

MINUTES
Town of Lexington

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

January 23, 2013

The Town of Lexington's Planning Commission held a meeting on January 23, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall, 111 Maiden Lane, Lexington, South Carolina. The meeting was attended by: Chairman Keith Frost, Vice-Chairman Frank Berry and Commissioners Brian Amick, John Bartlett, Roscoe Caughman, Jamie Fite, Edwin Gerace, Lisa Gibson and Sammy Hendrix.

Others in attendance were: Council Liaison Kathy Maness, Council Members Steve MacDougall and Todd Shevchik, Town Administrator Britt Poole, Municipal Attorney Brad Cunningham, Director of Planning, Building and Technology John Hanson, Director of Parks, Streets and Sanitation Dan Walker, Engineer Rosemarie Nuzzo, Network Administrator Darrell Pritchard and Assistant Municipal Clerk Karen Hanner.

There were approximately twelve citizens present. No one from the news media was present.

INVOCATION AND CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Frost introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the Planning Commission meeting. He announced that the meeting was being broadcast live on the Town's Time Warner Channel 2 and would be replayed several times during the week. Commission members and Staff then introduced themselves. Commissioner Gibson gave the invocation. Chairman Frost led in the Pledge of Allegiance and called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Vice-Chairman Berry to approve the Planning Commission Minutes from October 17, 2012 as submitted. The motion to approve the Minutes was unanimously carried.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. Planned Development at 206 and 212 North Church Street

Recommendation on request to rezone the property

Consideration of site plan (approval contingent on rezoning the property)

Director of Planning, Building and Technology John Hanson presented the request from Connelly Development LLC to rezone the property at 206 and 212 North Church Street from General Commercial (GC) to High Density Residential (HDR) with a Planned Development overlay. Mr. Hanson stated Mr. Connelly would like to develop a 56 unit multi-family housing facility. The properties include buildings that are in the Town's Historic Inventory but are not zoned Historic. Mr. Hanson stated Mr. Connelly is also requesting site plan approval contingent on rezoning the property. The property is bordered by North Church

Street which is classified as a Collector Road and Corley Street which is classified as a Local Road.

Mr. Kevin Connelly of Connelly Development LLC introduced himself and began a presentation on the proposed development. He stated the building would have parking underneath with a lower level having the appearance of a commercial storefront with metal awnings over the windows. The North Church Street side would have a secured entrance with an elevator lobby. The parking underneath would be contained and not visible from the street, well lit along with camera security from a management company. The plan is for 56 units with balconies. The site plan shows the parking lot but the building would be a U-shape over the parking area. The back of the property adjacent to the dental office would be the site of the stormwater retention with landscape screening. He pointed out that the drawing does not show the planned exit from the parking area on the North Church Street side of the building. The commercial element includes a plan for a downstairs coffee shop or beauty parlor. Mr. Connelly stated that at a meeting with some of the neighbors there were comments requesting modifying the appearance of the building to give it a more residential feel. He stated that they would do what they could to make it something Lexington could be proud of and that this is a preliminary plan. He stated the intended tenants would be at 60% of area median income which would be roughly \$40,000 a year. The building will consist of 70% exterior brick with HardiPlank siding to try to make it blend in with the neighborhood and also be as maintenance free as possible.

Vice-Chairman Berry asked if the property is deed restricted. Mr. Connelly said the property is similar to 26 other complexes in South Carolina and would be general managed by his property management company. Mr. Connelly stated the property management company conducts criminal background checks, credit and rental history background checks.

Chairman Frost stated that the property is very small. He asked Mr. Connelly to address green space and recreational activities for residents. Mr. Connelly stated there is a buffer around the property with landscaping and there is a courtyard in the building over the parking deck. He said the Town has several parks provided for citizens within walking distance of the property.

Chairman Frost asked for more information about secure access. Mr. Connelly stated the property would be like a gated community with a key card or access code to use the elevator. The stairwells would be exit only. Guests would use a directory to call the resident who could tune their TV to show a picture of lobby. The resident would enter a code to allow access.

Vice-Chairman Berry asked for more information about the parking area. Mr. Connelly replied that the parking area under the building would not be gated as that could potentially cause traffic to stack into the street. The garage has lighting and security camera monitoring.

Vice-Chairman Berry asked a question about the planned parking for the lower level shops. Mr. Connelly responded that they would be open to public with guest parking in the parking area. The plan has 56 units with 120 parking spaces.

Commissioner Caughman asked a question about the total acreage of project. Mr. Connelly stated the planned project is 1.86 acres. Mr. Caughman stated that is different from the information the Commission was provided. He said the handout shows the property with the LICS building which is not a part of this project. Chairman Frost stated the concern was how much is too much for a piece of property.

Town Administrator Britt Poole clarified that the provided map shows the 2.1 acres before the .3 acre triangle parcel that contains the former LICS building was divided from it leaving the 1.86 project area. The Lexington County tax map provided has not been updated.

Mr. Connelly stated that the project is for 56 units in an urban setting. Part of their goal is to get more people downtown. This is an attempt to try to do that.

