

Minutes of the Meeting
Of the Municipal Planning Commission
Of the Town of Thompson's Station, Tennessee
January 22, 2013

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Municipal Planning Commission of the Town of Thompson's Station was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on the 22nd day of January, 2013, at the Thompson's Station Community Center with the required quorum. Members and staff in attendance were: George Ross, Chair; Tom Evans, Secretary; Carl Hubert, Commissioner; Sarah Benson, Commissioner; Willis Gilliam, Commissioner; Brad Wilson, Commissioner; Greg Langeliers, Town Administrator; Wendy Deats, Town Planner; Doug Goetsch, Town Recorder; Richard King, Building Official, Todd Moore, Town Attorney; and Leah Rainey, Town Clerk.

Minutes:

The minutes of the November 27, 2012 meeting were previously submitted. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the minutes with an amendment to note that Commissioner Wilson was present. Commissioner Hubert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Announcements:

Mrs. Deats announced that staff had conducted a meeting for builders the previous week, during which staff laid out some revised standards and expectations regarding the permit and inspection procedures. The two main changes discussed were revising the fee schedule to re-instate a \$50 re-inspection fee, and amending the 2006 RC to require building studs to be 16 inches on center instead of the current 24 inches, for interior, non-load-bearing walls. The fee schedule update was an item on tonight's agenda.

Mr. Langeliers announced that the town was working on plans for the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Thompson's Station commemorative event on Saturday, March 9 at Homestead Manor. He said volunteers could sign up at the sign in sheet on the front table tonight.

Old Business:

Zoning Discussion: Mrs. Deats noted that Commissioner Gilliam had requested a discussion regarding Commercial Zoning. Mrs. Deats said she would like to set a date for a joint work sessions with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to review staff's proposal for Zoning revisions, as well as recommendations for additional standards for the town's permitted use chart. Per the Commissioners' feedback, the date was set for Tuesday, February 5, 2013 at 6:00 pm in the Thompson's Station Community Center.

Signage Improvements funded with Spring Hill: Mrs. Deats said that the new flashing signage at the intersection of Thompson's Station Rd East and Buckner Lane had been installed. The town had split the cost with Spring Hill.

North Depot Update: Mrs. Deats said the Board of Mayor and Aldermen had heard a presentation by North Depot applicant Daniel Woods and had directed him to solicit feedback from the residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. A community input meeting was scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2013 in the Community Center. Notices had been sent to every resident and property owner in the area.

Proposed Venue in Canterbury: Mrs. Deats referred to the revised Concept Plan for Fields of Canterbury which the Commission had approved last month. The plan included a possible privately held events venue as well as a mini-storage facility. She noted that Concept Plan approval did not grant the applicant any entitlement to pursue these uses. Residents from Canterbury were in the audience tonight wishing to express concerns about these proposed uses. Mrs. Deats noted that nothing pertaining to the Canterbury Concept Plan would be voted upon tonight; that the only item on the agenda from Canterbury was unrelated. She asked for the Commission to hear the Canterbury residents' input before proceeding with the agenda items.

The Commission agreed to hear the residents' input from two spokespersons.

Mrs. Deats reminded those in the audience that they were welcome to submit their concerns via email to her. Their emails would become part of the public record and she would respond to each.

Cort Bethman, 2557 Westerham Way, approached the Commission. He said when his family decided to move into the Canterbury neighborhood, the plans showed an open green space directly across from their lot. That is the location of the private events venue now being proposed. Mr. Bethman said he had concerns about the noise and traffic that might bring to the area, and confirmed that he and others had paid a premium for a lot in proximity to an open space. He said the residents of Canterbury, as demonstrated by the turnout tonight, wanted to be a productive part of the community and have input on their neighborhood.

Michael Lush, 2208 Chantry Place Lane approached the Commission. He said the proposed venue would be directly behind his backyard. He had paid a premium for his lot. He noted that he would not have purchased that lot or any lot in the Canterbury community if the venue had been shown on the plan originally. He said he was also opposed to the mini storage facility, which was not shown on the original plan either. He was concerned that it would be an eyesore.

