

May 8, 2013 @ 1:00 PM
Wendell Economic Development Committee
Downtown / Town Branding Workshop

The Wendell Economic Development Committee Downtown/Town Branding Workgroup was held on Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at the Wendell Community Center. Present at the meeting were Zunilda Rodriguez, Barry Perry, Town Clerk Jonnie Driver, and Commissioner Virginia Gray. Arriving later in the meeting was Paul White, Joanne Wright and Kyle Williams. Lesia McKenzie, Latisa Vereen, Donald Brown and Edward Morrell were not present.

Planning Director Zunilda Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

Public Comment

There were no public comments received at the meeting.

Minutes of the April 10, 2013 meeting.

- ◆ A quorum of the committee members was not present at the beginning of the meeting. The minutes were not voted on.

Draft Minutes of April 24, 2013

- ◆ Minutes were not reviewed due to a quorum not being present.

Review and discussion of the following items

- ◆ Small Business Incentives
Ms. Rodriguez stated she had been checking to see what State incentives might be available. She said in most cases the incentives were for municipalities that have a population of 10,000 or more. There is very little funding and might be something to think of long term.

Mrs. Rodrigues stated the committee talked about revisiting the fee scheduled as to what fees you have to pay when you start a business in Wendell.

She stated we also talked about trying to create incentivized zones for DMX, MI, CMX.

Mr. Perry stated he did not think fees made the difference in whether a business comes to Wendell, but more so the regulations. He said businesses expect to pay fees, because nothing is free. He stated not being able to put up a sign that directs people to my business being on a corner causes a lot of issues.

Mr. Perry said Wendell tends to make ethical decisions and things have changed and we need to be more fluid on things.

Commissioner Gray agreed. She said in the past there have been some businesses that wanted to come to Wendell and were not allowed.

Zunilda suggested that uses might need to be added to the UDO that would allow for different businesses.

Mrs. Wright said she remembers when someone wanted to open a sports bar downtown and that was not allowed. She said she didn't know what the difference in a Sports Bar and Restaurant that sells alcohol would be.

Commissioner Gray suggested making a list of things that other town have that Wendell does not to make changes.

Ms. Rodriguez stated they also talked about looking into the privilege license fees and having a reduction in some areas.

Mrs. Wright said I don't think fees are the problem; I think it is the obstacles.

Mr. Perry agreed. He said that time is money to a business and the amount of time it takes to get an answer needs to be shortened.

Ms. Rodriguez stated we talked about redoing the process, reducing the fees, but it does not have a lot of additional special uses and I would like to add that to make those modifications before going to the board of commissioners with it. I will email the draft to you for review and then I will take it to the Board.

Zunilda stated that the committee had talked about the 1:00 pm not being a good time for the workgroup meeting and also that we need to have a full committee meeting on May 22, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. She said REDUS would be coming to the May 22nd special economic development committee meeting to give an update on Wendell Falls.

Mr. White said everything depends on Wendell Falls; we will not get more businesses until Wendell Falls takes place.

Mr. White asked the group if they were all in favor of the Wal-Mart coming to Wendell. It was a consensus of the workgroup present that they were in favor of the Wal-Mart, even though Mrs. Wright stated she would like to see a high end store come in. Mr. White said if we are for the Wal-Mart coming to Wendell, we need to attend the next Board meeting on May 13th make the board aware of our feelings.

Ms. Wright asked if Wendell could get an ABC Store. Mr. White said yes, but it will not be downtown, it will be somewhere out around Martin Center because of the traffic that Sheetz pulls off of the interchange.

Mr. White said that only being able to have 20% parking in front of the stores is killing Wendell.

Zunilda stated the committee has also talked about creating a message for our Downtown and we need to work on creating an outline for the Downtown. She said the City of Mesa in Arizona had included everything in a model that we need to create a message to attract business to Wendell. She said we need to think about what our Downtown is and how we want to market it.

Ms. Rodriguez asked the workgroup what they consider downtown. Ms. Wright said I think of Downtown as more than just Main Street. She said that I am thinking more from Wendell

Elementary School to the downtown main street area. Paul White noted that it should include some of the commercial centers such as Knott Square for example.

