

STAFFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL WORK SESSION
Aquia Town Center
November 1, 2007

The Special Work Session of the Stafford County Planning Commission of Thursday, November 1, 2007, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman William Cook in the Board of Supervisors Chambers of the County Administrative Center.

Members Present: Cook, Kirby, Pitzel, Rhodes, Mitchell, Carlone, and Di Peppe

Staff Present: Harvey, Judy, Stepowany, and Hamock

Members Absent: None

1. RC2700543; Reclassification - Town Center of Aquia - A proposed reclassification from B-2, Urban Commercial Zoning District to P-TND, Planned Traditional Neighborhood Development Zoning District on Assessor's Parcels 21-49, 21-49H, 21-49J and 21-49Q consisting of 36.25 acres, located on the east side of Jefferson Davis Highway, south of Washington Drive within the Aquia Election District. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the property for Urban Commercial use which would allow a variety of wholesale, retail, service commercial and office uses. The P-TND Zoning District would allow development of pedestrian – friendly neighborhoods with a mix of residential, commercial, and civic uses. See Section 28-35 of the Zoning Ordinance for a complete listing of permitted uses in the P-TND Zoning District. **(Time Limit: January 15, 2008) (Deferred to November 1, 2007 Special Work Session)**

Mr. Cook asked staff to review the application for the Commission. He stated two residents would be speaking. He stated Reverend Mandel was going to speak but decided to forward an email to the Commission members.

Mr. Harvey suggested hearing the public comments first, then from the applicant.

Pamela Haines stated she copied a petition of 100 signatures from residents for the Commissioners. She stated she was speaking on behalf of the residents of Aquia Harbour. She stated there disapproval of the multi-level garage. She stated she loved the new development but doe not like the parking garage. She stated with the construction of the garage there would be health risks, denied fresh air, lights on the building would ensure no night, there would be an increase in garbage and the environment would be changed due to building weight. She stated the building would not be aesthetically pleasing and this could cause the Aquia Harbour Homeowners Association dues to increase and cause home price reductions. She stated a solution would be to move the garage away from the fence, allowing for green areas. She stated the developer should replace the current plans with an aesthetically pleasing plan.

Adam Hawkins stated his concerned was the reclassification effect on the county's water and absorption. He asked if the utilities department could present something showing the water absorption through 2011. He asked if he would be able to see site lines from adjacent lots onto the commercial property.

Mr. Cook stated staff could now review for the Commission.

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Mr. Harvey stated the Commission had received revised proffers with additions and deletions highlighted.

Clark Leming, Leming and Healy, stated Eric Vogel from VDOT was available. He stated the Commission had a set of revised proffers with changes highlighted in yellow. He stated these changes were made since the public hearing held October 17, 2007. He went over the revised proffers in detail. He stated the applicant met with Reverend Mandel and the Commission should have received an email from the church and the applicant could address every issue raised by the church. He stated the applicant met with Mrs. Haines and would look at that area more closely.

Mr. Di Peppe asked Mr. Leming if he had offered a tour to Mrs. Haines.

Mr. Leming stated she lived there.

Mr. Di Peppe stated he did not know if the applicant had offered.

Mr. Leming stated the proposed building would only be approximately 40 feet in height which is not a skyscraper. He stated the Big Lots store was twenty-two feet and the garage would not double that height.

Ed Wizner, Ramco Gershenson, stated he met with Aquia Episcopal Church, VDOT and Mrs. Haines and handed out a detailed study of the economic development and Dean Bellas could elaborate if needed. He stated he was willing to listen to any concerns.

Eric Vogel, Virginia Department of Transportation, stated he did an initial review of the project. He stated there was a deteriorating level of service on Route 1. He stated the traffic would be anticipated to double in the next ten years and physical improvements would be limited. He provided in detail, results of the traffic study.

Mr. Kirby stated Route 1 would be a lot like Route 17.

Mr. Vogel stated the actual per lane vehicle count would exceed Route 17 by 15 % in the next 10 years.

Mr. Di Peppe asked about the cost of the study for Route 1.

Mr. Vogel stated staff would be in a better position to answer that question.

Mr. Rhodes asked if the intersection was going to increase by 70 % in ten years and 6% of that would attribute to the development.

Mr. Vogel stated 6% of total traffic. He stated VDOT looks at peak hour traffic.

Mrs. Carlone stated 700 cars would make a difference. She asked for an overall projection.

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Mr. Vogel stated VDOT was currently focused on roadway improvement. He stated he could not guarantee a dramatic trip reduction.

