

**MEETING OF THE
GREENSBORO PLANNING BOARD
JANUARY 15, 2020**

The Greensboro Planning Board meeting was held on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 4:00 pm in the Council Chamber of the Melvin Municipal Office Building. Board members present were: Chair Steve Allen, Mike Cooke, Dave Blackman, Homer Wade, Richard Bryson, Donald Brandon, Carol Carter, and Emanuel Clark. Planning staff present included Steve Galanti, Luke Carter, Jason Earliwine, Jeff Sovich, and Russ Clegg. Also present was Andrew Kelly, from the City Attorney's Office and Cynthia Blue from the Department of Neighborhood Development.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 18, PLANNING BOARD
MEETING (APPROVED AS AMENDED)**

Ms. Carter requested to have the words, "no new development" on Page 6, paragraph 5 stricken from the minutes as she did not feel those words expressed her opinion on the matter. No other comments or concerns were expressed regarding the minutes.

Mr. Clark moved to approve the amended minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting, seconded by Mr. Brandon. The Board voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Blackman, Carter, Bryson, Clark, Brandon, and Wade. Nays: None).

Mr. Wade requested to be recused from the first annexation item. Mr. Blackman moved to approve Mr. Wade's recusal, seconded by Mr. Bryson. The Board voted 6-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Blackman, Carter, Bryson, Clark, and Brandon. Nays: None).

Mr. Cooke joined the meeting already in progress.

ANNEXATIONS:

**PL(P) 20-01. PROPOSED CONTIGUOUS ANNEXATION OF 3701 GROOMETOWN ROAD
(13.98 ACRES) (RECOMMENDED APPROVAL)**

Mr. Carter advised a portion of the property of 3701 Groometown Road is within the City and the Board will only be considering the portion of the property that is currently not within the City. Mr. Carter added that this request includes 3709-ZZ Groometown Road, which is a small triangular portion of the parcel located at the southern corner of the west side of the property. The request is for future residential uses.

Mr. Carter stated the property is within Growth Tier 1. City Water and Sewer is available and will be provided upon annexation. Greensboro Fire Station #10 will provide service to this location and response time should improve. The Police Department can provide service to this site with little difficulty, but there will be a small impact at the buildout stage. This request received a favorable recommendation by the Technical Review Committee at their January 6, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Carter moved to recommend annexation to City Council, seconded by Mr. Clark. The Board voted 7-0-1 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Blackman, Brandon, Carter, Clark, Cooke, and Bryson. Nays: None. Recuse: Wade.).

Mr. Wade resumed his seat at the dais.

PL(P) 20-02. PROPOSED SATELLITE ANNEXATION OF 1308 AND 1310 RANHURST ROAD (1.598 Acres) (RECOMMENDED APPROVAL)

Mr. Carter stated the property is located in Growth Tier 3. City Water and Sewer is available by connecting to an 8 inch water and sewer main located along the property frontage. City Fire Station #57 can provide service to this location, with the continued assistance of McLeansville Station #47, for non-medical events. Response time should slightly improve upon annexation. The Police Department can provide service to this site with minimum impact. Mr. Carter stated the Technical Review Committee recommended approval at their January 6, 2020 meeting.

Upon a question from Ms. Carter, Mr. Carter responded that the property owner is requesting access to the water and sewer lines that run along the front of the properties.

Mr. Blackman moved to recommend annexation to City Council, seconded by Mr. Bryson. The Board voted 8-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Blackman, Brandon, Carter, Clark, Cooke, Wade and Bryson. Nays: None).

EASEMENT RELEASES:

Chair Allen advised that items 3a through 3c, Easement Releases, are continued to the next meeting due to lack of information from certain utility companies.

Mr. Wade requested to be recused from the items 4a and 4b. Mr. Blackman moved to approve Mr. Wade's recusal, seconded by Mr. Bryson. The Board voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Blackman, Carter, Bryson, Clark, Cooke, and Brandon. Nays: None).

