

## Minority Response on Planning Board Action on South Suburban Plan

On June 8, 2017 the Winston-Salem Planning Board was formally presented the Area Plan for South Suburban. This plan had been updated to the Planning Board on multiple occasions and discussed at length at our work session meeting on May 25, 2017. Melynda Dunnigan represented the Planning Board in the process.

This Area Plan was the best attended of this round of Plans with as many as 70 people attending. There were a number of issues within the Area that were of concern to residents and at least two neighborhood associations that were very concerned with issues in their neighborhoods. On June 8<sup>th</sup> there were several speakers both as proponents and opponents.

In our briefings at the Planning Board work session it was clear that there was not consensus at the Area Plan meetings on several issues. It was also clear that decisions had been made on the plan without discussing other alternatives and without a clear acceptance by the residents. Based on this I pushed in Work Session for the Plan to go back to the residents/owners for more discussions and clearly resolve any confusion before bringing to the Planning Board.

Here are few of the problems with the process:

- ❖ During the Area Plan meetings with residents, when controversial issues arose there were no straw votes taken when there was disagreement thus the Planning Staff had to interpret what the direction of the Plan should be. There is a long history of strongly held views on the Sides Road area and many options should have been discussed and clear direction provided by residents/owners.
- ❖ On the last night (traditionally the lowest attendance night) drop-in there was large map printed out that had asterisked properties in terms of recommendations for zoning. There was a separate sheet explaining the asterisks but not enough copies were printed for the residents. This was a key night as it laid out proposed zoning for many properties however, many residents did not see the proposals leaving no discussion.
- ❖ At the Work Session, Paul Norby informed the Planning Board that he was meeting with a neighborhood group to discuss the controversial non-conforming sites. I pushed at this time for the all residents to be notified of this meeting as this would affect recommendations for multiple owners along Clemmonsville Road.
- ❖ At the June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting the Planning Board was hastily given new zoning for several sites and to my knowledge these were not posted at that time on line for the neighborhood. (Remember this was a well attended Area Plan.)
- ❖ At the June 8<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting there were a number of speakers. I was listening closely for how they felt about the Sides Road area's proposed zoning and potential design. The Planning Board had already received three letters pushing for different zoning for this area.
- ❖ Three speakers addressed their concern for the proposed Sides Road Zoning clearly indicating they did not agree with the Area Plan's recommendation. Two of these speakers were representing neighborhoods.

Based on the above problems with the process of developing this Area Plan, at the Planning Board Meeting I again pushed to have it returned to the residents/owners to clarify.

The Area Plan process is the most open and wide spread method of gathering neighborhood and owner input into the plans for Winston-Salem. It is wonderful when there are engaged residents/owners and the City should be very respectful of this process. There is no downside to an Area Plan taking a few weeks later to produce while there is a huge downside for the process to be viewed as meeting with individual interest groups and not including the engaged citizens in the final product. There is a problem with Staff "assuming" that the neighborhood agrees with suggestions especially with the history of knowing that these decisions have been seen as controversial in the past. As a Planning Board member I did not like being put in a position of voting on a document that was still needing to be discussed by residents/owners and, while recommendations from Area Plans are not binding, they are always commented upon in zoning request. It is very preferable to know that the plan reflects the process that occurred when having to make decisions on these zoning requests.

I would urge that this Area Plan in its newest iteration be sent to those that attended the South Suburban planning and that a new meeting be advertised and held to present and resolve the issues that have not been clear up to this point.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Bryan

Planning Board