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**CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
PUBLIC HEARING  
MINUTES FOR  
*SOUTH SUBURBAN AREA PLAN UPDATE*  
JUNE 8, 2017**

Public hearing on the *South Suburban Area Plan Update*. The plan area is bounded on the north by I-40 and Silas Creek Parkway, on the east by NC 109/Old Thomasville Road, on the south by the Forsyth County/Davidson County line, and on the west by Ebert Road.

Steve Smotherman presented the staff report.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

FOR:

Brian Allison, 1141 Bent Grass Lane, Winston-Salem, NC 27127

- I've been here before to discuss Sides Road traffic concerns. The decisions made by this body and the elected officials have direct and long-lasting impacts on our community.
- All future proposed development regarding Sides Road impacts the quality of life but also has life and death implications for residents that reside in the surrounding neighborhoods and as such must be given serious consideration. The increased traffic has adversely impacted the quality of life and safety of Kingstree and surrounding neighborhoods. There have been fatalities and numerous accidents on Sides Road attributed to speed along the S-curve. Sides Road was never designed to accommodate the traffic volume and dangerous manner of driving exercised by many drivers.
- The proposed development options suggested during the *South Suburban Area Plan* discussions for Sides Road will require numerous land owners to agree and will take years to come to fruition. We request that before any future development materializes the configuration of Sides Road and increased traffic be given top priority to reduce cut-through traffic in neighborhoods, as that narrow dangerous curvy road directly impacts the lives of thousands of residents that reside in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- With the cut-through traffic for Kingstree and Sides Road, enjoying a walk and run is a challenge. We need a nice community park within walking distance and ask that a park be given serious consideration for a portion of land along Sides Road. The City already owns a parcel of land with a water tower on it. It would make logistical and practical sense for the City to acquire adjoining land for the creation of a park for the betterment of community residents and would enhance the proposed future development plans for this area.

- There is not a lot of park space below Clemmonsville Road to serve the whole population of the south suburban area. Peters Creek Parkway would benefit more from having some green space around the water tower as an iconic symbol as well as providing recreational needs for the additional commercial developments which already exist along this heavily developed corridor.
- Sides Road is a very vulnerable and fragile area and for residents that live in surrounding neighborhoods it's our only buffer from Peters Creek Parkway.
- As residents we are in favor of removing the multifamily option from the existing 2011 *South Suburban Area Plan*. We have a rare opportunity to solve most of the problems with proper use of the space. Recreational opportunities reduce traffic congestion and accident problems by the addition of green space along a very busy and visible commercial corridor. Now is the time to commit for the betterment of the whole area. A community park would improve the quality of life and housing values for the residents in surrounding neighborhoods.

Elaine Renegar, 1108 Twin Knolls Court, Winston-Salem, NC 27127

- We've been at war about that Sides Road property over the past few years and it's going to continue. We've had 300 people at meetings and we're going to fight to the bitter end to keep that property from destroying our quality of life. Just give us that one little piece as a buffer area and maybe we can put this war to bed once and for all if we have it as a park.
- There are a lot of City parks scattered around the City until you get down to our area. Yes, we do have parks where we have tennis balls bouncing back and forth and people running around. It's an intense type of recreation area. Why can't we just have a nice strolling park with a gazebo, fountain, or something like that? I see women with their babies and strollers and kids dodging traffic in Kingstree and the surrounding neighborhoods. There's nowhere for them to walk peacefully and have these babies grow up where they don't have any stress inflicted on them. We have our tax dollars going up into the north area of town (to pay for a new park there). What would be wrong with us finally having our tax dollars go into a nice, relaxed environment like a park where people could go? We could have concerts on Sunday afternoons or something of that sort in the summer and enhance the quality of life for our area.
- People at the shopping areas could go eat their lunch there in the spring especially and in the fall and have a more relaxing area to be in.
- You are going to have a war over that property from now until the bitter end. That's just all there is to it because we're the ones living there. We see the cars shooting through at 50 mph right past our neighborhoods and right past little kids and people walking with strollers and so forth so we're going to fight for it. It's not going to end. If you turn that into a park we'll shut up and get out of your way and leave it alone.

