

Planning Board Meeting
September 9th, 2013
Council Chambers
6:30 pm

Minutes & General Account

Planning Board Members present: Art Wise, Vice-Chair; Richard Newbill, ETJ; Ted Johnson, ETJ; Dot Perdue, Eddie Oakley, Daniel McRae, ETJ; John Capes (Alternate for Kerry Miller)

Staff Present: Chuck Smith, Matthew Johnson, and Martha Wolfe

Visitors present: Ray Schwab, Dan O'Shea, Fairway Outdoor Advertising and Carol Brooks of the Jamestown News

1. Call to Order – Art Wise called the meeting to order.
2. Approval of minutes from the June 10, 2013 meeting – Richard Newbill made a motion to approve the minutes as present. Dot Perdue made a second to the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.
3. Billboard Advertising Industry – Dan O'Shea, Fairway Outdoor Advertising, stated that Fairway Outdoor Advertising actually has one billboard currently located in Jamestown. This billboard has been up for about 40 years. Jamestown Planning staff assisted in allowing maintenance renovations to this billboard located at the intersection of Guilford College Rd. and High Point Rd. It made a tremendous improvement in the appearance of the billboard.

Mr. O'Shea stated he is here to answer any questions the Planning Board may have. He is not here to clutter up Jamestown. He is here to look at an opportunity to promote Jamestown, the local business community, and the local non-profit organizations. The goal is to help capture some of that traffic that will otherwise pass you by once the High Point Rd. corridor extension is completed.

His company is interested in building something that works for Jamestown, fits the scale of Jamestown and not just fits their interest. The company has been in business since 1927. His passion is all about how we can create great outdoor advertisement and create assets to a community, not detract from the community.

Currently, Jamestown has a prohibitive ordinance. It states that you simply cannot build any billboards. He asked the Planning Board to consider a very limited opportunity in areas that you think are appropriate for outdoor advertisement. We do not belong in historic districts, not in residential areas, not in scenic areas. We belong where you do business.

O'Shea presented a power point presentation displaying a very restrictive billboard approach. He recommends that the Planning Board consider zoning districts such as commercial, conditional commercial, industrial, conditional industrial, and other areas that Planning Board and the Council think appropriate. Such as a special overlay district.

He recommends:

- Minimum spacing of 1000' between billboards on the same side of the street
- 500' radius spacing between billboards across the street from each other
- 300 liner ft. set back from Churches and residential areas
- Maximum sq. ft. of billboard 300'
- Maximum height 30'
- Required setback – 15' from designated right-a-way for the support of the advertising structure

The power point display showed an illustration of a map showing 1000' diameter circles to show where billboards might go. There could be 4 locations on Guilford College Rd. Assuming all conditions were right and the property owners were in agreement and no obstructions on the property. He does recommend Guilford College Rd. as one location.

Other locations include:

- High Point Rd. and Metals Drive - This is in the Town's ETJ and there is a billboard at this location. The billboard has been at this site for about 30 years.
- Business '85 - O'Shea said that more than likely this site is not buildable due to vegetative growth. But it is zoned CU-Industrial.
- W. Main St. between Penny Rd. and Parkside. There are 4 possible sites at this location providing his proposal is approved

Looking at all the possible locations we have about 10 sites. From this amount, we would assume getting 1 or 2 sites that are buildable and owner approved.

O'Shea displayed an illustration of a billboard at the ACE Hardware location. He recommends a digital board at this location. This allows one site to advertise several businesses. They rotate 6 advertisers every minute. The 7th rotation is reserved for the community. State law mandates you cannot change the copy on a digital billboard any faster than 8 sec. They reserve the 7th rotation for the community; be it a non-profit or a community event. This is call a PSA slot.

Jamestown is a wonderful community. He does not want to clutter it up. Fairway is willing to pick out a location and to invest by erecting a billboard to show you it works. It is a positive for the community. If the Town does not like it they will take it down. The core to protecting the community is to be conservative in regulations.

John Capes stated he is curious about the statement made; they will put up a billboard and take it down if the Town did not like it. O'Shea said if the Town owns property that fits the characteristics for a billboard, they will at their expense, display a digital poster for 6 months; see if the Town likes it. If the parcel is owned by private ownership, it would take longer for them to recoup the expense of a lease.

Lynn Montgomery stated that the recent rezoning of the GTCC property to CIVIC would eliminate that parcel on High Point Rd. unless a special over-lay district was established.

Capes asked if there were any plans for modifications to the existing billboard at the Sheetz location. O'Shea said because the traffic pattern was going to shift; it would be great if they were permitted to re-

locate the billboard. Any change would require property owner approval. It all depends on what the property owner wants to do and what makes sense. Capes also asked if it has been discussed to upgrade the existing billboard to a digital. O'Shea discussed this with the Planning Director. The Planning Director in his earnest to protect Jamestown, said he did not think the Town was ready for that.

Capes asked if there were any control measures to prohibit content from advertising if the Town found it to be inappropriate. O'Shea said their company made a decision 11 years ago not to accept Gentlemen's Club advertising. Other billboard companies do allow Gentlemen's Club advertising. O'Shea said it is very difficult for you as a governing body to censure. Fairway does turndown some advertising they feel inappropriate.

They do lease with property owners. Some of the leases have restrictive covenants in the lease. Fairway is a local company and they as responsive. He respectively asked for their consideration. Please look at the whole package. He would be glad for anyone to stop by his office to see their products.

