

Planning Board Meeting
9-14-15

6:30 pm
Council Chambers

Minutes & General Account

Planning Board Members Present: Art Wise, Chair; Sarah Glanville, Vice-Chair; Kerry Miller, John Capes, Eddie Oakley, and Steve Monroe and Ted Johnson, ETJ Members.

Council Representative: Lynn Montgomery

Staff Present: Chuck Smith, Carrie Spencer, Martha Wolfe

Visitors Presents: Carol Brooks of the Jamestown News

1. Call to Order – Art Wise, Chair, called the meeting to order.
2. Approval of minutes from the August 10, 2015 meeting – Kerry Miller made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. John Capes made a second to the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.
3. Discussion of Land Development Plan and Update process – Spencer stated we have a lot of items on the agenda. We have included items the Planning Board has requested we formally discuss. Spencer said we will begin discussion but if time does not allow the Board to discuss each topic, we will continue discussions of the items at the next regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting.

The first discussion item is the Land Development Plan and update process. Spencer asked the Planning Board members for clarification on what they wanted to discuss. After recently going through a rezoning request, she asked how the LDP worked for them after applying it. Art Wise felt the Planning Board needs to focus on the wording that the General Statutes require relating to the required wording for the consistency statement with the Land Development Plan. He feels it will simplify things if we really pay attention to the wording of how the motions have to be written. Such as does it maintain the character of Jamestown, is traffic affected, etc. If we look at the goals and policies it really does help clarify a lot of things. Spencer felt the Planning Board succeeded in bringing a motion back through the LDP. The goals and policies of the LDP were used in arriving at the motion and decision. Oakely asked how strong the Land Development Plan is going to be when it comes to making the final decision.

Art Wise felt in a Public Hearing it would be good to have the goals and policies posted on the wall or screen. Ask the people when they are speaking to relate to these points. The Public Hearing is not a time to answer questions, it is a time for the Public to comment and make statements. He feels the Public needs to know these (goals & policies) are the points the Planning Board needs to consider. Spencer said she can draft LDP bullet points to have at each meeting when a rezoning is held.

Art Wise thinks there are people that may be in favor or against a rezoning, but they are not sure how to express it. If the guidelines are displayed it might help the public relate their comments to the LDP. It was decided to have a hand out (goals & policies) to go with the agenda for the Planning Board.

Spencer stated in the Planning Board packet was a copy of the minutes from the Regular Council meeting of January 15, 2013. At this meeting, the Planning Board advised the Town Council of what they identified as the top 10 issues. At that time, the Planning Board was requesting authority to conduct an update of the 2020 Land Development Plan. Spencer said a complete update of the LDP has been budgeted and slated to be done in fiscal year 2017-2018. The process would include hiring a consultant to do the update process. She would like to know if the Planning Board feels we need to move this date up or work on some of the individual concerns in-house.

Miller stated that he is not concerned about the process. We have such a limited space available in our Town. He feels the question is with priorities of the rezoning of the Ragsdale property. This property has come up 3 times since he has been on the Planning Board. He feels we really need to look at what is considered Main Street. The first time the Town went through the rezoning process and the development of the Land Development Plan, we thought we were going to grow and expand. We extended the commercial zoning districts into and/or abutted neighborhoods. Miller said he is questioning this since there has been relatively no changes in the last 7 – 8 years and with the By-Pass coming, is that still a realistic goal/need. It is tiring to continue to see this piece of property come back for rezoning. The question is does the Town view this land as commercial or residential, or multi-family? Miller continued to say the current Main Street zoning district would allow for lots of uses. A Dollar General or an I-HOP restaurant is permissible. He is not so sure that if one of these businesses went in on Ragsdale Rd. that just as many people would be opposed to it as there are for the apartment rezoning. A lot of people don't want to see a tree cut down in that area. Miller asked do we need to go through the process again, through the community involvement to be sure people know the current zoning of the property. It is evident that multi-family is not a popular zoning. He feels we need to be sure the public knows the property is currently zoned MS (Main Street). Or do we need to redefine it based on the By-pass and based on the lack of new businesses since the last time this has come up. The question is where we want to focus the business and Main Street zoning.

Miller stated, with all due respect, he does not think the people realize that a Dollar General or other retail use could be built at this location tomorrow and would have more traffic. Miller said he is not so sure if the people were aware of this, they would feel strongly against it. Oakley said he thinks most people that live in the neighborhood understand that the property is a business zoned property. However, the Town Homes across the street from the property have added value to the residential neighborhood in a two block area. That helped stabilize the residential part of it. Oakley feels the people understand about the allowable business zoning. Miller stated he has talked with people that do not realize what types of uses are currently available.

