

DRAFT OF MINUTES PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION BY THE GREENVILLE PLANNING
AND ZONING COMMISSION
June 21, 2011

The Greenville Planning and Zoning Commission met on the above date at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Mr. Allen Thomas - *
Mr. Dave Gordon - * Ms. Linda Rich - *
Mr. Tony Parker - * Mr. Tim Randall - *
Mr. Godfrey Bell, Sr. - * Mr. Hap Maxwell - *
Ms. Shelley Basnight - * Mr. Doug Schrade - *
Mr. Brian Smith - *

The members present are denoted by an * and the members absent are denoted by an X.

VOTING MEMBERS: Gordon, Parker, Bell, Basnight, Rich, Randall, Maxwell

PLANNING STAFF: Merrill Flood, Community Development Director; Chris Padgett, Chief Planner; Andy Thomas, Planner; Valerie Paul, Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Dave Holec, City Attorney; Tim Corley, Engineer; Daryl Vreeland, Transportation Planner; Jonathan Edwards, Communications Technician

MINUTES: Motion was made by Mr. Bell, seconded by Ms. Rich, to accept the May 17, 2011 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Rezoning

Request by V-SLEW, LLC for a preliminary plat entitled "River Bend, Sections 1, 2 & 3". The property is located north of NC Highway 33 at its intersection with L.T.Hardee Road and west of Rolling Meadows Subdivision. The proposed development consists of 145 lots on 31.565 acres.

Mr. Andy Thomas, Planner, delineated the location of the property. The preliminary plat request is long and narrow. This property was recently annexed into the city and zoned R6S on June 9, 2011. The property will not be impacted by the floodplain and it is located on a major thoroughfare. In this subdivision sidewalks will be constructed on one side of all proposed streets and a detention pond will be provided. There is a ditch adjacent to the Rolling Meadows Subdivision and it will not be piped due to fear of damage that could be done to the septic tank systems that already exist in the subdivision. The property owner said that he would be amenable to discussions with the developer regarding getting a connection to Rolling Meadows Drive. After 30 homes are constructed, if there are no other means of access, the developer will have to put in a fire apparatus access road that will tie into one of the street stubs into NC 33. The City of Greenville's zoning ordinance states that every lot shall have access to a public street. The subdivision ordinance states that when a new subdivision joins un-subdivided lands that do not have direct and adequate access to a public street, the new streets will be carried to

the boundaries to ensure that there is direct and adequate access to a public street; streets should not be arranged so as to create a hardship to adjoining property owners. The Planning & Zoning Commission should make a determination if such street extension is necessary. The developers provided a master plan to show connectivity between this property and other properties in the area; it was routed to the technical committee and they were satisfied with the plan.

Mr. Gordon asked how staff felt about a street extension.

Mr. Thomas answered that the lots were created under Pitt County's jurisdiction and staff presumes that when they were created they met Pitt County's standards so they should have some means of access now because there are homes on the property.

Mr. Gordon asked Mr. Thomas to clarify that the lots did have access.

Mr. Thomas answered that they did have some means of egress, but they do not abut a public street.

Mr. Gordon asked if the land-locked properties are now under the jurisdiction of the City.

Mr. Thomas answered that they are still under the County's jurisdiction.

Mr. Parker asked how they would access the property if they do not abut a public street.

Mr. Thomas answered that they have driveways or easements.

Mr. Parker asked if that was permanent.

Mr. Thomas answered that they were created under the County's jurisdiction and they meet the standards of the County.

Mr. Bell asked to clarify that the Commission would need to make a determination on the requirement that they do provide public street access.

Mr. Thomas answered that was correct.

Mr. Parker asked if there is a possibility that they would be land-locked.

Mr. Thomas answered that they would have whatever access that they have now.

Mr. Gordon said that it would not be very prudent to require this developer to rearrange his streets because we don't know how it will work out in the future. He asked Mr. Thomas to clarify that staff did not have an opinion about it.

Mr. Thomas answered that the lots were created under Pitt County's jurisdiction and staff presumes that when they were created they met requirements for Pitt County's standards. Mr. Mike Baldwin spoke on behalf of V-SLEW. He said that they had a potential builder for the

145 lots on this preliminary plat. When he designed the project, he tried to break up the traffic and he suggested that they include traffic-calming devices, like speed bumps. He brought a map that shows the lots that are already subdivided under the County's jurisdiction. He asked that his client not be encumbered to provide street access to these lots because in his opinion that the properties there are subdivided, they are in the County's jurisdiction; it is unclear as to when they will be annexed into the Greenville or when the City's ETJ will be extended to include them. He said that they had provided street stubs on this plat to undeveloped properties.