4. Results from the survey regarding billboards in the Town of Jamestown – Johnson stated we tried very hard not to lead people with any of the survey questions. The responses were somewhat negative. We had about 196 responses. That equates to about 5% of our population. The survey was done on-line and was very inexpensive. Most of the respondents either live in Jamestown or close to it. There was no way to verify that. Results were as follows:

- When traveling 47% do not use billboards
- Some responses- positive affect to increase business enhance marketing for local businesses. Increase public messages
- 75% negative affect appearance issue. Create visual clutter
- Some comments - Can minimize that with regulation of distances
- 35% no way to minimize the impact of the billboard
- If restricted only to commercial and industrial as to where appropriate, most people said that Guilford College Rd. corridor and Jamestown By-Pass area would be best
- 75% bypass area & 63% Guilford College Rd.
- 50% said spacing should be 1 per 2000'
- Most comments were negative

Johnson said this was an informational survey to see how people felt about billboards. We are not asking for a vote or any recommendation at this time. Just gathering information.

Art Wise said he thinks a lot of people will be surprised by what is available in advertising. Electronic signs are much smaller than the previous billboards.

Johnson stated he does not believe the Town owns any property that would be appropriate for a billboard. O'Shea just showed the commercial & industrial districts possible so that the impact would be minimal.

Capes stated assuming the property across from the Sheetz site was developed, it may benefit from a digital billboard. We must look at 5 years in the future when the road project is finished. He feels if we wanted to test an area that would be the location to try. It needs to be a conservative approach. He is concerned the bypass will take traffic away from the Town and the businesses.

Oakley stated you cannot control the advertising going on the billboard. The advertisement could be for a business located out of Town.

It was discussed that the GTCC property just rezoned might be a good site for a billboard if GTCC wanted to allow it on their property. Johnson said it might be a good fit for GTCC. Presently the sign ordinance does not allow digital signs.

Capes felt it might be worth discussing permitting the current billboard be allowed to upgrade to a digital use. Oakley stated he does not see a benefit for the Town currently. However, 5-10 years down the road it might. We might possibly bring GTCC into the discussion regarding billboards. Johnson said that we can restrict the corridors where a billboard can be placed. (Such as high traffic generating areas.)

Newbill feels right now it will not make a big difference to Jamestown, but when the Bypass is complete it will. We need to have in place our restrictions before the Bypass is finished.

Art Wise stated he would like to look at ordinances and regulations of other Towns our size to see what they have in place. Johnson will research that.

Ted Johnson said we are looking at a concept that will stretch from the Duke Power Substation out to '85 back into Sedgefield & GTCC. That whole area will be thriving. If we can get ahead on these billboards. He can see an advantage to the Town.

Dot Perdue stated she was not surprised at the survey results. We need to consider what is best for the Town. She supports researching a restrictive billboard ordinance.

Daniel McRae said most of the survey comments were about aesthetics. He said the billboard displayed looked better than some signs in existence. He likes the way downtown is. To maintain that, we will have to find a way to let folks outside of the area know what is here.

Wise would like to keep this discussion on the agenda for the next several meetings. Also, check with GTCC and research ordinances of other towns & cities. Lynn Montgomery is Council Liaison and she can update the Council on the Planning Board's discussions. We could have a joint meeting with Council as well as meet with other outdoor advertisers.

5. Public Comment Period

Ray Schwab – 4606-1-A Crowne Lake Circle, asked if the Planning Board was considering an amendment to the sign ordinance. The Planning Board stated at present no billboards allowed. Johnson explained the procedures for amendments to the ordinance. The Planning Board makes recommendation to the Town Council however, the Town Council has the final decision. The billboard locations the Planning Board is discussing is in regard to local streets.

Schwab said if the prime purpose is to promote local businesses and not to censure content of the sign. He is not sure you can reach your aim of promoting only local businesses. It is not going to be easy.

Dan O'Shea said that 82% of his business is local. Their strength is by being local. We cannot restrict other businesses from advertising. But you will not see a lot of national advertising. The demand is going to be from local businesses within a 3 mile radius from the Town Hall.

The suggestion of perhaps digitizing the existing billboard is something O'Shea is willing to do. He has to look at the structure and make sure it is engineered for the additional weight of the digital face.

6. Other Business –

Eddie Oakley asked if there were any fees and restrictions on Food Trucks. Johnson stated that the Town does not have privilege licenses, so no fees are required by Food Trucks in Town. The Food Trucks are licensed and inspected by Guilford County Health Dept. The owner of the property must give permission for the Food Truck to park on their property. Oakley asked if we needed to address restrictions on Food Trucks.

Johnson said if you direct him to research it, he could find ordinances from other towns. Oakley said restaurants must pay rent on their storefronts. Food Trucks do not pay rent. He thinks we need to have a feel for where we want to go with this. Johnson said this came up in Greensboro not too long ago. Greensboro Council ruled it was free enterprise and that competition is healthy. Capes said it adds diversity to the Town. Johnson will research and provide sample ordinances for the next meeting.

Still under other business –

Oakley stated there is a corner lot at Forestdale & Guilford Rd. that is in horrible condition. Others have complained to him. Johnson said there is a complaint form that needs to be filled out and he can then investigate. Art Wise asked for him to wait. He would like to see if people in his Church would help clean it up. The person that lives there is 90 years old and incapable of taking care of it.

Johnson advised the Planning Board that we will have an Oct. 14th, 2013 meeting.

John Capes made a motion to adjourn. Richard Newbill made a second to the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The meeting ended at 7:45 pm.