Mr. White said we need to define our core and take care of it. If you build up Martin Center and Wendell Falls, then our Downtown becomes a destination point.

Zunilda said we have all the pieces, but how do we pull it all together, which is the key question for this group to examine. She said Wake County has funds available to help us with the printing of material for marketing purposes. Zunilda said she would like to get some suggestions from the committee to take to the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. White stated we need to send a message and the Title of Economic Developer sends a positive message rather than a regulation. He stated he would like to see Ms. Rodriguez with the title of Economic Developer rather than Planning Director.

Mr. Perry stated the committee needed a business liaison to work with people on how to start their business.

Ms. Rodriguez stated she would put something together and bring it back to the workgroup.

Mr. Perry stated that 60 percent of the people in the United States shop in Wal-Mart and that is what shoppers are looking for. When Wal-Mart comes other businesses come with it.

Zunilda stated the median income has gone up in the past 5 years and we could show those numbers which might help some.

Ms. Wright said she was thrilled that AT&T has been in town this week and they come into the store and talked with us about the mobile service we get things are a little better.

Mr. White asked Ms. Rodriguez if the workgroup would have something to vote on at the joint meeting on May 22nd? Ms. Rodriguez replied yes. She stated that at the May 22nd meeting the committee would also make a decision on a Chairperson for the economic development committee. It would also include an opportunity to review and vote on action items being produced from the workgroup. She encouraged everyone to attend the meeting. She identified the following follow-up deliverables the workgroup discussed:

- Develop list of SUP uses that could be modified to permitted uses or additions to SUP for certain zoning districts
- Identify what other uses other jurisdictions typically have in a CMX, DMX or MI zoning district
- Look into what applications could be considered for staff administration
- Identify which chapters in UDP could be modified
- Identify point of contact as business liaison for the Small Business Resource Center when launch
- Provide sample streamlined downtown façade grant program application for review in the future

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

May 10, 2013 @10:00 A.M.

Wendell Economic Development Committee

Corporate Development/Shovel Ready Sites Meeting

The meeting of the Corporate Development/Shovel Ready Sites meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. at the Wendell Community Center. Present were Donald Brown, Paul White, Ed Morrell, Zunilda Rodriguez, Commissioner Virginia Gray and Town Manager Teresa Piner.

The meeting was called to order by Zunilda Rodriguez at 10:00 a.m.

Draft Incentive Policy Outline

- ◆ Mr. White and Mr. Brown agreed that it was a good idea to show desire to welcome business. Mr. Morrell commented that this group was to work on industry. He said the small reduction of fees will not impact or significantly attract an industrial company to come to town.
- ◆ Mr. Brown stated the companies that we are looking to bring to Wendell, this reduction of fees would not bring in a company with jobs. He would like to see a more streamlined process for businesses to open in Wendell and our development review process should be revisited.
- ◆ Mr. Morrell recommended breaking out incentive policies between downtown and industry as recommended by Wake County Economic Development. He said there is a big difference between downtown businesses and large industries. He said he wanted to focus on the “New Business” section of the draft Incentive Policy for industries.

Economic Development Parcel Strategizing

- ◆ Mr. Morrell suggested that the façade requirements for metal industrial buildings on sides and rear of buildings needed to be reviewed.
- ◆ Commissioner Gray said we need to look at the definition of metal in the UDO.
- ◆ Mr. Morrell stated that we need to do something specific – our plant is a dot on a map – 10 acres and we employ 250 people. He said let’s get an inventory list and send letters to owners to see if they are interested in selling their property. He said it would be easy for an existing business to move and expand in Wendell and we could get a list of vendors from Siemens.
- ◆ Mr. Brown said the inventory list could be targeted to suppliers of existing industry, particularly those in the region. We need to have incentives in place before we go to them. Mr. Morrell agreed as long as we have separate policies. He said the beauty of talking to Siemens is that they know what their vendors need.
- ◆ Commissioner Gray said she agreed that the administrator needs to have more flexibility in working with businesses. As a group we need to be able to move faster when talking to a business or industry.
- ◆ Mr. Brown said we need inventory list of available properties include shell buildings that are available for sale and lease in Wendell. The town will acquire a list for review by the committee.