Chairman Thomas asked to clarify that it is not in the ETJ at this point.

Mr. Baldwin said that was correct and there may be a small portion that is under the City's jurisdiction.

Mr. Gordon said that there is a little triangle that is right in between land that is already in the City's ETJ.

Mr. Baldwin answered that the City Council annexed that property a few weeks ago.

Mr. Gordon asked why they didn't just go ahead and purchase the property.

Mr. Baldwin answered that the property owners had nice homes and were not interested in selling.

Mr. Parker asked if the properties on HWY 33 had curb cuts for access.

Mr. Baldwin answered that they did.

Chairman Thomas asked if he had discussions with the property owners in that wedge.

Mr. Baldwin answered that he had not.

Mr. Randall said that they have had access easements and their own private gravel roads so it appears that they have been happy with what they have.

Mr. Baldwin said that it appears so and the private roads are named so that rescue services will be able to locate them.

Mr. Parker asked him if, to the best of his knowledge, they will always have access.

Mr. Baldwin answered that they would.

Mr. Bell said that the city's ordinance requires that you provide a public street to accommodate a fire apparatus and he asked if that could be done.

Mr. Baldwin said that they had already done that and he pointed it out on the map.

Mr. Parker asked how many lots are there.

Mr. Baldwin answered that there are 145 total lots.

Mr. Maxwell asked if all of these lots will use septic tanks.

Mr. Baldwin answered that they would not. They will have Eastern Pines water and Greenville Utilities Commission (GUC) sewer.

Mr. Parker commented that he appreciated the sidewalks and traffic calming devices.

Mr. Baldwin said that they were required to put the sidewalks in and the developers were very receptive to the traffic calming devices.

Mr. Parker asked if anyone had thought about putting in bicycle lanes for the kids.

Mr. Baldwin said that they had met the street section requirements and they would have to defer to Public Works about the bike lanes.

Mr. Bell said that he understood from the staff presentation that they would not be putting pipes in for the ditch because of sewer from parts of Rolling Meadows. He asked Mr. Baldwin to explain why.

Mr. Baldwin said that those lots are on septic tanks. Septic tanks are subject to the seasonal high water table. That ditch affects the seasonal high water table; if you were to drain the ditch, then the seasonal high water table would rise and cause potential problems.

Mr. Randall said that it appears that the property is zoned properly, they are not building in any wetlands and there is stormwater detention to take care of the run-offs so he made a motion to approve the request.

Mr. Gordon asked if they would need to say anything additional to approve the motion.

Attorney Dave Holec answered that they would not need to say anything additional since they were approving the request.

Mr. Gordon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

OTHER

Petition to close a portion of West Gum Road

Mr. Tim Corley, Engineer, presented the item to the Commission. He presented an aerial photo of the property to the Commission. He said that the owner has asked the City to abandon .0634 acres of right-of-way in this location. The reason that this request is coming before the Commission is because the green silo that had been sitting on the property was considered an existing non-compliant structure. The City discovered that they had torn it down and begun

constructing another silo without a building permit. The new silo is subject to the new setback requirements so they had to find a way to keep the new structure in its current location.

Mr. Gordon asked if it would be completely closing West Gum Road.

Mr. Corley answered that it would be just one side of the street's right-of-way.

Mr. Bell asked if West Gum Road was the road leading out to Greenville Utilities' Station.

Mr. Corley said it was not. He said that Greenville Utilities was on the eastern side of Green Street. He said that West Gum Road is the road on the left right after you pass Airport Road.

Mr. Parker asked if there was precedence for this situation.

Mr. Corley answered that he was not aware of any similar situations since he has been with the City and he said that the Planning Division would be the best suited to answer that question.

Mr. Merrill Flood, Community Development Director, said that he was not aware of a similar situation in recent history.

Mr. Bell made a motion to approve the request to close West Gum Street, Ms. Basnight seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Presentation on the ECU Master Plan

Mr. Flood introduced the Commission members Mr. William Bagnell, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Campus Operations at East Carolina University (ECU).