Commissioner Benson said that the mini storage use had been presented as an amenity to the Canterbury residents, and asked if Mr. Lush considered it that way.

Mr. Lush said he did not wish to speak for everyone else, but that he personally did not consider it to be an amenity.

Commissioner Ross thanked the Canterbury residents for their feedback.

Mr. Langeliers suggested that perhaps in the future, changes to the Master Plan should require a public notice, at least to the immediately affected residents.

Mrs. Deats said staff was revisiting the process for Concept Plans and Master Plans.

Commissioner Benson asked what Commercial, if any, was proposed in the original Canterbury Master Plan.

Mrs. Deats said Commercial was proposed along the roadside leading out directly to Columbia Pike. The uses weren't identified, but was a mix of office and some retail. However, Mr. Langeliers, noted the sale of 38 acres to Mars had changed all of that.

Mrs. Deats said that regardless of where Commercial was proposed in the original plan, the site for the proposed events venue was within the residential area.

Commissioner Hubert said he considered it a safety issue to put a private events venue in a residential neighborhood because of traffic going to and coming from the venue that has no business or interest in the community beyond the fact that they've rented a space.

Commissioner Benson noted that in the original plan, there was an extensive commercial area proposed for what is now the Mars site, and that area would have had its own separate road access to Columbia Pike.

Old Business:

Impact Fee Discussion

Mr. Langeliers said that the Town had been considering ways to revise its approach to impact fees. Whereas the Town currently has a flat fee of \$1 per square foot, there are other ways to assign fees based on different uses and traffic impacts. He introduced Steve Tocknell of Tocknell Planning Services who had come to make a brief presentation to the Commission.

Mr. Tocknell introduced himself and Chris Rhodes of Kimley Horn. He gave an overview of the consulting services his firm offers and summarized some various approaches to impact fees, citing a comparison of neighboring municipalities including Nolensville and Franklin.

Mr. Langeliers said the Town will need a justifiable basis if it decides to increase impact fees, and staff could use some sort of expert guidance in revising the Impact Fee approach. He said he would work with Mr. Tocknell to develop a scope of services to bring back as a proposal.

He said he wanted to get a consensus from the Planning Commission as to whether this type of study was worth recommending to the Board of Mayor and Alderman. He said his opinion was that it would be worthwhile to pursue a study.

Commissioners Ross and Hubert said they agreed it was important; Commissioner Wilson said he'd be supportive of a work session on the topic.

Mr. Tocknell said he could put together a study schedule, scope and budget for researching options for impact fees. He said a major thoroughfare plan or traffic study could also be useful as the basis for determining a fee schedule.

After discussion, Mr. Langeliers said staff would proceed working on a draft scope and budget for an impact fee study to present to the Commission.

PRELIMINARY PLAT:

1. Fields of Canterbury – Section 4 to include the development of 89 single family residential lots and one open space and public utility and drainage easement lot (File: 1-C-13-001)

Mrs. Deats said the proposed plat would include 89 single family residential lots and 1 open space lot. The applicant was proposing to extend and widen several roads, including Westerham Way and Chaucer Park Lane with a connection to Callaway Park, already partially constructed.

She stated that platted open space for Canterbury was at about 27 acres so far.

She said the proposed plat was consistent with the Town's Subdivision Regulations, acceptable land uses for the area, and the Master Plan for the development. She said staff recommended approval and was available for questions, along with Bob Nichols from Ragan Smith.

Commissioner Hubert said he favored the idea of widening streets, but on Paddock Park Drive, it appeared that the widening would cause the road to be out of alignment across the intersection. He noted the same issue with Chaucer Park Lane. He asked if the width should instead be consistent at 41 feet.

Bob Nichols with Ragan Smith said some adjustment of those road widths may be merited, but also some variance might be expected between primary versus secondary streets.

Mrs. Deats said she had asked the same question. Paddock Park drive was already partially constructed with lots in place, so they needed to increase the right of way where they could take it from both sides of the road. As for Chaucer Park Lane, she said she thought the plan had shown a width of 41 feet all the way to the roundabout, so she would revisit that.

Commissioner Wilson noted that the widths shown are not curb-to-curb, but right-of-way measurements.

