

**MINUTES OF THE
ROCKY MOUNT PLANNING BOARD MEETING
HELD MAY 14, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.
IN THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, GEORGE W. DUDLEY CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Lige Daughtridge (Vice Chairman)
James Robert Davis
Clara Knight
Johnnie Mayo, Jr.
Elaine Williams

MEMEBERS ABSENT

Matthew Sperati (Chairman)
Robert Hudkins

STAFF PRESENT

JoSeth Bocoock, Planning Administrator
William Deaton, Director of Development Services
Stephanie Goodrich, Senior Planner
Brad Kerr, Director of Public Works
Bernetta Smith, Planner

1. Call to Order

The vice chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved by the Board.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes: February 12, 2019

The vice chair presented the February 12, 2019 meeting minutes to the Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Mayo, seconded by Mrs. Knight and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2019 Planning Board meeting with a correction to the date notated in item 3.

4. Development Review

There were no development items on the agenda for review.

5. Zoning Review

5.1 Rezoning Request #05-05-19

At the request of the vice chair, Ms. Smith presented the request for rezoning of the property located near E. Raleigh Boulevard, having PIN 386053381200. The subject site is a single parcel with an area of approximately 54.29 acres, located between Highway 64 and Virginia Street. The southernmost 25 acres of the land is proposed to be rezoned to Office and Institutional 2 (O-I2); while the portion to the north would retain its designation as a Low Density Residential District (R-10). The property is currently undeveloped in a forested, natural state. Immediately west of the site, are single-family dwellings zoned R-10 and Medium Density Multifamily Residential (R-6MFA). To the south is Showers of Blessings Christian Center and Bojangles, which are zoned Commercial Corridor District Conditional Use Overlay District (B-2CU). To the east, across US Highway 64 are forested, natural state parcels zoned R-10. North of the subject site is US Highway 64 and a vacant parcel zoned R-10.

Ms. Smith advised that there have not been any rezoning requests within the immediate vicinity of the subject site since the adoption of the current comprehensive plan.

Ms. Smith stated that the Together Tomorrow: Tier I Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan identifies the subject site as being in the "Southeast Smart Growth Area," noting that the smart growth area is one of three "outward growth" areas – and one of five, when including the "inward growth" areas – selected during the comprehensive planning process. It was identified for "its utility infrastructure and for the newly completed Springfield Road section which provides the crucial impetus for future development." The smart growth areas call positive policies that encourage pedestrian-friendly communities with transportation choices and an intensity of development, for incentive packages and programs to be established to promote development and growth in this planning area. Targeted incentives include: participating financially with developers in the construction of collector streets and major drainage structures, marketing surplus land for private housing, expediting development review and waiving zoning, subdivision and building permit fees, and funding commercial revitalization strategies for façade improvement or rental assistance.

With regards to transportation, Ms. Smith specified that the 54-acre lot is located northwest of the US 64 Bypass (Martin Luther King Jr Highway) and US 64 Alternate (East Raleigh Blvd) interchange. The request is

to rezone approximately 25 acres of the parcel to O&I-2. The property would be accessible from East Raleigh Blvd via an extension of Meadowbrook Road and from Virginia Street as planned as part of the parcel development.

Traffic volumes recorded by NCDOT in 2017 on US 64 Bypass and US 64 Alternate were 41,000 and 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) respectively. US 64 Bypass is designated to be the Future Interstate 87. East Raleigh Boulevard, a five-lane major arterial roadway with a center turn lane, has a practical capacity of 39,000 vpd. The 2017 NCDOT recorded traffic volume on East Raleigh Blvd was 10,000 vpd. There is a sidewalk with curb and gutter on each side. Tar River Transit operates a public transit route on East Raleigh Blvd.

Virginia Street, a two-way collector street with curb and gutter but no sidewalk on the 1600 block, has a practical capacity of 8,000 vpd. The traffic volume on Virginia Street is estimated to be less than 2,500 vpd. Tar River Transit Route 4 serves the Virginia Street and Barnes Street intersection, which is approximately 3,000 feet from the subject property. On Meadowbrook Road, south of East Raleigh Blvd, the traffic volume is 5,300 vpd. The practical capacity of Meadowbrook Road is 11,500 vpd.

Several development possibilities on the 25-acre property exists. One feasible development scenario for the property zoned O&I-2 would be 75% residential and 25% commercial use. Eighteen acres of multifamily housing may support approximately 260 dwelling units and generate 2,300 vehicle trips per day. Seven acres of business development may support a trip generation of approximately 2,000 vehicle trips per day. In this scenario, some 4,300 trips may be expected.

The recommendation from the city's transportation planners is to require a traffic impact analysis (TIA) will be required prior to construction plan approval due to the size and scope of the potential development on the East Raleigh Blvd corridor. Per City standards, road extensions shall be designed to accommodate traffic and fire access.