Mr. Bagnell presented ECU's Long Term Master Plan to the Commission. He said that there were two sets of plans – one for the health science campus and one for the main campus. After comments and review, the all of the plans were narrowed down to one plan, which was the one being presented to the Commission. Mr. Bagnell presented maps and visuals of anticipated projects and he gave timelines.

Mr. Randall noted that the proposed parking deck was in gray and he asked if that meant that it was not on the board yet.

Mr. Bagnell answered that it was in gray because it does not represent a new construction. He said that parking is an auxiliary project so it will have to pay for itself and that is something that they will have to build into the budget.

Mr. Bagnell said that the core value within the Master Plan is sustainability with encouragement of pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout. Due to the increasing size of the student body, they are currently going through a RFP for a new Student Union.

Chairman Thomas asked if that would replace Mendenhall.

Mr. Bagnell answered that it would, but Mendenhall would be re-purposed as meeting space.

Chairman Thomas asked what was on the corner of the visual that was being displayed.

Mr. Bagnell answered that it was McDonalds.

Mr. Bagnell said that they show some major development in the area that they have designated as the downtown area. Their highest priority on the campus right now is their Bio-sciences center; it will be in the area where the Christenbury Gym is. They would close the parking lot that is in front of Brewster and make it into a green space to calm some of the traffic on Tenth Street to allow more pedestrian movement; they will work with the City and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to do projects similar to the Tenth Street Connector.

Chairman Thomas asked if there has been any discussion about creating an overpass to connect the dorm area to Brewster where the new science area will be.

Mr. Bagnell answered that they have looked at it several times, but the problem is that students will usually take shortcuts so they don't think that they would utilize it since they would have to go up and down over the top of it. One of the improvements that they made about ten years ago was the construction of a fence and berm to try and steer students to cross at College Hill or over at Christenbury, but there are still students that cross in the middle.

Mr. Bell said that 4-5 years ago it was indicated that ECU's hotel and conference center would be located on Tenth Street and he asked if that plan had changed.

Mr. Bagnell answered that he was not aware that there was any plan for a hotel and conference center on Tenth Street. He said that in the plan that they have right now, the hotel and conference center would be placed off of First Street near the Performing Arts facility.

Mr. Parker asked if most of this would be new construction.

Mr. Bagnell answered that they would stage out new buildings and re-purpose old buildings as they move along.

Mr. Bagnell went through slides showing improvements and new additions to the Athletics Facility.

Chairman Thomas asked if these changes would really be made.

Mr. Bagnell answered that was the vision.

Chairman Thomas asked if the two towers on College Hill would be enough to cover expected growth.

Mr. Bagnell said that there are about 5600 beds available and that is not counting the beds at Slay and Umstead. He said that there is also private development in close proximity to the campus; they are trying to work within the realm of accommodating on-campus housing while being respectful to the current market.

Mr. Maxwell asked about the issue of bus traffic on Fifth Street.

Mr. Bagwell said that they will not be able to eliminate bus traffic on Fifth Street altogether, but there are discussions about how they move people in and out of the campus.

Mr. Parker asked if there had been any discussions about active re-use of buildings in the downtown area.

Mr. Bagnell answered that they have talked to a number of developers in the past few years about new construction with residential above and retail above. Though it has not come into fruition yet, that does not mean that they will not continue to entertain that idea.

Mr. Randall asked if there is anything that they can do to facilitate this development and he asked if zoning rules apply to them.

Mr. Bagnell answered that zoning rules do apply and they do not have any zoning issues with the property that they already own.

Presentation on the Greenville Urban Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Mr. Flood introduced Mr. Daryl Vreeland, Transportation Planner, to the Commission.

Mr. Vreeland gave a brief overview of the MPO Master Plan to the Commission. He summarized the public input opportunities that were available at the time of the plan. There were meetings, online forms, and paper surveys. There were a total of 6 workshops with the last workshop being a presentation of the draft. There is a pedestrian network that is recommended. The other part of the plan is the bicycle network recommendations. There are priority and pilot projects; details and costs are available online. There are before and after pictures so that the viewer will get an idea of what their investment is going towards. There are policies that are recommended in the plan. The policies were formed by the same consulting group that was consulted by NCDOT for their complete street project. There are programs that are recommended such as fitting helmets at school, bicycle rodeos and others. The consultant has made a draft Bicycle Friendly Community Application; the draft has been submitted to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission. The Commission gave their input and directed staff to submit the application. It's an online application consisting of about 80 questions.