Mr. Nichols said the 36-foot right of way contained 24 feet of asphalt, and the 41-foot right of way contained 29 feet of asphalt.

Mr. Nichols noted that the Town had design guidelines which they were obligated to comply with.

Mr. Wilson said he thought the design guidelines might need revisiting.

Discussion ensued about concerns that street parking may make it difficult or impossible for buses or fire trucks to get through.

Mr. Langeliers noted that wider streets are more expensive to maintain, so things should be considered in balance.

Mr. Nichols noted that generally along with a preliminary plat, a construction plan was submitted including a signage plan for stop signs and yield signs. He suggested that might include some other signage also, such as "no parking" signs. He said these types of details are not usually borne out in the preliminary plat; the construction plans might be a better vehicle.

Commissioner Benson asked whether this plat included any lots with special concerns regarding slope, etc.

Mr. Nichols said there were six showing a retaining wall in the rear, per the grading plan. He said these Critical Lot designations would be included on a Final Plat, as that is a recorded document, and a Preliminary Plat doesn't include grade.

After discussion, Commissioner Wilson moved for approval, with a note that the developer work with staff in regards to the possible addition of "no parking" signage on site. Commissioner Gilliam seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER:

2. Resolution 13-003 to consider a Plan of Services for an annexation of approximately 50 acres along the south side of West Harpeth Road, predominantly east of Hunter Road (Ozzad/Riverbend Annexation) (File: 6-C-13-001)

Mrs. Deats said this annexation is the result of an agreement between the property owner and the Town to acquire land for drip fields. She said the land was within the Town's Urban Growth Boundary. The standard Plan of Services was being proposed, which accounts for police, fire, water, sewer, power, natural gas, streets, planning and codes, recreation, and trash collection. She said this resolution would go before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on February 12, 2013.

After discussion, Commissioner Gilliam moved to approve. Commissioner Benson seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. First Reading: Zoning Amendment – to consider an update Article 3 Resource Protection and Resource Management (File: 6-A-13-002)

Mrs. Deats said the proposed revision was to strike out Section 3113, and add Critical Lots instead to Section 3100, just to be more concise. She said language had also been modified to "prohibit" rather than "discourage" construction on slopes in excess of 25 percent. Anything over 40 percent would be required as designated open space.

She also said she had removed from this section the definitions for "soil erosion" and "sedimentation" and added them instead to the "Definitions" section, as a matter of housekeeping, which was the next agenda item.

Commissioner Evans referred to the part stating that slopes in excess of 20 percent should remain undeveloped. Mrs. Deats said that should be taken out, as it conflicts with the above statement. She said she would strike through that for the Board of Mayor and Aldermen's First Reading on February 12.

Mr. Gilliam referred to the Hill property on Columbia Pike and asked whether that would all be considered undevelopable by these standards. Mrs. Deats said she thought there were portions of that site that were developable.

She noted that she was not changing the slope percentages already in place; she was just modifying the language. If that were to be removed entirely, it would be tantamount to allowing hillside development, which was currently prohibited.

After discussion, Commissioner Benson made a motion to defer item 3 until staff made the aforementioned changes. Commissioner Hubert seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Zoning Amendment – to consider an update to Article 1, “Definitions” (File: 6-A-13-001)

Mrs. Deats said she had added definitions for items that were not previously defined, including “administrative decision,” “agricultural use,” “boarding house,” “concept plan,” “critical lot,” and “motel”, as well as tightening the definition for “hotel”. She had also moved the definitions from the Resource Protection section to this section.

After discussion, Commissioner Benson moved for approval, with a note to revise the definition of “erodable slope” before First Reading. Commissioner Evans seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Fee Schedule Update – to consider incorporating a re-inspection fee – (File: 6-H-13-001)


Mrs. Deats said the proposed change to the Fee schedule was the reinstatement of a \$50 re-inspection fee for jobs that aren't ready when the building official goes out, or are otherwise not in compliance with the town's requirements for posting permits and plans. She noted this had passed First Reading at the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on January 8, 2013.

After discussion, Commissioner Gilliam made a motion to approve. Commissioner Benson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Signed:


George Ross, Chair

Attest:


Tom Evans, Secretary