

Planning Board Meeting – July 14, 2015 Minutes

Members Present: Harold Broadwell, Ruth Van der Grinten, Errol Briggerman, Ashley Anderson, Charles Kramer, Judy Silver, Gilda Wall, Kathe Schaecher,

Members Absent: Billy Bryant

Staff Present: Planning Director David Bergmark, Planner Allison M. Rice

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mr. Broadwell called the meeting to order.

2. Welcome and Recognition of Guests

Mr. Broadwell welcomed the guests. He addressed the audience, saying that this was not a regular Planning Board meeting, in that it was not scheduled for any kind of action. He said there were several new members, so this meeting was being held primarily as training for them. He said Mr. Bergmark added an item so that the Board could have an additional opportunity to discuss the transportation plan.

Mr. Broadwell said the public was welcome to attend the meeting and that he was glad they were here, but that this would not be a typical Planning Board meeting.

3. Chairman and Board Members' Comments

Mr. Broadwell asked members of the Board to introduce themselves for the benefit of the new members.

There were no additional comments from the Board.

4. Adjustment and Approval of Agenda.

Ms. Silver made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Briggerman seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Comments

No members of the public had signed up for public comment. Mr. Broadwell said he was always willing to allow members of the public to speak, but the Board needed to get training done.

A member of the public asked if he could ask a question from the back of the room. He asked, if this was a training session, how could someone come at a later date and add an item that could be acted on. Mr. Broadwell said that there would be no action on any item of the agenda that night. He said that the agenda is always open for adjustment and amendments. He said this was a special-called meeting, and by state law they were required to give notice of that if there would be a quorum present and if business was being conducted. Mr. Broadwell said the public was certainly welcome to stay and hear what the Board heard.

Mr. Bergmark said that a public information was held on May 29th. He said a few members had asked at the information session for additional time to discuss the Transportation Plan before the regular meeting. He said they had already planned on doing the training, so he decided to use that as an opportunity to allow the Planning Board the chance to discuss the Plan and to brainstorm. He said the public was welcome, but that it was not set up the same way as the public information session on May 29th at the

Community Center, which was designed to educate the public and to get their feedback. He said they would be set up to explain more about the plan at the meeting the following Monday – maps would be out and the consultant who drew up the plan would be present to answer any questions. He said he encouraged the public to attend that meeting to learn more about the plan and to give their opinions.

The gentleman again asked from the back of the room how people were notified other than the website. Mr. Bergmark said that a notification was posted in the newspaper and at Town Hall. The gentleman from the back of the room said that he didn't get the newspaper and that he doesn't do the internet. He said that notifications used to be posted in front of the fire station. He said that the average person his age didn't have much way of being notified of these meetings. Mr. Bergmark said that there was a notification in the paper, there was an article in the newspaper written by Johnny Whitfield, a message was posted on the message board, and there was a posting on the website and on facebook about the public information session on the 29th. He said there was more of an effort to spread the word for the public information session because that meeting was more designed for public interaction and feedback. He said that the regular Planning Board meetings are always at the same time, on the third Monday of every month at 7pm.

Mr. Broadwell asked out of curiosity, how the guests found out about that night's meeting. The gentleman in the back of the room said through person-to-person phone calls. Mr. Broadwell said they were glad they were here. The gentleman in the back of the room said it didn't seem that way since they weren't told about the meeting. He asked why he wasn't told about the meeting. Mr. Broadwell said he didn't know his name or where he lived. The gentleman said he wasn't notified about the public information session. He said he used to get notices in the mail. Mr. Broadwell asked if he lived in the Town of Wendell. The gentleman said he did not.

Mr. Bergmark said that all of this was preliminary. He said there would be a public hearing with the Town Board.

6. Discussion, Consideration, and Action on the Following Items:

Item 6A – Planning Board Training

Mr. Bergmark gave the Planning Board a description of the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Board, as well as an overview of basic planning theories and concepts. Mr. Bergmark also discussed the code of ethics and the criteria used for the Planning Board to make their decisions.

Ms. Anderson asked who the TRC representative was from the Planning Board. Mr. Bergmark said it was generally the Chairman, but that it didn't have to be. Ms. Van der Grinten asked for a copy of the presentation. Mr. Bergmark said that the UDO would be the most useful thing to the Board to become familiar with.

Item 6B - Discussion on an Updated Transportation Plan for the Town of Wendell.

Mr. Bergmark said that not a lot had changed since the public information session. He said that there were a few changes as a result of some comments made at the information session. The first is a change on Wendell Blvd in the downtown area, which originally called for a 3 lane road. That was updated to be a two lane undivided road. He said the other change was to include a stronger connection from Selma Road back to Eagle Rock Road.

