighborhood District. He distributed photographs of the proposed site for Champion Credit Union.

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Paul Benson reminded Planning Board members that any decision made by them would apply to any other similar uses in the Walnut Street Neighborhood District.

Mr. Proctor stated the site on Walnut Street is the former Verizon location. He pointed out other commercial uses in the area as well as two other existing banks with drive-thru windows. Also, some residences have been converted to business uses. He said the primary area for walking is south of Walnut Street. There are sidewalks in most of the Walnut Street area. The shopping center where the credit union will be located is a vehicle driven destination. The nature of the use of the neighborhood will not change. When Verizon was there traffic was very heavy. The addition of Champion Credit Union will probably result in a lower traffic flow than when the building was used by Verizon.

There is a retaining wall between the two entrances to the property. This wall separates the parking area from the sidewalk allowing separation for pedestrians from the traffic flow in the shopping center area. There are two entrances to provide for easier access during rush hour. A banking institution is a good neighbor for this district.

Lee Bouknight pointed out the intersections of Walnut and Cherry and Walnut and Russ have had some accidents in the past. He also has noticed that some pedestrian signs have been added in this district. Mr. Proctor replied that the Town might be willing to add pedestrian crosswalks in the area which might make conditions safer for pedestrians.

Don Stephenson drove the area and said the only problem he might anticipate would be stacking of traffic at certain times. Mr. Benson pointed out this portion of Walnut Street is maintained by the Town and any driveway issues would be addressed by the Public Works Director Fred Baker.

Jim Francis said the volume of traffic should be less of a problem than when Verizon was in the building.

Marty Prevost reminded the Board that any amendment change would affect the entire district. Mr. Benson said the only other financial institutions in the district are First Citizens Bank and Mountain Credit Union both of which already have drive-thru windows. Ms. Prevost stated she felt the allowance of drive-thru facilities should be limited to financial institutions and just for properties that front on Walnut, West Marshall and North Main.

Mr. Bouknight asked about the staff recommendation. Mr. Benson answered that Mr. Baker felt the ordinance should remain unchanged because it might open the door too much to redevelopment and auto use in the district since it is primarily designated for a smaller scale commercial and more residential type uses. However, Mr. Benson feels that since banks are allowed in the district and normally have drive-in windows, that it might be appropriate to allow drive-in windows for financial uses only. This would not open the door to a degree that would cause problems since this is an existing commercial property.

Jim Francis moved, seconded by Dan Wright, to recommend to the Board of Aldermen that Section 154.131(B)(8)(d)1 be amended to allow drive-thru facilities in the Walnut Street Neighborhood District for financial institutions only. The motion carried unanimously.

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Adjournment

With no further business, Dan Wright moved, seconded by Jim Francis, that the meeting be adjourned at 5:58 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

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Lee Bouknight  
Vice Chairperson

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Freida F. Rhinehart  
Secretary