TOWN OF KNIGHTDALE
Planning & Engineering Committee
6:00 pm
Monday, May 12, 2014
950 Steeple Square Court, Conference Room
Knightdale, NC 27545

Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Councilor Tripp ***called*** the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The following members were present:

Town Council Members present: Councilor Tripp, Councilor Swan

LURB Member Liaison present: Doug Taylor

Staff Members Present: Chris Hills, Jeff Triezenberg, Fred Boone, Courtney Jenkins, Katie Griffin

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 14, 2014

...Mr. Taylor moved to accept the minutes of the previous meetings as presented. Mr. Swan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Construction Projects Update

Greenway Phase II – Mr. Boone estimated the project to be approximately 92% completed. The paving is complete. The contractor is working on boardwalk number 3 which has proved to be the biggest challenge thus far. The preliminary walk through has been performed. There are portions that need 2 feet of gravel shoulder installed on both sides. The official completion date will be between June 4th and 6th.

Knightdale Park Phase II – Mr. Boone reported that the contractor is currently erecting the timber structures for the open air pavilion, which is beginning to take shape. The contractor has made up about a week so far and is hoping to make up more time as the weather allows. The estimated completion time is scheduled for early September.

Smithfield Road CDBG Project – This project is almost complete with signal activation and re-striping at the intersection remaining.

Smithfield CMAQ and STPDA – Staff is currently receiving the administrative documents needed to move forward. The next step will be to schedule a preconstruction meeting in early June.

B. Commercial Vehicle Parking on Town-Owned Streets

Ms. Griffin discussed the issue of commercial vehicle parking on town-owned streets. Staff wants to resolve any issues with understanding the ordinance and to ensure that it is easily identifiable for the police department to enforce. Staff has conducted research for vehicle weight rating(GVWR) which is by defined by what the truck is capable of carrying, not the current weight of a vehicle. With that aspect being clarified, Staff recommends no change to the current structure of the ordinance. Vehicles greater than or equal to a GVWR of 30,000 lbs. are easily identifiable to the police department; examples of trucks exceeding would include sweeper trucks, dual-y trucks, box trucks, bucket trucks and RV Homes. The current fine listed is $25.00. She asked if the committee would be interested in increasing the fine.

Councilor Swan asked if Staff researched the fees/costs associated for renting spaces to park the commercial vehicles.

Mr. Boone informed the committee that buses and safety response vehicles are excluded.

Councilor Tripp requested examples of other parking fines for the Town.

Mr. Hills replied that it currently states there is a $50.00 fine for fire lane or handicap parking. However, he believes it has been updated recently.

Mr. Taylor believes a $50.00 fine would be acceptable.

Councilor Tripp answered that he would like Staff to research what the fines are currently before making a final decision.

Mr. Hills stated that Staff could consult with the police department and ask for their recommendation.

Councilor Tripp and Councilor Swan agreed to Staff determining the police department recommendation and to bring the item back next month.

C. Chapter 5 Civic Building Type

Mr. Triezenberg discussed the Land Use Review Board's concern with the regulations for civic buildings. The Board questioned how the regulations were created and why these types of buildings have more flexibility. He informed the committee that the original language was drafted before he started with the Town. However, he believes the language was created to allow a variety of architectural styles to be constructed in the Town. He stated that it would be hard to create guidelines for churches; and Staff would not want to infringe on religious freedoms. The text does state generally exempt, which does give Staff the opportunity to review. For example, if a prefab building was proposed that did not contribute to the character of the community, then Staff could state that it does not meet the exempt requirements and reference them to the architectural standards; Chapter 5.4 of the UDO. He cited Elevation Baptist as an example of a church that was created within the context of the ordinance and followed rules regarding parking, landscaping, screened roof top units, 20-ft. wall breaks through the Technical Review Committee (TRC).

Mr. Hills reminded the committee that the Town does have to be cognizant of religious freedom.

Mr. Taylor stated that Mr. Hess was questioning the vagueness of the language. He wanted to ensure that churches are not receiving a pass.

Mr. Triezenberg indicated that the language is not intended to give anyone a bye; the intent is directed more at allowing the architects the freedom to design for the churches.

Councilor Swan asked if the Town Attorney is confident with the current language.

Mr. Hills answered yes; Mr. York addressed the freedom of religion aspect.

Mr. Triezenberg stated that the key is applying the ordinance consistently.

Councilor Tripp believes Staff has the extra layer of ensuring intent with the Technical Review Committee.

The committee members agreed to keep the current language in the Unified Development Ordinance regarding Civic Building Types.

D. Street Cross Sections/Street Tree Locations

Mr. Triezenberg discussed the background information regarding the location of street trees in Town and the desire to reassess what the ordinance currently allows. He has conducted research regarding neighboring municipalities, the City of Raleigh and the NC DOT Complete Streets guideline. He informed the committee that Wendell, who recently updated their UDO, is now asking the street trees to be installed between the sidewalk and curb. He provided handouts with information regarding NC DOT Complete Streets guideline and Raleigh's Street Design Manual regarding neighborhood streets. These are good standards for incorporating trees between the curb and sidewalk which is now the trend moving forward with development. The previous concerns with NC DOT have been addressed and accomplished through bike lanes and on-street parking for clear zone requirements. He feels that the Town could also accomplish the look and feel of complete streets through similar guidelines and practices.

