

MINUTES

TOWN OF LEXINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION April 27, 2016

The Planning Commission held a Work Session on April 27, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room C at Town Hall, 111 Maiden Lane, Lexington, South Carolina. The meeting was attended by: Chairman Keith Frost, Vice-Chairman Frank Berry, Commissioners Brian Amick, John Bartlett, Jamie Fite, Lisa Gibson, and Sammy Hendrix. Commissioners Roscoe Caughman and Jeannie Michaels were absent (excused).

Others in attendance were: Town Councilmember Ron Williams, Director of Planning, Building & Technology John Hanson, and Assistant Municipal Clerk Karen Hanner. One citizen was in attendance. No one was present from the news media.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Frost welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Annexation of Lexington County Tax Map #4200-02-112 Located at 284 Highway 378 West**

Chairman Frost referred to the meeting earlier this month where the Commission approved a recommendation for PR1 zoning for this property. He said the developer has requested additional time to consider what impact that will have on the project.

Mr. Bill Dixon from the Mungo Company thanked the Commission for agreeing to meet with him. He stated that after looking at the requirements for the lot and setbacks, a PR1 zoning would make this project economically unfeasible. Mr. Dixon said the reduction in density would be almost 20%. He asked to look back at the comments and concerns expressed by the Commission at the previous meeting and consider their response to those concerns.

Mr. Dixon referred to the traffic plan in the resubmittal packet from the April meeting and the changes made by Mr. Bill Flowers of Civil Engineering of Columbia. Mr. Dixon stated that the Town of Lexington does not have a specific criteria for determining Collector roads so they used the Lexington County criteria of 2000 counts per day which would only occur at the entrance to the subdivision. They did an analysis of probable traffic patterns to exit the neighborhood and possible problems caused by street parking which could block an emergency vehicle. He noted that the connectivity provides two to three alternative routes. Mr. Dixon stated they concluded that the only logical place to widen the road would be near the intersection of road A and road B across from Lot 34. They said he felt this addressed that part of the concerns expressed in the meeting. He added that the island in front of Lots 1 and 2 has been shortened.

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Chairman Frost disagreed and stated he did not feel this addressed all of the concerns expressed at that meeting. He said based on his experience in Lexington with narrow streets and cars parked on the street, residents along the entire loop road would have issues. He was concerned about the loop street's curve radius with a car parked on it. An approaching vehicle would be blind.

Vice-Chairman Berry asked about the front setback measure. Mr. Dixon responded 20 feet. Mr. Berry asked if it could be 25 feet. Mr. Dixon stated they could probably do that. Mr. Berry asked about the garages. Mr. Dixon answered that the homes all have two car garages. He added it will be a nice neighborhood with home prices in the mid-200s to 300. Commissioner Fite asked the average square footage of the homes and Mr. Dixon answered the average is 2800 to 3000 sqft with some of them smaller or larger.

Councilmember Williams asked if the creek at the back of the property at the curve of the loop road is part of the project. Mr. Dixon said it was but would be part of the open space. Councilmember Williams asked if it was possible to move the lots a few feet to widen the radius on the road loop. Mr. Dixon responded that they could look into that but they would need to study the amount of open space and requirements for stormwater management. Vice Chairman Berry commented that stormwater controls require detention ponds to be larger. Commissioner Fite asked if the pond visible from US 378 is part of this project. Mr. Dixon responded that it is not.

Chairman Frost asked if the house plans were for single garage doors. Mr. Dixon said the standard is a double garage door that is sixteen feet wide. Chairman Frost noted that you couldn't park two vehicles in that. Vice Chairman Berry stated it was more important to have a larger setback so you could park up to four vehicles on the driveway. Commissioner Bartlett asked how many vehicles would park at a four bedroom house. Mr. Dixon responded that the traffic engineers use a national average of ten trips per day per house. Chairman Frost observed that people don't want to shuffle vehicles and they will park on the road. He said it is a road width issue. Mr. Dixon noted that construction trucks are able to negotiate around parked cars. Chairman Frost said that it is difficult when two are parked across from each other. Mr. Dixon stated some people place a parking pad to the side. Chairman Frost asked how to do that with a five foot side setback. Vice Chairman Berry noted that sometimes it will work and sometimes not depending on the lot.

Commissioner Fite asked if no parking on the street could be in the Covenant. Mr. Dixon said that is a part of the Covenant and enforcement is an issue. Letters can be sent to get situations corrected.

Commissioner Bartlett expressed uncertainty as to a course of action to address their concerns. He noted that many proposals for neighborhood projects in Lexington seem to put a lot of cars on an already busy street with narrow roads and minimum setbacks. As planners, they want to figure out a way to improve that. Commissioner Bartlett asked about the proposed improvements to the intersection of US 378 and Gibson Road.

