

MINUTES
Planning Board Regular Meeting
E.S. Douglass Community Center, 1185 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Thursday, August 24, 2023, at 6:00 PM

Chair Westbrook called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Diane Westbrook, Kim Wade, Andy Bleggi, Matthew Walden, John Earp, Monica Harvey and Jennifer Garner were present.

Andy Bleggi made a motion, which was seconded by Matthew Walden, to approve the Minutes of the July 20, 2023 regular meeting. The motion carried.

PRELIMINARY FORUM:

PD-03-23 Planned Development – Preliminary Development Plan for Morganton Park South Phase 3

Robert Koontz submitted an application on behalf of Midland Atlantic Properties for a Preliminary Development Plan to develop a 101,840 square foot wholesale retail building, a fuel service station without a convenience store and a 2,050 square foot drive-thru restaurant on 13.89± acres.

Matthew Walden made a motion, which was seconded by Jennifer Garner, to open the preliminary forum. The motion carried.

Senior Planner Alaina Mallette stated that the Preliminary Development Plan is Phase 3 of the development under Conceptual Development Plan PD-08-21 for Morganton Park South and provided a Power Point overview of the application. She stated that the proposal falls short of the intent of a PD district to encourage shared parking and to integrate public spaces and amenities to promote community gatherings and activities. The CDP mentions things like patios, park features and trellises, none of which have been included in the Preliminary Development Plan. There is an issue with the geometry of the connection to the parkway; however, the applicant is aware of the issue and it will be addressed during technical site plan review.

Ms. Mallette stated that she had met with James Michel, Town Engineer, and expressed concerns regarding the pedestrian connection between the drive-thru restaurant and the sidewalk, the connectivity of utilities with adjacent phases, which was addressed, and the geometry of the connection with Carolina Green Parkway. Noteworthy issues for Planning staff included the geometry of the connection of Southern Road and Carolina Green Parkway, public street lighting, the lack of outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities for community gathering and activities and landscape screening of the fuel station. Also, dedication of the Parkway was not

mentioned in the application, the number of parking spaces being proposed exceeds the number required, and building articulation was not provided.

John Silverman of Midland Atlantic Properties acknowledged that the number of parking spaces being requested for the restaurant exceeds the number called for in the UDO but the additional spaces are necessary. Landscape screening of the fuel center will be incorporated and regarding outdoor amenities, there is a large gazebo in close proximity to this phase, there will be multiple gazebos throughout the overall development and the Starbucks will also have an outdoor patio area.

Bob Koontz provided a Power Point of the site plan and transportation plan and stated that the proposed uses will generate less traffic than what was previously proposed. He stated that the entire CDP area is required to have 19.8 acres (20%) of open space, with 9.9 acres (10%) being usable, and Phase 3 will include ± 3.40 acres of open space.

Andy Bleggi asked if the power substation will be screened and Mr. Silverman responded that Duke Energy will provide some screening but they are going to add additional screening along Carolina Green Parkway.

Mr. Bleggi inquired about a buffer around the delivery area and dumpster site and Mr. Koontz responded that there will be a 20' landscape buffer in that area.

Monica Harvey inquired about the pedestrian access to Starbucks and Mr. Koontz responded that there will be a crosswalk.

Mr. Bleggi asked how many stacking spaces would be provided for the drive-thru and Mr. Koontz responded 16 spaces.

Mr. Earp asked Mr. Koontz if the additional parking spaces were based on the requirement for a retail operation and Mr. Koontz confirmed.

Chair Westbrook asked Ms. Mallette if the issues listed in her presentation had been addressed to the Town's satisfaction.

Ms. Mallette responded that pedestrians accessing Starbucks will have to cross the drive-thru lane and even though the retailer wants more parking, it is just not what the Morganton Road Overlay allows.

Chair Westbrook asked how that will be resolved.

Mr. Koontz stated that the original Morganton Road Overlay was created several years ago and over time the property has been developed on a parcel-by-parcel basis and they now view it as being more like the Target shopping center.

Ms. Mallette responded that the Morganton Overlay allows between one (1) space per 400 SF and one (1) space for 250 SF which works out to between 5 and 8 parking spaces.

Jennifer Garner asked if the large retail building was going to have as much parking as would be allowed.

Mr. Mallette responded that they are within the range permitted by the CDP.

Ms. Garner commented that there will be less parking spaces overall.

Ms. Mallette responded that these are two separate parcels.

Ms. Garner responded that the parking lots will be connected and you will have to drive through one to get to the other.

Mr. Bleggi commented that he had no issues with the amount of parking.

Mr. Koontz stated that articulation of the building will be addressed through architectural review and landscape screening will be addressed during site plan review.