Mr. Hills stated that he is pleased that Mr. Morgan from the Land Use Review Board brought up the subject of street cross sections and street tree locations. Staff would like to report to LURB next month on the committee's decision. He reminded the committee of the successful test run results that were provided a few months back from the Cheswick subdivision and Hinton Oaks Blvd. Planning Staff is in favor of re-instituting the street cross sections/street tree locations in residential subdivisions.

Councilor Swan asked if developers have a preference.

Mr. Hills answered yes, they prefer behind the sidewalk, how the ordinance is currently written.

Mr. Triezenberg cited Pablo Reiter, the developer with the Cheswick subdivision, as an example. Mr. Reiter was originally concerned with planting between the back of curb and sidewalk; and now highlights it from a marketing standpoint. Once it is addressed with the utilities, the process can be straightforward.

Councilor Swan stated that before the desired location of the trees was deemed to not be allowed and that is why the ordinance changed.

Mr. Taylor responded yes and that was prior to DOT's Complete Streets program. NCDOT is now in favor of the street canopy feel in low speed subdivisions. However, higher speeds and traffic does still equal fewer trees for visibility purposes.

Mr. Triezenberg stated that the bike lanes create the clear zone from the travel lane.

Councilor Tripp and Councilor Swan both agreed that the street trees do create a traffic calming effect.

Councilor Tripp indicated his only concern is that trees love sewer lines. He would like to see a distance requirement for the trees from sewer and sanitary easements to ensure they are not disturbed.

Mr. Boone agreed and explained that although it is not his decision, he wants the committee to be aware that there will be increased maintenance costs. He cannot determine what the amount will be at this time but the trees could eventually impact curb and sidewalk.

Mr. Hills specified that Staff would research and select the most appropriate species to be located between the curb and sidewalk. The selections would not include oak trees; however, some may be larger than crape myrtles.

Councilor Swan specified the Widewaters subdivision as an example of where the street trees if planted between the curb and sidewalk would have been beneficial. He questioned if the decision should be left to the developers.

Mr. Hills responded that developers will most likely choose whichever option is the cheapest. However, being upfront with developers about the ordinance requirements is best practice for ensuring a smooth, well understood process.

Councilor Swan indicated that he is considering the extra expense but firmly believes that everyone desires the street trees in the proposed locations.

Mr. Boone stated that current maintenance is reactive based on received citizen complaints. He feels that NCDOT and the City of Raleigh have put forth the effort to prescribe the complete streets program. He wants everyone to be aware that there will be additional maintenance.

Councilor Swan stated that he supports an updated street tree plan.

Mr. Triezenberg informed the committee that he would like to draft a specific plan with details, specifications and species and bring the information back to the committee to review.

Mr. Hills concurred that the discussion has generated sufficient information to report to the Land Use Review Board next month regarding drafting an ordinance revision.

...Councilor Tripp motioned for Staff to move forward with creating revised guidelines for Street Cross sections and Street Tree locations. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update/Join Wake Plan

Mr. Triezenberg provided an update on the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Town of Knightdale's plan is scheduled to expire in October. The town is working with Wake County and the other municipalities to create a plan together. In the beginning, Wake County was confident that everything would be approved prior to October. However, there is a gap between Knightdale and the other municipalities regarding upcoming expirations. Wake County's current plan does not expire until summer next year. Staff is proposing joining the current Wake plan, which would eliminate any insecurity regarding an expired plan. FEMA typically does not deny claims but we do not want to risk it. Council would need to adopt a resolution stating that the Town joins the current Wake County plan, which would then be sent to FEMA.

Mr. Hills stated that Mr. Triezenberg has done a great job keeping up with the Hazard Mitigation Plan time frames to ensure the Town's current one does not expire. He explained that this is an update for informational purposes only and to inform the committee that the item will be on the June cycle.

B. In-Fill Lots discussion outside of Old Town Area

Mr. Hills explained that there has been an internal staff discussion regarding in-fill lots located in areas outside of the Old Town area. Staff originally interpreted the ordinance language to only apply to Old Town. He asked the committee if the language should be applied throughout the Town. He listed an infill lot in the Green Pines subdivision as an example.

Mr. Triezenberg agreed that it would not be beneficial to have new houses constructed in an older subdivision with dramatically different setbacks from what currently exists. He discussed the concern with Ms. Currin and she has interpreted the language to reference the plats and to use what has been recorded for setbacks. This is what the Town enforces for new construction.

Mr. Hills suggested that Staff draft a technical edit to formally state in the UDO what Staff has already interpreted, which is to examine plats to keep the determinations consistent.

Councilor Tripp stated that if Staff is currently referencing recorded plats, then it should state that information in the UDO, to examine plats first. If an applicant is not satisfied with what is recorded, then they could apply for a variance.

Councilor Swan and Mr. Taylor agreed to the technical edit.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Having reached the end of the evening's agenda and hearing no further discussion, Mr. Taylor motioned to ***adjourn*** the meeting at 7:23 p.m. Councilor Swan seconded the motion.

Attest, Chairman of the Planning and Engineering Committee, Dustin Tripp

Clerk to the Planning and Engineering Committee, Courtney Jenkins