Art Wise stated if a developer built a Multi-Family housing development such as a one/two story patio homes/townhomes; he feels that would be acceptable. Oakley said that is a better selling point to the people. He feels people would accept a Townhome project or single family patio home project. (Owner occupied)

Oakley knows for certain a developer that develops rental property for elderly (55 +) government assisted and section 8 rental property. He says this property (Ragsdale) is not big enough for the government financing program to support. That is one reason the financing was turned down on the previous project.

Spencer said it sounds like with all the hits & misses with this property, we need to establish if it has the right zoning district. Would it be better suited as another zoning district? Miller said the business component hasn't increased in the last 7 years. We are closer to the By-pass being realized, is this Main Street zoning the best use? The Planning Board discussed residential uses for this property. They discussed Main Street periphery zoning. Spencer said there could be a zoning district that is more

appropriate. Also, growth strategy is part of our Land Development Plan. Possibly a growth strategy plan should be established. Montgomery said what has changed in the Main Street zoning district is that the properties on Main Street have filled in more. We had a lot of empty spaces that are now full.

Spencer said the By-pass could take some business away from Main Street or it could benefit existing businesses. Miller feels we need to revisit that component of Main Street district. Spencer said a clear policy that the Town does have is that we will make strategic decisions about land use. Which means that you might say we are not ready to develop a project in the Main Street district that is disconnected from the other properties until the Main Street properties are developed or occupied.

Art Wise stated we need to think about what will develop at the Koury property on Guilford Rd. and how that will affect surrounding development. Miller asked if we had more information on Koury development than we did 10 years ago. Such as numbers and types of businesses. Spencer stated we know there will be a wide range of retail, office space and multi-family apartments. It could be a self-contained village in itself to serve Grandover. There will be an anchor grocery store.

Chuck Smith stated I think we always knew that Jamestown would be comprised of the specialty shops. Development along Guilford College Rd. would be the franchise type businesses. Spencer said the Town has been very successful in protecting the property at Gannaway & Ragsdale Rd. forcing developers to make choices closer to Main Street.

Capes stated the 2 times he has been involved in a rezoning for this parcel, parking capacity, parking density for that piece of property and height were the reoccurring objections. Spencer said the Main Street District does call for 2 & 3 story buildings. It seems from the discussion that the consensus is to re-visit the Main Street District zoning.

Spencer advised the Planning Board that the current rezoning case for 202 Ragsdale Rd. has been advertised for a Public Hearing at the September 15, 2015 Council meeting. The applicant has sent a letter requesting the Public Hearing be continued until the following meeting. Spencer said the Public Hearing will be opened and the applicant can make the formal request for the continuance. Then it is up to the Council to vote on whether to grant that continuance or not.

Wise said there will be a lot of people disappointed if that happens. They made plans to be at the Public Hearing. Spencer said if the applicant feels additional time is needed for him to present his case properly, he will request that. He has requested to reduce his density from 60 units to 56 units. The 3rd story was taken off the small building on the Ragsdale Rd. side. The other buildings still have 3 stories. The Planning Board discussed what would be classified as a significant change. Spencer stated it would be up to the Council if they want to refer the case back to the Planning Board or the Council can hear the case. A change in the plans doesn't necessarily have to come back to the Planning Board or it could come back to the Planning Board. If the applicant were to come to the Town Council and the changes made were in keeping with the Planning Board's comments then the Council may hear the case.

Monroe questioned who submitted the idea of the angled parking. Monroe said that the parking would cut into the setback requirements. Spencer said the applicant is willing to work with the Town to grant an easement to allow on street parking. Spencer said this is not a condition of the rezoning request.

The Planning Board agreed they would like to re-visit the Main Street zoning district and properties. Spencer said this relates to the Corridor Study she would like to do. Spencer said we probably need to recommend to the Council that the Planning Board would like to do this as a project.

Art Wise asked if there is a tie-in between Main Street Zoning and the parking. Spencer stated that land use and transportation are very closely related. Spencer said that there is a traffic study just for Gannaway Street and then a traffic study potentially for all of Main Street. The Town Manager said he heard traffic study & corridor study. Both can be very broad. A traffic study is a component of a corridor study. Montgomery said at the last Council meeting, it was determined that the Town needed to look at the issues on Gannaway Street. This was something we were going to do in-house.

Smith said the corridor study is very expensive. We could possibly do parts/pieces of this study in-house. A corridor study would include from Guilford Rd. to Oakdale Rd. providing recommendations on landscaping, lighting, parking, storefronts, road designs, etc. The Town hopes to request funds from NCDOT through our MPO for this study. The study could cost over \$100,000.00. We cannot request funding through the MPO until fiscal year 2016/17. This would be a 12 month study.