Ms. Smith stated that the request will result in an increase in zoning intensity of the immediate area. However, this increase in intensity is one that was anticipated by the community during the process to adopt the current comprehensive plan. The O-I2 district is a mixed-use transitional district intended for parcels abutting proposed or existing subdivisions/neighborhoods to serve as a buffer between residential districts and more intensive commercial activities. The O-I2 district allows for office, residential and limited business land uses anticipated to fulfill service and convenience needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Smith advised that per state statutes and city ordinance, notification of this public hearing was sent to adjoining property owners and a notification sign was posted on the subject property. Also, the Planning Board agenda was posted to the City's website.

Staff recommended that the request be forwarded to the Rocky Mount City Council recommending approval. The rezoning request will result in an increase in zoning intensity of the immediate area that was anticipated by the community during the Together Tomorrow: Tier 1 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan adoption process. Ms. Smith concluded her presentation and stated that the applicant was present and available for questions.

The vice chair called for questions/comments from the Board. Mr. Daughtridge requested clarification on the recommendation for fire access on the road extension. Brad Kerr advised that at the time a site development plan is submitted for approval the street improvements would have to be constructed to city standards for traffic and life safety requirements.

The vice chair called for the applicant to speak on the request. Mr. Brian Michot stated he was with the design and engineering firm representing the property owner. He noted that the intent would be to extend Virginia Street and also provide access to the property with an extension of Meadowbrook Road, via an existing deeded easement. Mr. Davis inquired if there was a meeting held with the community in advance of the planning board meeting. Mr. Michot replied that there was a meeting held with residents from the adjacent neighborhood and other individuals representing the property owner; however, he personally was not present.

The vice chair called for questions/comments from the public. Max Avent real estate agent involved with the property transaction, stated that he had personally visited with neighbors near the subject site to share information about the rezoning and stated that he did not come across anyone that was opposed to the request. He noted that the plan is to construct market rate housing that would increase the tax base for the city and county. He stated that the expected scale of development would be unprecedented for the area. Mr. Avent added that the O-I2 is requested to allow for mixed use and due to Raleigh Blvd. being one of six corridors designated for this zoning district. The vice chair recited a list of land uses that are permitted within the O-I2 zoning district.

Elaine Williams asked Mr. Avent if he could state specifically what types of uses are planned. Mr. Avent responded that multifamily dwellings are a near certainty, and the owner is hopeful to open a brand name grocery store. Mr. Michot stated that the multifamily dwellings would serve as a buffer between the commercial and single-family zoning districts adjacent to the subject site.

Leroy Williams, 1501 Harper Street, stated that he is against the proposed rezoning due to the anticipated burden of higher property taxes due to a higher valuation that would come with new development in the neighborhood and the impact it may have on existing residents. He added he is in favor of growth but questioned whether the existing income levels in the neighborhood would allow the residents to support any new businesses in the area.

Guion Davis, 1629 E. Virginia Street, has lived at his property near the subject site since the 1960s. He stated that he is not opposed to the site developing; however, he does not want any development that would result in the value of his property being lowered.

April Johnson, 1612 E. Virginia Street, stated that she is in favor of the request, and noted that with the property already zoned R-10, a developer could apply to build single-family dwellings – market rate, or subsidized – without consequence from the adjacent neighborhood.

Joseph J. Ray, Sr., 1625 E. Virginia Street, stated that he is a long-term resident of the adjacent neighborhood and former member of the city's planning board, noting that he understands the decision-making process the board is faced with but trusts they'll use their best judgement in making their recommendation to city council. He added that he is neither in favor or opposition of the request but is concerned that high end development could lead to area residents being priced out of their community.

Lea Henry, spoke as an agent of the current property owner (NC Community Development Initiative). She stated that her work has been to encourage developers to consider building on the property in light of the new employment opportunities that are expected in the region. She stated that a lot of effort has been put into developing the site by her agency and the Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation, which owns the adjacent Crossing at 64 property. She believes that the rezoning would make way for the first market rate multifamily development within the Edgecombe County portion of Rocky Mount in 20 years and potentially bring relief to the food desert in the area if a much needed grocery store is opened.

The board summarized that they have to consider that any use allowed in the proposed zoning district could be operated on the site. In addressing the concern mentioned by the speakers, they noted that—based on the information that the applicant has presented at this time—it would be expected property values in the area would rise and result in additional tax revenue for local government services.

Board action: A motion was made by Mr. Mayo, seconded by Ms. Williams and carried with Mr. Davis, Mr. Daughtridge, and Mrs. Knight to recommend to the Rocky Mount City Council the approval of the request to rezone the subject site, from R-10 to R-10 and O-I2, on the basis that the rezoning request will result in an increase in zoning intensity of the immediate area that was anticipated by the community during the Together Tomorrow: Tier 1 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan adoption process.

6. Other Items for Review

There were no other items for review.

7. Planning Review

There were no planning review items.

8. Other

There were no other review items.

9. Items from the Planning Board

There were no items from the Planning Board.

10. Items from the Secretary

Will Deaton advised it is probable there will be items for review at the next scheduled planning board meeting.

11. Next regular meeting

The next regular meeting of the Rocky Mount Planning Board is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rocky Mount Planning Board
William Deaton, Secretary