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Mr. Dixon stated that from their perspective, they could go a quarter mile down the road and the Town would receive the same impact. They are looking for predictability.

Chairman Frost stated that the Planning Commission met with Council to consider growth to the north and west with areas of undeveloped land and how they want the Town to look. Mr. Dixon responded that the development community would like to have those discussions. Chairman Frost said that as citizens of the Town they have a responsibility to determine what the Town will look like. He stated safety and sustainability were concerns and they want feedback from the development community.

Mr. Dixon said they looked at the proposed improvement to add an additional left turn lane into Town at the US 378 and Gibson Road intersection. He stated they were not opposed to cooperating with the cost on some level. Mr. Dixon added that they do not think it is fair that when there is a pre-existing problem, the next developer that comes along is the one that gets to foot the bill. They would participate in some way. Mr. Dixon said he got a cost estimate of around \$60,000.

Chairman Frost responded that this is the first significant development down US 378 and this is an intersection that is already an issue with congestion in peak hours. Most of the residents from this subdivision will add to this traffic. He said they wanted to look at the options.

Councilmember Ron Williams asked about the developed area near the project. Mr. Dixon answered that there are some older brick houses there but not a large subdivision. Mr. Williams asked if there was any plan for interconnectivity or a second entrance for future development. Mr. Dixon said that was something they could look into but he didn't know at this time.

Commissioner Sammy Hendrix noted there are three parcels for sale up the road and he agreed it would be fair for other developers to participate in the cost of improvements. He stated that often they hear from residents who complain about traffic when new developments are built. Vice Chairman Berry commented that no one wants to increase taxes to pay for road improvements.

Commissioner Bartlett said revised requirements will need to be defined for PR1 and PR2 in the future because at this time new developments only meet the minimum requirements. He added nobody wants to do a PR1. Mr. Dixon stated a real problem with the PR1 was the 10 foot side setbacks. Commissioner Bartlett asked if the PR1 zoning with a variance for a five foot side setback would solve the problem. Mr. Dixon responded that they looked at that scenario and the combination of the front setback with the minimum lot size would negatively affect the density enough so that it wouldn't work. He added the highly sought Lexington area affects property price and that makes it harder to work out the numbers.

Chairman Frost commented that if changes to the requirements are made, a property may sit unsold until the price comes down. He said Lexington is the place that people want

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to be and planners need to shape the community the way it needs to look. Commissioner Fite stated that communities across the state and the country are doing that and trying to make their towns better.

Commissioner Bartlett asked how a reduction in the number of homes built in the subdivision would affect the price of a home. Mr. Dixon responded that it would mean a minimal reduction in the infrastructure for a lower number of lots which could raise the home price \$20-30,000. He added their competitor down the road in unincorporated Lexington County could sell at a lower price. Commissioner Hendrix stated the Town would need to change the standards.

Chairman Frost said that they would prefer to see a PR1 but he wanted to look at options that could make this work to the PR2 standard. He asked about the cost of making improvements to the width of the loop road. Mr. Dixon said their estimate had looked at widening all of the roads with the associated increase in stormwater management. He added that they were looking at the extra costs to be sure of the possible benefits.

Commissioner Bartlett stated that during their first meeting on this project, they made suggestions. He said when the new plan was brought back for the second meeting he felt they only got the minimum of the options. Mr. Dixon said he was at the meeting today to find out about moving the project forward. Commissioner Bartlett said he would make a suggestion as a compromise for widening Road A on the far side of the project to Road F cul-de-sac and having 25 foot setbacks going back to a PR2. Mr. Dixon said they were willing to go back to the drawing board to determine what works.

Chairman Frost commented that he hoped something could be worked out to send to Council about the US 378 and Gibson Road interchange. He felt the proposed additional lane was a major improvement for the estimated cost. Mr. Dixon said they would be willing to enter into a separate agreement with the Town.

Mr. Hanson suggested that to move this forward it continue to Council as PR1 for a First Reading of the Annexation with the note that there are discussions regarding reconsidering a recommendation of PR2. The revised site plan would come back to the next Planning Commission meeting for reconsideration and a recommendation for the Final Reading at the next Council meeting. Councilmember Williams agreed to present the item with that notation.

Commissioner Bartlett made a motion that the Planning Commission reconsider the PR1 zoning on the Counts property annexation and review the Madison Park subdivision revised site plan. Commissioner Hendrix seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Amick asked about the possibility of a deceleration lane along US 378 at the entrance. Mr. Dixon said they had discussed that possibility with SCDOT but there are storage limitations due to the grade and the guardrail. Chairman Frost added that the

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Town Engineer could look at possibly modifying the speed limit in that section of US 378.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Hendrix made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Berry and unanimously carried.

The Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

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.