Fred Lowrey, Jr., 422 Gus Hill Road, Clemmons, NC 27012

- Mr. Lowrey lives on Gus Hill Road but owns property at 2208 Old Salisbury Road.
- I'm referring to the property located at 2208 Old Salisbury Road.
- We're like a little island here where the surrounding area used to be residential but is now commercial all around us and we'd like to request that we get commercial zoning there and become uniform with about half a dozen other businesses that are right there in the area. I've talked to a number of people so far. I don't know of any objections.

- This is right next to Advent Church and they are in the process of drafting a letter of support stating that they have no problems.
- When I go up there mowing grass I have observed there are apparently a lot of people in this densely populated area that don't have cars because I've seen people walking all the way up to the shopping center on Peters Creek Parkway coming back with food and things. I think it would not only not be a problem, I think it might actually be a very helpful thing if we could have the commercial setting there.
- We are buffered all the way around. There's a buffer area behind the property and you're between two churches. There are no houses behind the property. There are no houses directly in front or on either side so we're basically the last site that's not commercial.

At the request of the chairman, Steve Smotherman explained that the area Mr. Lowrey mentioned is part of the land on West Clemmons Road between Peters Creek Parkway and Old Salisbury Road Activity Center. The Lowrey site is recommended for office. The property owners, developers, and realtors would like to see that corner shown on the land use map for commercial use. Arnold King noted that they can file a rezoning petition. Steve Smotherman: The last area plan showed the property for office use. Staff's concern with showing it for retail is that it is surrounded by churches on three sides. We did mention that if they came in with something that was planned sensitively to its surroundings, some level of commercial activity might be seen as reasonable.

Carolyn Highsmith, 3335 Anderson Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27127

- I'm here today on behalf of the Konnoak Hills Community Association in support of the *South Suburban Area Plan Update* providing the Planning Department's amendment that you've already seen noting changes to five (5) nonconforming properties on West Clemmons Road and S. Main Street along with some additional editing changes are incorporated into the *South Suburban Area Plan Update*. The changes to these five (5) nonconforming properties are being recommended as suitable for rezoning only to a low intensity commercial and/or office zoning districts and are being recommended to be rezoned to special use zoning to improve the compatibility of the properties and adjacent residential uses.
- I urge the Planning Board to approve these supplemental changes to the *South Suburban Area Plan Update* so that the Konnoak Hills Community and surrounding area neighborhoods will be able to fully support the entire *South Suburban Area Plan Update*.
- Also, the Konnoak Hills Community is supporting the additional changes to the *South Suburban Area Plan Update* that have been submitted today by the Kingstree Neighborhood where they are recommending a park as the primary future use for the property along Sides Road.
- Finally I would like to recommend that future area plan update sessions be extended to five (5) meetings instead of the current four (4) where there are four (4) resident meetings and all final land use recommendations are presented at the fourth update meeting before the final drop-in meeting. This extra update meeting should help to give the needed time for maximum discussion of all area plan concerns.
- In conclusion, we urge you to support these amendment changes provided by the Planning Department to address nonconforming property concerns along the West Clemmons Road and S. Main Street areas.

Jacqueline Speas, 100 Cassell Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27127

- I'm talking about properties on the south side of Cassell Street. The water in the back of those fifteen (15) homes has totally ruined those backyards. Is there any kind of help that the City of Winston-Salem can give those residents? Any kind of FEMA money or Home Restoration money? Any kind of money that can help, because when I first moved there in 1972 you could just walk across there but now you could drive a big bus through there. I have had my niece and my son fall into that area back there. Just so happens they are still alive. I just want to know if the city is going to be able to do anything about that.

Paul Norby explained that it sounds like there is a combination of stormwater issues and housing issues so that's probably something that would involve a couple of different departments. In response to a question about whether there had been discussions with those departments in the past, Ms. Speas stated that there had been. Chris Murphy: There was an article in the paper within the past two weeks that talked about this. It mentioned some long-term discussions which have been going on since the late seventies or early eighties with the Western Electric expansion and some other things. Keith Huff, Stormwater Director, and Greg Turner, Assistant City Manager with Public Works, are aware of the situation. So, yes there have been discussions but I think it would likely be a matter for the City Council's Public Works Committee. Paul Norby: I think this issue is beyond the scope of an area plan, but I think those departments would be the key there. Jacqueline Speas asked when something would actually be done about it. Paul Norby replied that the Planning Board isn't the Board that decides whether it's done or not. He recommended contacting Assistant City Manager Greg Turner for more information. Arnold King: Ms. Speas, we'll make sure we have staff get with you and give you the name and contact information for Mr. Turner.