AMENDMENT TO GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE MAP (GFLUM)**CP 20-01: 4.06 ACRES AT 3701 AND 3709ZZ GROOMETOWN ROAD, FROM LOW RESIDENTIAL TO MIXED USE COMMERCIAL**

Mr. Sovich advised this request is in conjunction with an annexation and an original zoning request for these properties. The current designation is Low Residential and the proposed amendment is for Mixed Use Commercial. The Comprehensive Plan defines Low Residential as 3-5 dwelling units per acre, which includes the City's predominantly single-family neighborhoods, as well as other compatible housing types that be accommodated within this density range. Mr. Sovich provided the background and history of these properties to the Board members. The applicant requested this amendment of approximately 3.1718 acres of the subject property that lies within the City of Greensboro city limits and the remaining +/-13.98 acres of the subject property that lies within the County's jurisdiction, which is being proposed for annexation into the City.

Mr. Sovich stated the subject site is partially located outside of the city limits and is proposed to be annexed. He also stated that the Connections 2025 Land Use Goal 4.3 - Growth at the Fringe has the greatest bearing on the site and discussed the framework elements for the growth fringe and land use concept plan. Mr. Sovich referenced the map amendment designations and uses. He also stated that the applicant's circumstances warrant approval of the amendment. Images were shown depicting the site locations.

In response to a question from Mr. Blackman, Mr. Sovich stated County RS-40 zoning is basically one dwelling unit per 40,000 square feet of land area.

In response to a question from Ms. Carter, Mr. Sovich responded the triangle portion of 3709ZZ, mentioned by Mr. Carter in the annexation request, was included in the amendment and indicated where the triangle was on a displayed map. In response to a question from Ms. Carter, Mr. Sovich responded the property to the west contains a church.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:

Ms. Carter stated this was a wonderful example of the development concept discussed previously where the Land Use Plan introduces a mixed use type of development at the intersection of two major roads, with the plan designating the intersection as mixed use. Ms. Carter suggested additional buffers be considered due to the residential nature of the surrounding properties and was appreciative of the thoroughness of the staff report.

In response to a question from Mr. Cooke, Mr. Sovich explained how a GFLUM amendment from Low Residential to Mixed Use Commercial will allow the density being considered for multi-family housing and anticipated the final density on the site to be calculated at 12.83 dwelling units per acre, with a total of 220 units. The Low Residential category suggests up to 3 dwelling units per acre. Mr. Sovich stated that while this is an increase in density, it is not an increase to the densest category the zoning ordinance would allow.

In response to a question from Ms. Carter, Mr. Sovich responded the future land use category would consider multi-family and possibly some retail, but that consideration is not part of this proposal.

CP 20-02: 11.62 ACRES AT 2005 MITCHELL AVENUE, FROM LOW RESIDENTIAL TO MODERATE RESIDENTIAL.

Mr. Sovich advised this is a request in conjunction with a rezoning request for this property. The current designation is Low Residential and the proposed amendment is for Moderate Residential. The Comprehensive Plan defines the Low Residential designation as 3-5 dwelling units per acre, which includes the City's predominantly single-family neighborhoods, as well as other compatible housing types that be accommodated within this density range. The Comprehensive Plan defines the proposed Moderate-Residential designation as 5-12 dwelling units per acre, which will accommodate housing types ranging from small lots, single-family detached and attached housing, and other single-family dwellings such as townhomes to moderate-density, low-rise apartment buildings. The subject site is adjacent to large areas currently designated as low and moderate residential. Mr. Sovich demonstrated the patterns of development surrounding the site via aerial photographs and provided background and history of the property to the Board members. The Connections 2025 land use goals were cited regarding this property. Street level photographs depicting the current conditions on the site and developments around the site were presented to the Board members.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:

Mr. Blackman stated that the request appears to be compatible with the surrounding areas, but would like the builders to be sensitive to existing residential developments by providing extra buffers.

Ms. Carter stated this was a good GFLUM amendment request, considering the proximity of the Urban Loop. The amendment appears to be an appropriate residential use for the surrounding area and is cohesive with what is existing.

Mr. Wade resumed his position on the dais.

ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT:

UPDATE ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Clegg presented an update for the Comprehensive Plan process and provided a review of each section of the plan. Mr. Clegg advised the Board of how the maps contained within the Plan will be used in the rezoning process and spoke about the role the Board members will have in using the Plan. Mr. Clegg presented the Board members with a draft of the various sections within the Comprehensive Plan and the background for each. Mr. Clegg also stated the sources for the Plan and how they were obtained. Mr. Clegg stated the data within the packets backs up the findings and facts of the Plan, which represents a good analysis of the Plan itself.

Mr. Clegg referred to the structure of the plan and the vision of the plan. The goals, strategies, and visions of the plan were identified. He stated that staff is working on the implementation process using a more specific strategic plan. Mr. Clegg described, in detail, each of the values within the plan, and the commitment to equity and diversity, which includes inclusivity with jobs, housing, and people. Mr. Clegg stated the goal of the City of Greensboro is to become the greenest city in the southeast and presented the strategies to achieve that goal. The existing plans will be carried forward into the new plan. Mr. Clegg reviewed the process in place for GFLUM amendments, which will be presented to the Zoning Commission and then City Council. Mr. Clegg stated that current state law requires either the Zoning Commission or City Council to make one of three statements regarding a rezoning amendment, regardless whether it is a GFLUM amendment or not. Mr. Clegg provided details regarding the Anticipated Growth Maps.

In response to concerns expressed by Mr. Blackman, Mr. Clegg responded the plan is based on input consisting of public meetings and other community outreach. Mr. Blackman stated he is overwhelmed and unsure of what to ask at the Planning Board meetings and would like to request an informal Planning Board meeting to help with clarity. Mr. Blackman stated he has always been concerned about outside influences on the Plan and the accountability aspect for the implementation process. Mr. Clegg responded that he is aware of the large amount of information to digest and would be happy to meet informally to discuss the Plan further. Mr. Clegg also stated that he will send additional information to the Board regarding the draft Plan. He added that the implementation section is still being developed. In response to concerns expressed by Ms. Carter regarding the airport and suburban areas, Mr. Clegg responded the plan will help frame every zoning case discussion. He added that some zoning cases are more complex than others and that he did not want to make it sound like staff is creating a huge extra process. However, staff does want to ensure the Future Land Use Maps serve as an adequate key to understanding the plan policies and how a particular zoning designation is or is not supported by the Comprehensive Plan. There will not be a separate process for GFLUM amendments in that framework, but it would be an opportunity for the Planning Board to participate.

In response to a question from Ms. Carter, Mr. Clegg responded the Planning Board would not have an opportunity to comment on requests to amend the GFLUM as they would not be part of the Planning Board process. The Planning Board is charged with looking at long term planning and a bigger picture of changes which would result in a higher level discussion.

Ms. Carter stated that she has an issue with the Board not seeing Comprehensive Plan amendments when they are charged with keeping and maintaining of the GFLUM. The Board will not know when an amendment is approved. She also stated that at the very least, it should be available for informational purposes. Mr. Clegg stated staff will keep the Board regularly updated to the process.

In response to a question from Ms. Carter, Mr. Clegg stated that staff will present on this topic to the Board again. This particular presentation was meant as an overview. Mr. Clegg stated that he felt a workshop would be a great idea. He also informed the Board that staff would prefer the maps to be stand-alone documents to focus conversations about a particular rezoning case. Mr. Clegg advised that Greensboro is one of the few jurisdictions that require an official amendment process.

Ms. Carter stated she is concerned about the airport areas, the regulatory standing of the map, and the Board not being able to comment on amendments before they are approved. Ms. Carter thanked Mr. Clegg for his hard work and does feel a work session would be very beneficial for those wishing to attend.

In response to a question by Mr. Clark, Mr. Clegg responded that a lot of time was devoted to policies and working with other groups to create the new Plan. Staff has spoken to land use attorneys and others within the development community, but the City did not hire a consultant to create the new Plan. Mr. Clark stated he believes the new Plan reflects many of the Chamber of Commerce's goals to ensure sufficient and necessary infill to provide additional housing within the City, improve downtown Greensboro, and keep land available for larger companies that are interested in the relocating to our City. Mr. Clark recommended introducing this plan to the Chamber's Commission.