Mr. Bergmark said that another thing that was discussed was the impact on development requirements. He said that Knightdale has a family subdivision ordinance that was helpful. He said Wendell already had one, but that Knightdale's was a little more structured and did not only apply in the RA district. If the property owner went through this process, they would be able to forgo the road development requirement. Ms. Anderson pointed out that if the property was under 10 acres, they would still be sacrificing the tax benefits of the rural agricultural zoning. Mr. Broadwell said that tax benefit was set by the county. Ms. Anderson said that was also prohibitive, since over time, taxes on that half acre home would cost more than it would cost to improve the road. Mr. Bergmark said that if they were building themselves something related to the farm, it would be subject to the bonafide farm standards and would be exempt. He said if they were subdividing out .5 acres to build a home, then it wouldn't be part of the farm anymore and would be taxed as such.

Ms. Anderson asked if a person was building a house on a large piece of property in Wendell that previously had not house one it, if they would have to pay to develop the road along their property. Mr. Bergmark said they would, or pay a fee-in-lieu. He said that he would have to check, but that the property owner could probably subdivide their piece from the rest of the property, and only be responsible for developing the road along that smaller piece. He said that if the property was a family conveyance, he agreed that the town shouldn't be heavy-handed. Mr. Bergmark said he didn't mind adding a provision saying that if there was no home on a large existing piece of property, then building a new home would not trigger the road development requirement.

Mr. Broadwell said that Knightdale's family conveyance restricts who the owner may convey the property to after it had already been conveyed once, and explicitly stated in the deed. Ms. Anderson said she didn't have a problem with this. She said she just wanted to be aware that these weren't just lines on the map, that these could impact real people with fixed incomes. Mr. Bergmark said he was suggesting these changes to address those concerns.

Ms. Van der Grinten said she had a couple of questions. She asked first, if their concerns would be addressed on the maps they would be receiving on Monday. She asked specifically about her concerns about Wendell Falls Parkway. Mr. Bergmark said the map changes he had mentioned before had already been updated on the maps they were looking at. Mr. Briggerman said they wouldn't be able to widen the road at the bridge because it would be too expensive to widen the existing bridge.

Ms. Anderson said, speaking of bridges, she understood that the bridge on Old Battle Bridge Road was not a priority on DOT's list. She asked, when improvements were made to the Battle Bridge Road intersection with Highway 64, if they were made in the hopes that the bridge would be reopened. She asked, if development were to occur on either side of the bridge, if that would encourage DOT to do something with that bridge. Mr. Bergmark said it could, but there would have to be a discussion with DOT when someone was looking to develop it. Mr. Bergmark said that as development increases in Wendell Falls, he would think that the priority of that bridge would be pushed up, since access to emergency services would become more important with higher populations.

Ms. Anderson said she had a question for the engineer at the last meeting about who is responsible for the cost of building a bridge, since she didn't remember ever seeing a developer build one, aside from Wendell Falls. She said the engineer had said at the last meeting that there would need to be three new bridges based on the current map proposal. She asked if, as the plan was currently written, the developer was solely responsible for putting in a bridge. Mr. Bergmark said yes, if the developer owned the property on both sides of the water. Otherwise they were responsible for half the cost of the bridge. Ms. Anderson said she would like to know what the anticipated costs of these bridges would be, since that would be a lot to ask a developer to pay. Mr. Bergmark said that Mike Sorasky from AMT was working on a rational nexus, that would essentially say that the developer was only responsible for the cost of road infrastructure that equaled up to 10% of their overall development costs. Ms. Anderson said that would disincentivize people from paying to put in nicer developments. She said this would be money taken away from the landowner, since developers would take the costs of the improvements from what they paid the landowners when buying the land. Mr. Bergmark said possibly, although a bridge would also make the land that much more valuable, since it would give that area better access.

Ms. Anderson said developers should pay for roads, but that bridges were entirely too much to expect them to build. She said that would put too much on the property owners and that not every developer was like Newland. She used Edgemont Landing as an example. Mr. Bergmark said developers pay for bridges fairly regularly, and that DR Horton was paying for a bridge to be put in in Wake Forest. He said that developers are often not required to put in bridges until after a percentage of the homes had been put in, to allow density to build and to give the developer some funds, as long as another access point is available. Ms. Anderson said she would like to see this for herself, to see how large the development was. Mr. Bergmark said that he would try to find some other examples. Ms. Anderson said she would also like to see a list of estimates for bridge costs, keeping in mind that they were a lot of variables.

Mr. Briggerman asked what triggered this transportation plan update. Ms. Schaecher asked when the current transportation plan was approved. Mr. Bergmark said that it was adopted in 2006, and that it wasn't the first transportation plan, that there had been updates for years and years.

Ms. Anderson had questions about how much the developers had to abide by where the roads were placed according to the map.

7. Adjourn to Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Ms. Silver made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Briggerman seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.