Mr. Pitzel referenced the current analysis for existing traffic and asked if VDOT used theoretical numbers from the uses or actual numbers.

Jami Milanovich, Wells and Associates, stated the existing traffic count was for the proposed square footage. The estimated traffic count was from the proposed stores rather than the stores that were open at the time.

Mr. Pitzel asked if that was an actual count.

Ms. Milanovich stated yes.

Mr. Pitzel stated that the total traffic was comprised of 2 to 6% of traffic volume, but that some movements would be up to 35%. He asked if that would be left and right turns.

Mr. Vogel stated yes.

Mr. Pitzel asked what method would be used to bring it back to a D.

Mr. Vogel stated the county needed a comprehensive study of the entire corridor. He stated the objective of the study would be to look at 10 to 20 years growth.

Mr. Pitzel stated in his opinion, to solve the problem there would need to be flyovers and tunnels.

Mr. Di Peppe asked if VDOT looked at the traffic light timing in Route 1 and Route 610 and asked about the efficiency.

Mr. Vogel stated the study was done and forwarded the northern region traffic operation center.

Mr. Cook stated the lights need improvements.

Mr. Leming stated Ms. Milanovich would describe the recommendations she had made to the applicant which was discussed with Mr. Vogel and would be put into the proffers.

Ms. Milanovich stated the changes were to be implemented into the proffers. She stated the recommendation of making a contribution of \$150,000 to study, give the county tools needed to improve roads, come up with creative solutions, looking for ways to get people out of there vehicles, citizen using alternative modes of transportation and strategies in proffers would remain and be enhanced. She stated the first enhancement would be putting Traffic Demand Management (TDM) coordinator on site, alternative transportation, utilizing Fredericksburg Regional Transit and Virginia Railway Express, spaces would be provided for zip cars in a centralized location and information readily available for the public.

Mrs. Kirby stated she would have to use a car to get there.

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Ms. Milanovich stated the people who work there or live there that use zip cars would lessen the amount of cars on Route 1.

Mr. Leming stated the TDM was fairly new to the Commissioner and if Ms. Milanovich could give a working definition.

Ms. Milanovich stated the TDM was a program designed to reduce the use of single occupant vehicles. She stated the county would encourage using alternative transportation.

Mr. Pitzel stated the multi-modes were not available on site. He stated the concern was reducing the bottle neck going in and out of Aquia Towne Center.

Ms. Milanovich stated the TDM needs to be expanded in a larger basis to eventually have lesser vehicle travel.

Mr. Leming stated some of the components designed to keep people on site and the TND would be a self contained community. He stated a large segment of the project would be office with employees on site.

Mrs. Kirby asked what stores were considered upscale.

Mr. Wizner stated restaurants above what the county already has and multi-cinema. He stated it would definitely be upscale.

Mrs. Kirby stated upscale may be Nordstrom or Dillard's.

Mr. Wizner stated the applicant would stay away from Mall anchor stores and have a step above what the county already has. He stated now so much size of tenant but the feel of the retailer.

Mrs. Carlone stated according to an employee with Silver Companies, it had been difficult to bring in upscale businesses. She stated the only way to keep these people on site would be to have a large grocery store for the residents living there. She asked how many parking spaces would be available.

Mr. Wizner stated there would be 3 parking garages, 900 to 1000 spaces. He stated the dwelling units would only be 1 or 2 bedrooms.

Mrs. Carlone stated her concern with the stacking problem and would like a closer number of parking spaces to have a better idea of what the county was getting.

Mr. Wizner stated he would get the Commission information referencing the parking lots.

Mrs. Carlone asked about parks being provided. She stated there would be children in some of these residences.

Mr. Leming stated this development was not setup with children in mind. He stated this would be more of young couples starting out.

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Mr. Wizner stated he was not aware of the stacking issues. He stated the dwelling units would be rental units and the lease would define the occupants allowed. He stated these residential units would be smaller and may cater to the newly married or older couple but not marketed to families.

Mrs. Carlone asked if there would be on site management.

Mr. Wizner stated yes.

Mr. Carlone stated the applicant could not deny people with children.

Scott Rykal stated this would be an urban project with a programmable green space which could be used by schools or summer concerts.

Mrs. Carlone asked if the nine acres green space would be outside of the 50 foot buffer.

Mr. Rykal stated no there would not be an additional nine acres.

Mrs. Carlone stated it would be a good idea to have a flat park in the middle of the Towne Center.