Mr. Randall asked who it would be submitted to.

Mr. Vreeland answered that it would be submitted to the League of American Bicyclists.

Mr. Randall said that there was a slide in his presentation that had the bicycle priorities listed. He asked what priority 1 & 2 was and he asked for their costs.

Mr. Vreeland answered that number 1 is 14th Street with a cost of \$2,600 and number 2 is Charles Boulevard with a cost of \$19,000.

Mr. Gordon asked if the City Council would have to approve funding.

Mr. Vreeland answered that was correct; they would have to approve any project in the plan.

Mr. Gordon asked if there would be any private funding.

Mr. Vreeland answered that could be looked into.

Mr. Gordon asked if that had ever been done in any of the other cities.

Mr. Vreeland answered that he had not done that analysis. He said that he imagined that some cities do depending how tracts are laid out.

Mr. Randall commented that it seems like it is going that way because the City Council has already adopted this plan. He brought up the preliminary plat item that was discussed earlier in the meeting and he asked if this plan would apply to that.

Mr. Christopher Padgett, Chief Planner, answered that the City has a requirement that if a private individual subdivides property and creates a new street or extends an existing street, then a sidewalk must be provided on at least one side, or sometimes both sides, of the street. There is not a requirement that the individual provide sidewalks or bicycle lanes on existing streets. He said that Mr. Vreeland was alluding to the fact that the plan made recommendations for policy and code modifications for the City, such as creating a complete street policy for a wide range of users. Likely, when developing a process for such a policy, current development standards would want to be reviewed.

Mr. Parker asked if the Tenth Street Connector would be an example of a complete street project.

Mr. Padgett answered that was his understanding. It contains a range of mobility options; it was designed for motor vehicles with transit users in mind and it has bike lanes and sidewalks.

Mr. Parker asked about the routing if the City were to decide to adopt a complete street policy; he asked if it would first go to the City Council or to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission.

Mr. Padgett answered that it would go through multiple city departments and then be funneled through multiple advisory committees because it would impact multiple levels of the City Code.

Mr. Gordon asked if there was a complete street policy in effect, would a street in a subdivision have to be wider than what it is now since it would have to provide for bicycles.

Mr. Padgett said that would be a possibility, but that is a technical question that would have to be addressed once you got to the street design standards.

Mr. Gordon commented that it would add cost to the development and add additional paving.

Mr. Randall said that it could be marked differently.

Mr. Maxwell said that when they had tried to get bike lanes on Fifth Street years ago, they were initially told it was not wide enough. They looked at it again and determined that bicycle lanes could be added by narrowing vehicle lanes; it was said that if you narrowed the vehicle lanes then it would make the cars go slower and thus make it safer.

Mr. Padgett said that he wanted to make sure that the Commission was clear that the way current standards are today, the way that bicycle and pedestrian facilities could be constructed would come in one of three ways:

1. The City could do it as a standalone project.
2. NCDOT could do it as a standalone project.
3. NCDOT could require developers to add them.

Mr. Randall said that this could be a 30 – 50 year project.

Mr. Padgett said that the reality is that it may never be completed because it will constantly be updated and he imagines more corridors will be identified.

Chairman Thomas asked how we compare with other communities in the region such as Wilmington, Jacksonville and New Bern.

Mr. Vreeland answered that he believes that our Master Plan is nicer than some. We're one of the few in the state that has Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission.

Mr. Parker asked how close the NCDOT is to adopting a complete street project.

Mr. Vreeland answered that they released a draft for comment and he will email a link to him if he'd like to comment.

Update on Review of Vegetation Requirements

Mr. Padgett said that staff has been working on this project since January of this year. They have been working with 12 landscape professionals to collect their input on desired changes to the City's vegetation requirements. It was staff's goal to have the comments back earlier, but they are still coming in so they will finish collecting comments and try to get it back to the Commission in a report at the next meeting.

Chairman Thomas took a moment to recognize Bill Lehman and Cathy Maahs-Fladung for their service to the Commission.

With there being no further business, Mr. Bell made a motion, Mr. Gordon seconded and the motion passed unanimously to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Merrill Flood, Secretary