The next meeting of the Corporate Development/Shovel Ready Sites Workgroup will be Wednesday, May 22, at 5:30 pm at the Community Center in Activity Room A. The 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM meetings will be canceled on that day. Mr. Joe Lassiter or Bill Honaker from Wells Fargo will be there to update the full economic development committee on Wendell Falls.

At a future meeting Jim Cauley, Town Attorney, will come to discuss Wendell Group of 100 concept and to answer any questions that Mr. White has discussed with the workgroup thus far.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

May 22, 2013 @ 5:30 P.M.

Wendell Special Economic Development Committee Meeting

The Corporate Development/Shovel Ready Sites Workgroup and Downtown/Town Branding Workgroup held a joint special Economic Development meeting on Wednesday, May 22, 2013 at the Wendell Community Center. Present were Barry Perry; Kyle Williams; Lesia McKenzie; Edward Morrell; Paul White; Joe Ann Wright; Zunilda Rodriguez; Manager Teresa Piner; Finance Director Butch Kay; Mayor Timothy Hinnant; Commissioner Virginia Gray, Lucius Jones and Eastern Wake News reporter Andy Specht.

Planning Director Zunilda Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Comments

There were no public comments made.

Presentation – Wendell Falls Update

Mr. Joe Lassiter of Wells Fargo made the following statements:

- Updated construction drawings recently made
- Wendell Falls has gone out to BID; Final selection process for BID winner
- Timeline after selection of BID is up to the bank and 3 elected developers
- Time to get parkway finished before December
- Confident it will move forward
- Bank has been supportive in moving it forward
- Noted the Town needs to have patience

Mr. White asked who will pay for parkway. Mr. Lassiter replied if starting on the Parkway right away, the Wells Fargo Bank will pave the parkway. If the parkway is built after closing, the developer will pave the parkway. He said he had impressed upon the bank the need to move forward due to calendar and seasonal timing.

Mr. White noted that the Economic Development Committee wanted to help Wells Fargo Bank.

Mr. Lassiter noted that the bank has internal controls/regulations regarding the highway movement; however, information on infrastructure age has been provided.

Mr. White asked about the sewer and stated it needed to be fixed. Mr. Lassiter noted that is a minor issue. Some parcels would be impacted. Sewer lines would be appreciated.

Mr. Perry asked where are Wells Fargo contacts located – are they regional? Mr. Lassiter stated that his contacts are in Charlotte, California/West Coast. Mr. Lassiter noted local representatives are understanding of local issues on the ground.

Mr. Perry asked what is the approximate scope of the project - \$10, \$20, \$30 million? Mr. Lassiter could not comment on the cost.

Mr. Perry said he would like for the Economic Development Committee to stay informed. He said Wake Med is still interested in coming to the area. Mr. Lassiter stated it would be the new developer's responsibility to engage Wake Med who has expressed interest.

Mr. White stated he hoped Wake Med was being informed. He stated there was also interest in locating a police/fire/rescue facility at that site. Mr. Lassiter stated that would be the developer's choice on whether they decide to keep it.

Mr. White asked would there be a master developer or would it be sold in pieces. Mr. Lassiter noted that most bids were master developers.

Mr. White asked what was the value of the parcels. Mr. Lassiter noted there were a few parcels they are looking to get into the market as quickly as possible, because there is a shortage of lots in Wake County.

Mr. Perry asked if Wells Fargo was looking to remain involved in the project. Mr. Lassiter stated Wells Fargo may not remain as an equity partner in the project.

Mr. Williams stated Wells Fargo has mortgages on 1 out of every 5 mortgages in North Carolina.

Mr. White stated the Economic Development Committee would like to get involved in the future and to please keep us informed of any interests.