SCHEDULE AND UPDATE FOR 2019-2020 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS.

Ms. Cynthia Blue, Manager of Housing Services for the City's Neighborhood Development Department, presented the process and schedule for the 2020 Affordable Housing Development Request for proposals for affordable multi-family developments. Ms. Blue advised the Board that Valarie Moore is now the new CDBG Section Chief for the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Ms. Blue explained that the low income housing tax credit program, administered by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, is the largest subsidiary source for affordable housing development. She further explained that tax credits alone are often not enough to make a project work financially, and City funds are used to fill in gaps between what a project can afford to pay toward a bank debt and their tax credits and what it would actually cost to develop the project at an affordable level. There are long term affordability restrictions typically lasting 30 years or so which are placed on these types of properties. This request for proposals would be limited to NCHFA for the tax program. There is approximately 3.5 million dollars available in home and housing bond sources and they anticipate the process will be very compatible. It is anticipated the process will be very competitive, as they expect to have a larger number of applications than available funding will support.

Ms. Blue provided the schedule of the process. NCHFA will inform all of the applicants on the list who have projects located in Greensboro to apply for City funds. There is an online application process and the application deadline is March 9. Ms. Blue reminded the Board that she will be back before the Planning Board in April for review and recommendation to City Council, to which she will present at the public hearing on May 5. Deadlines for the developer's final applications to NCHFA is May 15 and awards will be announced approximately the third week of August. Ms. Blue stated she will be presenting to the Board again in February with the list of applicants and will be requesting volunteers from the Board to assist with the process.

In response to a question from Mr. Wade, Ms. Blue responded that when an approved project is forwarded to a finance agency and is not selected, the monies are returned to the general fund and are available for another project once approved.

In response to a question from Mr. Blackman, Ms. Blue responded that in past years, typically two to three members of the Planning Board have participated in the review process. These members are familiar with how the projects look, how the scoring process works, and understand what the recommendations are.

Mr. Allen stated the process is quite intensive but he would definitely advocate for anyone interested in the process, and also informed Ms. Blue that he would be participating.

ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR:

Chair Allen wished everyone a great and fruitful 2020.

ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS:

Ms. Carter asked how the Board would feel about attending a workshop on the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Clark, Mr. Blackman, Mr. Bryson, Mr. Wade, Ms. Carter and Chair Allen indicated their interest.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR ON ITEMS UNDER PLANNING BOARD AUTHORITY:

Judy Stalder, 1114 Southwest Gate Street, representing TREBIC, thanked staff for their work on the Planet Greensboro Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Stalder stated that after the small group meeting with developers, TREBIC believed the Plan would undergo another round of revisions before it is presented at a public hearing. Ms. Stalder stated the developers were overwhelmed and have not had the opportunity to review the text in conjunction with the maps presented. She also stated they were led to believe there would be changes in the way the maps were structured prior to going to a public hearing and that some time should be set aside for anyone who provided input into the Plan to review the finished Plan before it is presented at a public hearing. Mr. Clegg responded that there is scheduled time already, but if more time is needed, staff can make that happen. Staff does intend to follow up with those participants.

Ms. Stalder stated that she believes a public hearing in February and a ruling by City Council in March is premature. Ms. Carter stated it is an aggressive schedule. Ms. Stalder stated TREBIC handles government affairs for the Chamber of Commerce, and therefore they will participate in those meetings. They would like the Chamber to have time to review the Plan and understand how the maps and text will work together and ultimately be implemented.

Chair Allen stated a review is needed to determine what, if any, timeline can be utilized for potential changes, and this will need to be determined before any direct changes are made. Chair Allen appreciated Ms. Stalder's input.

Ms. Carter stated she felt strongly that February is too soon to present the Plan to City Council and hopes the Planning Department will consider her concern and amend the schedule. Mr. Clegg responded that staff can alter the schedule if needed and will work through that as the Plan moves forward.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES:

A motion was made by Mr. Wade to approve the absence of Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Blackman. The Board voted 8-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Cooke, Blackman, Carter, Bryson, Clark, Brandon, and Wade. Nays: None).

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Schwartz, FAICP
Planning Department, Director