Vice-Chairman Berry asked if the impact of the future traffic improvements with plans for a one way pair had been considered. Chairman Frost commented that the development was not on West Butler Street.

Chairman Frost asked those who wished to speak to please introduce themselves and limit their comments to three to five minutes.

Mr. David Rhoad introduced himself as President of the St Stephen's Lutheran Church Congregation Council. He stated that directly across the street from the proposed development is the church cemetery which is sacred ground. He was also concerned about the safety issues already existing with pedestrians crossing West Butler Street.

Pastor Patrick W. Riddle from St Stephen's Lutheran Church said he was here with Beth Haggard from the St Stephen's Lutheran Church Pre-School. He questioned the seeming hurry on this project. He requested that Mr. Connelly talk with their Congregational Council and address their concerns. He stated Butler Street is already a mini by-pass for traffic. He expressed concern that children would play in the cemetery.

Mr. Jake Moore, Jr. stated he is the parent of two children at St Stephen's Lutheran Church Pre-School and a business owner on Main Street. He voiced his objection to this project. He expressed frustration at not being able to get a speed bump on West Butler Street to help with traffic problems and now there is a plan to "build a monstrosity". He said it was not a good idea.

Mr. Mike Bledsoe stated that with his partner Bob Hudson, they are owners of the adjacent property at North Lake Drive, North Church Street and Corley Street. When they renovated their building they used the design from the old bank building. Their building has a frame shop and photography studio. He stated they felt the development of downtown Lexington would encourage specialty shops and restaurants. He stated he didn't see that this plan would enhance the downtown area. He felt the property could be put to a better use.

Chuck Corley introduced himself as a neighborhood property owner on Berly Street. He said he was at a meeting yesterday afternoon regarding this project and the recurring thought at the meeting was that this was an awfully big building. He said that he felt it was not a good use for that piece of property and he had hoped for something that would be a better fit. Mr. Corley stated he had spoken to other residents in the Historic Triangle neighborhood who agreed the plan was not a good fit for the area.

Mr. Connelly stated that there was a short window of time to meet application deadlines. He said he would be glad to meet with any groups to talk about the project. The building will have open space in a courtyard area in the center. There are plans for wood columns, porches, trim work resembling the new Lexington Chamber building and a cupola similar to the one on the Palmetto Collegiate Institute. He shared pictures of a property at Daniel Island with Commission members.

Pastor Riddle asked about the plan for 56 units and the maximum occupancy and also why there seemed to be a rush to do this. Mr. Connelly responded the plan is for 14 one bedroom units, 28 two bedroom units, and 14 three bedroom units with requirements for no more than two occupants per bedroom. He stated there is an application deadline in March with State Housing for Federal Tax Credits as a funding source.

Chairman Frost stated the focus is on downtown Lexington and they have looked at the Comprehensive Plan. He said the goal is to find the right catalyst.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Bartlett to deny the request to rezone 206 and 212 North Church Street. The motion to deny was carried by vote of Chairman Frost, Vice-Chairman Berry and Commissioners Amick, Bartlett, Caughman, Fite, Gibson and Hendrix. The motion to deny was opposed by Commissioner Gerace.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Bartlett to deny the site plan. The motion to deny was carried by vote of Chairman Frost, Vice-Chairman Berry and Commissioners Amick, Bartlett, Caughman, Fite, Gibson and Hendrix. The motion to deny was opposed by Commissioner Gerace.

2. Annexation of 169 and 179 Industrial Drive TMS# 5498-05-004 and 5498-05-015

Recommendation on zoning and road classification

Director of Planning, Building and Technology John Hanson stated Quadco-South Carolina, Inc. owns a property located at 169 Industrial Drive and recently purchased another property located at 179 Industrial Drive. The company has petitioned to annex both properties which combined are approximately 3.74 acres. Quadco is located on the 169 Industrial Drive property and a residence is on the 179 Industrial Drive property. At this time, there are no plans to expand the business onto the 179 Industrial Drive lot.

Due to the surrounding conditions and the potential use of the property, the requested zoning for both parcels is Industrial (IND) and the recommended road classification for Industrial Drive is Arterial and the recommended classification of Porsche Drive is Limited Local.

Chairman Frost asked if the access to the house was from Porsche Drive or Industrial Drive. Mr. Hanson responded that there is access to both roads.

Vice-Chairman Berry made a motion to approve Commissioner Bartlett seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor. Motion carried.

COMMENTS

Councilmember Maness thanked the Commissioners for all their hard work and reminded everyone about the Lexington County Museum Gala on February 2 at the Lexington Municipal Complex. Valentine's Day is February 14th. She reminded everyone that Town Hall offices will be closed on Monday February 18th in observation of President's Day.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further comments or questions, a motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and seconded by Commissioner Fite to adjourn Planning Commission meeting. The motion was unanimously carried by all those present.

The Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

Chairman Frost thanked everyone for attending the Planning Commission meeting and stated that it would be replayed on the Town's Channel 2 several times during the week.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Hanner
Assistant Municipal Clerk

APPROVED:

Keith Frost
Chairman

FOIA COMPLIANCE – Public notification of this meeting was published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Lexington requirements.