Mr. Earp asked if there were any safety concerns with regard to pedestrians crossing the drive-thru lane.

B.J. Grieve responded that the drive-thru will have to be designed appropriately to ensure safety but the arrangement is not unusual.

Lynn Goldhammer, Pinehurst resident, asked if there will be housing above the large retail building and if additional traffic lights are planned and Mr. Silverman responded no.

Iris Kelly Wallace asked if there will only be the one roundabout for the 488 new parking spaces and expressed concern about the increased traffic and navigational challenges.

Mr. Koontz responded that Southern Road connects back to Brucewood Road and Brucewood Road connects to Morganton Road and also to US 15-501. A Traffic Analysis was done for the entire CDP and the four-lane parkway with a roundabout that will go out to Morganton Road was created. This will probably help traffic and take some traffic away from the 15-501/Morganton Road intersection. There will be a traffic light at Carolina Green Parkway and Morganton Road

and also at Carolina Green Parkway and US 15-501. NCDOT is planning some major improvements which have been delayed due to the US Open.

Andy Bleggi made a motion, which was seconded by Matthew Walden, to close the preliminary forum. The motion carried.

Kim Wade made a motion, which was seconded by Matthew Walden, to adopt the following for transmission to the Town Council as a result of the August 24, 2023 Preliminary Forum on application PD 03 23 for the Morganton Park South Phase 3 Preliminary Development Plan:

The information presented at the forum indicated that the following issue be considered in applying the criteria for a PDP to application PD-03-23: the impact of traffic and attach a link of the DOT study when the project was submitted and future NCDOT plans posted on the NCDOT website.

The motion carried by a 7-0 vote.

PUBLIC HEARING:

LRP-01-23 Southern Pines 2040 Comprehensive Plan

A Public Review Draft of the new Comprehensive Plan was posted online on June 30, 2023 and the public was encouraged to read the document and submit comments. Meetings with the Community Advisory Committee and the public were held in July of 2023 and planning staff made themselves available to the public at office hours events to answer questions and collect comments. A revised version of the Public Review Draft entitled "Public Hearing Draft" was posted online on August 4, 2023.

Andy Bleggi made a motion, which was seconded by Jennifer Garner, to open the public hearing. The motion carried.

Senior Planner Alaina Mallette presented a Power Point overview of the Comprehensive Plan update project and stated that Planning staff was in support of the Plan as written but would also stand behind it with any potential modifications that do not essentially and fundamentally change the balance that the consultant has attempted to create between all of the different opinions, values and ideas of the community.

Community Development Specialist Rachel Mann, project manager, presented a Power Point of the numerous opportunities for community engagement that were offered throughout the process in an effort to hear from as many people as possible and specifically those who live, work and play in Southern Pines.

Matt Nooncaster of City Explained Incorporated and lead consultant on the Plan update project, provided a detailed overview of the project timeline and public interest, which included 674 views and/or downloads of the Public Comment Draft of the Plan. He felt like the plan was filled with shared wins and compromises and encouraged those whose exact ideas were not represented to try to find where there might be consensus and something that they could support.

Bob Koontz of Koontz Jones Design, present on behalf of the owners of the Southern Pines Golf Club, summarized a letter from the owner requesting consideration of adding a portion of the Southern Pines Golf Club property that is not presently being used as a golf course to the Land Use Map as a Designated Neighborhood Activity Center.

Andy Bleggi asked if the proposal had been mentioned during the Plan update process and Mr. Koontz responded that it was brought up late in the update process.

Robert Jackson, 430 N. Hardin Street, expressed concern regarding the rapid growth in the area and the overwhelming congestion, and also requested that the long-time residents be taken into consideration.

Felicia Winfield, 315 Austin Ridge Circle, expressed concerns regarding gentrification and the lack of policies regarding residential development resulting in higher-priced homes that are not consistent with the character of West Southern Pines and higher property taxes. She asked that the risks to West Southern Pines legacy homeowners be taken into consideration.

Paula Harris, 953 W. Michigan Avenue, expressed concerns regarding the amount of growth and increased traffic in the area.

Jacqueline Ross, 1000 S. Hardin Street, stated that people who have lived here their whole lives are being displaced and requested that the West Southern Pines charter to be included in the Plan as part of the Town's history.

Oliver Hines, a lifelong resident of Southern Pines, stated that West Southern Pines is not being treated fairly and also expressed concern regarding excessive speeding on Pennsylvania Avenue and that growth needs to slow down.

Iris Kelly Wallace, 1395 W. Michigan Avenue, expressed concern about growth management, increased traffic and lack of consideration for the residents.

Janet McSwain expressed concern regarding displacement of longtime residents due to higher taxes and rents that are not affordable.