Mr. Wizner went through some of the uses of the Town Center.

Mark Herbkersman stated the area could be a programmable public space with green lawn areas. He stated the area had not been fully designed yet and was diagrammed with several thousand square feet.

After a brief discussion referencing the areas and uses from the residents, Mr. Leming stated the applicant would try to come up with a better concept on November 13, 2007.

Mrs. Kirby asked for an ides of some of the types of anchors that may be used.

Mr. Wizner stated on the main street an anchor may be outdoor sporting goods store, possible fitness center, fashion, book store and restaurants.

Mrs. Kirby asked if there would be a possibility to move the garage to another side not so offensive to the residents in Aquia Harbour and the Church. She stated she asked because the church was the premier historic site in the county.

Mr. Leming stated the only parking garage issue the applicant was aware of was on the south side. He stated the garage was to be approximately 40 feet high and would be in compliance with the TND.

Mrs. Kirby stated the height was a concern to her.

Mr. Leming stated the site would be tight.

Mr. Kirby asked about the water capacity.

Mr. Leming stated he would check with the Utilities Department.

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Mr. Harvey stated he spoke with Dale Allen from the Utilities Department, and Mr. Allen described a short term supply issue and Rocky Pen Run should be on line by 2011. He stated there was a timing issue and for by right, it was first come first serve. He stated there was no moratorium in the county stating no future businesses or residents could be added due to water restriction. He stated the only time the county may be in that mode would be if the health department determines the county had exceeded the safe yield. He stated for this project the applicant has the option to go by right.

Mrs. Kirby asked about the establishment of the Community Development Authority (CDA).

Mr. Harvey stated the county was not a party to CDA other then who would be the members.

Mr. Leming stated the CDA would handle the infrastructure and not to pay the cash proffers. He stated the CDA was important to a development to set up money for internal taxes to raise money for infrastructure.

Mrs. Kirby asked who would write the check for the proffers.

Mr. Wizner stated RAMCO-Gershenson would write the check for the cash proffers and over time with improvements of the project with the CDA in place would be pay through taxes above what it would produce today.

Mrs. Kirby stated the residents of Stafford would not be out any money.

Mr. Harvey stated that was correct if done as described earlier. He stated the CDA was an authority or funding mechanism.

Mr. Di Peppe stated on page 6, under per unit contribution, the wording sounds like the county would not get cash proffers unless there was a CDA.

Mr. Leming stated once the applicant goes to the Board and hopes to get the CDA and the rezoning approved.

Mr. Cook asked what if the CDA was not approved.

Mr. Leming stated he had not seen an instance where the CDA would not be approved.

Mrs. Carlone asked why the statement on page 4, the last paragraph, had not been taken out as previously asked.

Mr. Pitzel stated his main concern was the bottle neck. He stated there should be better option to lessen the amount of cars.

Mr. Leming asked where the people would come from.

Mr. Pitzel stated people could park then shuttle into the Towne Center. He stated the Saturday traffic would be the worst traffic

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Mrs. Kirby stated the traffic would be so bad that emergency vehicles may have to wait to get through.

Mr. Rhodes asked the approximate size of the units.

Mr. Wizner stated the units would be approximately 950 square feet.

Mr. Di Peppe asked if all units would be on the second floors.

Mr. Wizner stated Main Street would have second floor units and on the other side of the development the units would be four stories. He stated the units would range between \$1000.00 to \$1300.00.

Mr. Di Peppe asked if the development would incorporate Universal Design. He asked if a small percentage of the first floor could be used for disabled or older families.

Mr. Wizner stated the applicant would be open for discussion.

Mrs. Carlone asked if there would be four stories in the back of the development and second level units in front.

Mr. Wizner stated the maximum height of the four story building would meet housing codes.

Mrs. Carlone asked if the applicant would be willing to lower the number of units in the development.

Mr. Wizner stated the applicant would be hesitant to do that and would need to wait to see who the residential developer would be.

Mr. Pitzel stated if the number of units were reduced then the traffic may be reduced as well.

Mr. Mitchell stated the residential component was required by the county and the TND was not something the developer was pushing. He stated this development was not a retirement community and should not be strictly marketed to the retirement community.

Reverend Mandel stated he would like to be involved as changes were being made and reminded the applicant his concern was to preserve the historical aspect of the county.

Mr. Leming stated the applicant would have provisions to the county by the November 13, 2007 meeting and have issues ready for the meeting that needs resolution.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.