Mr. Morrell asked if the bank is looking for a Master Planner or separate developers. Mr. Lassiter replied he had offered different strategies over the years. He stated it would make sense to have a master developer considering the size and scope being so large here. He has asked them to look at continuity in signage, colors, marketing, etc. is needed. It really has to be done under one umbrella. Mr. Morrell said he sympathizes with the bank in its current situation. Mr. Lassiter said it is not a superficial process that the bank goes through.

Mr. Morrell said the bank needs a master developer to see the project through. Mr. Lassiter said when going to bid, the developer has to be pre-qualified for capital and show a track record. They have to prove they have equity in place during the due diligence process.

Mr. White asked who deals with the aspects? Mr. Lassiter noted East Deal Secured market the project, and they are an international company.

Mr. Perry asked what could stand in the way or the project moving forward. Mr. Lassiter noted that he has a muted and positive answer, and would put his money on it. He said any number of geopolitical events can create a road block in the future. He stated the interest has been higher than before and continued low mortgage, steady job growth and low supply of available lots has improved since last year.

Mr. Perry asked what is the project makeup? Mr. Lassiter stated full build out calls for 4,000 homes with \$2 million commercial as a maximum. He said he doesn't believe the maximum could be achieved or desired. He said they are looking to produce quality and not quantity.

Mr. White asked if the sewer runs through the commercial area. Mr. Lassiter noted yes that it would be mixed use, which would likely occur in the middle/late stages. He said there is a variety of ways to address connection issues.

Mr. Lassiter said he had provided an overview of what has occurred over the last year and that the bank was a large organization.

Mr. Perry provided a return welcome. Mr. Lassiter noted that he would be agreeable and could potentially bring the developer to a future meeting.

Mr. Morrell asked Mr. Lassiter what his role or job was. Mr. Lassiter stated he was a contractor for Wells Fargo and he managed this project. He said this project is very complex and has unique characteristics and the bank was not equipped to manage the project. He stated he works closely with his Asset Manager.

Mr. White asked what is REDUS. Mr. Lassiter stated REDUS is an entity of Wells Fargo that owns many properties in Wake County. He said technically I work for REDUS.

Mr. Perry asked what is project relativity. Mr. Lassiter noted that projects of this size are rare now, but several years ago there were several. He stated you will probably have a better product now than you would have had before.

Mr. Morrell asked what happened to the other projects. Mr. Lassiter said some were developed, some land banked; and some sold.

Mr. White stated that another entrance to the downtown was needed and the parkway opening is so important to Wendell. Mr. Lassiter stated he understood the problem.

Mr. Lassiter noted that there is often a quiet time during this process.

Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Mr. Morrell nominated Zunilda Rodriguez to be Chairperson. He noted that she has been serving well in this de facto position over these few weeks and sees no reason for a change. Mr. Perry seconded the motion. All voted unanimous for the nomination.

Mr. Perry nominated Paul White to be Vice Chairperson. He noted that he would serve as a good spokesperson for the committee before the Board of Commissioners. Lesia McKenzie seconded the motion. All voted unanimous for the nomination.

Draft Minutes:

- a. April 24, 2013 – Downtown Branding Workgroup. There were no comments for revisions. All voted unanimously for approval.
- b. May 8, 2013 – Downtown/Town Branding Workgroup. There were no comments for revisions. All voted unanimously for approval.
- c. May 10, 2013 – Corporate/Shovel Ready Sites Workgroup. There were no comments for revisions. All voted unanimously for approval.

Wendell Meeting Schedule

The member would like to keep the revised meeting schedule as provided and revisit it in three months for any needed modifications.

Wayfinding Signage

- Fundraising could be done
- Matching funds should be identified
- Feel it is important

Downtown Façade Grant Program

- Economic Development Committee wants to be proactive in outreach for this program
- Think there is no value
- Need to find properties for the program

Small Business Incentive Policy

- Gross sales under \$1.5 million and/or under 15 employees
 - Restaurants
 - Specialty shops

Large Business Incentive Policy

- Offer Incentive grants – may be hit
- Need to provide examples for the group

The next meeting of the Corporate Development/Shovel Ready Sites workgroup will be June 5, 2013 from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM and the Downtown/Town Branding workgroup will meet on June 5, 2013 from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.