The Planning Board discussed several options. Pending the Council's directive, it was decided to focus on a small area plan for the Main St. District. Spencer would investigate a scope of work for a small area plan possibly get some assistance from PTCOG.

Art Wise asked if there is any proposed development for the Oakdale Mill Property. Spencer said currently A&T University engineering students are doing a project to study possible development uses for the Mill property. October 9th they will be doing a community presentation in the Civic Center. Please attend.

4. Discussion of sign ordinance – Oakley wanted the sign ordinance to be more consistent not only in height but in design. He travels a lot. There is a new gateway into Mocksville and they have re-designed that entranceway. The signs on the new properties are all similar and it looks very nice.

Capes asked if there was something the Town could do to compel some action to be taken at the Food Lion Shopping Center sign. Spencer said she advised the management company that they are violating our nuisance ordinance with a poorly maintained sign and poor landscaping. They will be prohibited from any of the other businesses being allowed to put up a sign until the entrance sign is replaced.

The Planning Board discussed having a similar design style for all business, such as posts, height and width. The Board discussed the Sandwich Board signs. The Sandwich Board signs in Town are supposed to be put out when the business opens and taken in at night when the business closes. Currently that is not happening.

The Planning Board discussed the problem with non-conforming signs that have been grandfathered in. Should these businesses be made to upgrade their signs? Several PB members felt that could be a financial hardship on the businesses. Miller stated we should remain business friendly. However, when the signs are replaced they need to be brought into compliance. Spencer said we can look into changing the ordinance so that when signs are replaced or a new business comes in the sign has to be brought into compliance.

Spencer said temporary banners are allowed in Town. One is allowed for every piece of property. They may be up for 21 days. The group discussed the banners and that they need to be properly installed and maintained. So often they sag in the middle and cannot be read.

Spencer said in regard to the Sandwich Board signs, she would need support to enforce these regulations. The requirements for the Sandwich Board sign is 4' high and leave 4' of clearance in the sidewalk. The Sandwich Board signs are to come in when the business is not opened. This has not been enforced for some time. Spencer would need support from the Planning Board & Council to begin enforcing the Sandwich Board sign regulations. Businesses may only have 1 Sandwich Board sign. The Planning Board said they support staff enforcing the sign ordinance as adopted. Oakley suggested the PB give a recommendation to the Council. The Town Manager said the sign ordinance is an adopted ordinance which the staff should enforce.

Spencer said she is hearing; sign consistency, height & design, banners falling down and Sandwich Board signs. The PB asked Spencer to be sure the Town's regulations about digital signs was appropriate. Capes felt we need to keep on the maintenance issues of signage. Owners should keep their signs in good shape. Spencer would like to photograph and see how many signs are in compliance and how many are non-compliant. Glanville added one thing that happens on the weekend are businesses putting out the Flags/banners. (Friday-Monday) Spencer said between Friday at noon and Monday morning, the Town allows Real Estate Open House yard signs and yard sale signs to go up. But they are taken down Monday morning.

5. The Planning Board felt the next item on the agenda- Parking concerns, needed more time to discuss. This will be added to the next agenda. Capes said this is a big issue. Glanville said we have discussed parking, the Council has discussed parking, and the businesses have discussed parking. She would hope we could actually talk about solutions. The Town Manager said that every plan of action that staff has come up with has required a significant amount of money. The question is who does this (parking) benefit. Is it right to spend a large sum of money to benefit a select few. Capes said on the 1 side it is incumbent upon the business to do their fair share to help with this problem. Also, when he sees cars being towed on a Saturday night that are clearly not local it is upsetting. They are beside themselves. It is the first time coming to Jamestown and they get towed. This is not really the message we want to send to people coming to Jamestown. It is incumbent upon the Town to take ownership of more of this problem. Even if it benefits a select few, it ties back into what we want for our Town and what we want it to look like. We want to keep the businesses here. We need to come up with something. Glanville agreed. She feels her home property value has increased with the amenities and businesses here in Jamestown. She feels it would benefit her to use tax dollars for parking in downtown. Montgomery said part of the parking solution is for businesses to educate their patrons as to where they should/can park. The Planning Board talked about putting up signage/banner at the Town Hall saying "Free Parking" or "Park & Walk" signs in downtown.

Oakley mentioned that we need to talk about handicapped parking.

6. Public Comment Period – None
7. Other business – None
8. Adjournment – Kerry Miller made a motion to adjourn. John Capes made a second to the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The meeting ended at 7:55 pm.