Mary Rocca, 782 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, stated that the Plan is entitled “2040 Comprehensive Plan” and one year seems like a very short period of time to plan for what will occur in 17 years. She supports the major points in the Plan but the language specific to gentrification with regarding to West Southern Pines could be tightened up and made stronger. The 2016 Comprehensive Long Range Plan has a whole section dedicated to the West Southern Pines Overlay with a lot of suggestions and none of them have been implemented. She asked that as Planning staff works towards updating the UDO to include stronger protections for West Southern Pines in general and to keep the legacy homeowners front and center in their minds.

Lynn Goldhammer asked if Southern Pines is going to become a “15-minute city.”

Lynn Thompson, 957 Sandavis Road, stated that the Plan acknowledges that gentrification is a problem but the solutions are vague.

Barry Huggins, 455 N. May Street, stated that he served on the Community Advisory Committee and felt that the process had been exceptionally well handled and he applauded staff and Mr. Nooncaster’s efforts and urged the Board to adopt the Plan.

Marsh Smith, 568 Santee Road, recommended density averaging for non-contiguous parcels instead of using the Town’s watershed allocations for high density areas; simplifying development regulations; preserving affordable housing by establishing a community land trust, i.e. Durham Community Land Trustees, whereby someone buys a home but leases the land on which the home is located; and the preservation the Southern Pines Country Club land to ensure that it is not developed.

Iris Kelly Wallace asked if the Board had received the emails that were submitted regarding recommended changes to the Plan.

Mr. Nooncaster responded that all of the comments that were received were considered and when the public hearing draft was written he had all of the comments that had been submitted and worked with Town staff to revise the document.

Ms. Wallace reiterated that the Board was not privy to the emails that had been submitted.

Kim Wade stated that the concerns regarding inclusionary policies that had been expressed during the hearing were included in a document that she submitted to the Board during the agenda meeting.

Mr. Nooncaster stated that while her specific email was not shared, Ms. Wade was saying that all of the issues were shared in her document.

Ms. Wade said she thought Ms. Wallace was saying that the emails were not shared with the Board and therefore it was not considered, but because she is from West Southern Pines herself she has the same issues and she shared those.

Ms. Wallace said no one had mentioned an affordable housing overlay district. She asked how to make sure she was heard by all entities going forward.

Chair Westbrook responded that the Board members do not need to see all of the emails. The consultant and Planning staff discern whether concerns have been addressed in the Plan. Any other changes that need to be made can be made amendments to the Plan going forward.

Mr. Nooncaster stated that he did not mind forwarding Ms. Wallace's email to the Board, but one of his responsibilities was to decipher all of the different comments and make edits which resulted in the public hearing draft for review.

Mr. Grieve stated that once the document was drafted it was released as a Public Review Draft and it was advertised as such and the community was given the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas. Additional meetings were held to receive ideas and thoughts and Mr. Nooncaster made revisions based on those comments and ideas. Some of the ideas were already in the Plan and some were enhanced based on Ms. Wallace's comments and the comments of others regarding similar issues, and then the Public Hearing Draft was released. A majority of the items in Ms. Wallace's email have been addressed in the Plan.

Ms. Wallace asked how to go about ensuring that all parties involved receive her input.

Mr. Nooncaster suggested that if she had an idea the Board would have to consider proposing an amendment during the meeting or if she found places that she thought the language should be revised she could make that recommendation to the Town Council for their consideration.

Joanne Gillis, 855 Massachusetts Avenue, expressed concerns regarding the lack of affordable housing.

Andy Bleggi made a motion, which was seconded by John Earp, to close the public hearing. The motion carried.

Kim Wade stated that based on the map on pages 104 and 105 of the Plan, it is not going to be affordable for anyone who currently lives in that area. It appears that the Town is being marketed to attract newcomers who are more affluent and able to live here and it changes the entire landscape of the community. A living wage would relieve some of the burden residents face and the residents of West Southern Pines District Overlay want to hear solutions that will allow them to continue to live here.

Monica Harvey listed each of the 37 proposed modification to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Board comments and the Board's conclusion regarding each modification.

Monica Harvey made a motion, which was seconded by Andy Bleggi, that after reviewing the draft of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and supplemental documents and after hearing from the public at an advertised public hearing and after holding Planning Board discussion regarding the Plan, the Planning Board recommends approval of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to the Town Council with the following modifications: those listed in the attachment entitled "Final List of Modifications" and recommend final proofreading of the document for grammar. The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Ms. Mallette stated that there would be an agenda meeting and a regular meeting in September.

No new business was discussed.

John Earp made a motion, which was seconded by Matthew Walden, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 PM.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted:

Cindy Williams
Secretary to the Planning Board