

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

July 18, 2007

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Stead. Commissioners present were George Stead, Tom Whitson, Robert Allen, Kevin Fiske, and Jennifer Ange. Jim Wilmer had an excused absence. Planner Bill Trimm and Aimee Broadsword, PACE Engineering, were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Unavailable

DISCUSSION ITEM: Draft Letter to Mayor Nichols/Town Council regarding Underground Wiring

Planner Brill Trimm read a draft letter he prepared to Mayor Nichols and the Town Council from the Planning Commission regarding the request for the Planning Commission to study a Town-wide underground wiring program. The letter described the Planning Commission's investigation into an underground wiring program and their unanimous recommendation that the Town not pursue a Town-wide underground wiring program based on potentially prohibitive costs, ineffectiveness during wide-spread power outages, and to maintain the Town's vegetated streetscapes. The letter cited the need to create a Local Improvement District to install and finance an underground wiring system; the ineffectiveness of undergrounding due to the overhead electrical grid outside the Town; and removal of trees and vegetation that would be required on 10-foot easement adjacent to the right-of-way to accommodate undergrounding which is in conflict with Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and would drastically impact the Town's streetscape. The letter concluded that although a Town-wide program to convert overhead lines to underground was problematic, installation of underground utilities from the existing overhead system to individual properties should be voluntary. New residential development would continue to be required to install underground wiring.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to forward the letter to Mayor Nichols and the Town Council with copies to Town Administrator Eric Faison and Public Works Director Terry Bryant.

DISCUSSION ITEM: Development Status

Aimee Broadsword, PACE Engineering, provided an update on development occurring in the Town. With regard to the 3-lot GPA short plat, she advised construction of the shared infrastructure improvements was approved and has begun as well as construction on the Daviscourt property. A demolition permit was approved for Lot 3, however, grading and drainage permits for Lot 3 are pending. She described issues with the location of the silt fence, clearing of underbrush and rhododendrons, location of the proposed residence on Lot 3 that would require variance approval by the Hearing Examiner due to encroachment into the steep slope setback, and proposed construction of a new driveway within the 100-foot streetscape setback and parking pad for a 3-car garage for Lot 3.

Discussion followed regarding the location of the residence on Lot 3, variance criteria, the property owners' desire to maintain the existing vegetation, anticipated issues with the location of the residence on Lot 2, the Planning Commission's intent with regard to access, staff's plans to meet with the applicant to discuss the variance criteria, and past approved/denied variances requests in the Town.

Next, Ms. Broadsword reported the Echelbargers had plans approved several years ago to relocate an existing driveway but the approval has since expired. They recently resubmitted their plans to relocate the driveway and she responded they must hire a consultant to prepare a buffer enhancement plan to reduce the 50-foot buffer of the Class 4 stream adjacent to their property to 25-feet. Mr. Echelbarger wrote to Mayor Nichols objecting to the requirement to submit a buffer enhance plan to relocate his driveway.

DISCUSSION ITEM: Municipal Urban Growth Boundary Program

Mr. Trimm

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at _____ p.m.

Heidi K. Swenson
Secretary to the Planning Commission

APPROVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

George Stead, Chairman

(These minutes accurately reflect what was said at the Planning Commission Meeting. Publication does not vouch for the veracity of these statements.)