Aaron King: Council Member Taylor is aware of this issue. It's been brought up in the neighborhood before. This item was on the agenda for the May 9th Public Works Committee meeting. The comments from that meeting about this item are: "This item was pulled by Council Member Taylor. Mr. Gregory Turner, Assistant City Manager, gave the staff presentation on this item. Council Member Taylor requested staff put together information that would provide options available to help with the erosion problem along Cassell Street. Council Member Montgomery requested information regarding the success of other neighborhoods in compelling neighbors into storm water project actions." It looks like it was held in Committee until June so Council is aware of this issue. It's an ongoing issue and it's been brought to Council's attention. Jacqueline Speas: I understand that but it's time to get something done about it. I know James Taylor. Allan Younger: You said a meeting is set to address this, right? Aaron King: Correct.

AGAINST: None.

### **WORK SESSION**

During discussion by the Planning Board, the following points were made:

George Bryan: What is the zoning of this one area I'm looking at? (Referring to the area

between Sides Road and Peters Creek Parkway.) What is the current area plan recommendation for that area? Steve Smotherman: The current area plan recommends Sides Road for Office and/or Multifamily use. Paul Norby: If you're asking about zoning, it's zoned RS9, Single Family Residential.

Chris Leak: Going back to category "c." and going back to last month's case what happens if Unlimited Wireless goes out of business? Would that property stay at the same zoning or would it go back to residential zoning? Steve Smotherman: That would stay the same zoning because it is already zoned for commercial uses. Category "b." is actually most similar to that case. That site was rezoned to the most restrictive district that allowed that use.

Paul Norby emphasized for the public who were present about this item that area plans do not determine the specific site of a park. Area plans look at the land use, community facilities, and needs for improvement in certain areas. When it comes to community facilities, staff makes general recommendations, but takes pains to not identify a specific site because there's a whole different process of budgeting for those facilities, of determining what sites work best, and negotiating prices with landowners. All of those decisions are much more detailed than the scope of an area plan. So while the plan certainly acknowledges that this area is lacking in parks and could use some additional park facilities and showed in general that something could be located in the vicinity, staff also includes land use recommendations so that if a park is not built in that general area then other land use recommendations exist there. I know in some of the emails I've seen over the last couple of days some of the folks who were writing in were thinking that this public hearing was solely about whether a park is going to be in that location and that's not really the role and function of the area plan. It sets the table for the discussion but it doesn't make the decision as to a park being there. That's a different process.

Allan Younger asked Steve Smotherman if the proposed rerouting of Sides Road addressed any of the concerns about traffic. Did any members of the community speak to that thinking it would solve some of the issue? Steve Smotherman: The sense I got from the community was that if someone came in and built staff's Sides Road design concept they seemed to be okay with that. Paul Norby emphasized that we were dealing with a couple of issues here. One is the Kingtree folks have consistently been against having multifamily or commercial on Sides Road immediately across from the entrance to Kingtree. So in our thinking about this we were saying having single family homes on the west side of Sides Road directly across from the neighborhood would help with that land use transition. But in terms of the road, having the traffic network filter indirectly through the area behind the single family zones would discourage traffic from using Sides Road as a cut-through and hopefully keep them on Peters Creek Parkway to go up to Clemmonsville Road. Not everyone is going to do that but if you make it more difficult for people to do that it's going to work better. We also recognize that along Peters Creek Parkway it's going to be hard to market single family homes there so you need something that is more realistic there but at the same time we were sensitive to the citizens in the area not wanting apartment complexes so that's why we tried to keep that as low intensity as possible. That was the idea behind that concept there to just illustrate how that could solve both the land use and the traffic issue.

George Bryan: The changes that you're bringing in to us today, did you give the property owners of these properties an opportunity to chime in on this as well? Steve Smotherman: No. The

reason is that this is just a plan. It's not a rezoning case. It's saying that if an existing use changes we may not recommend as intense a district as what's there. And a lot of these properties had the same type of condition on them in the previous plan. George Bryan: I am perfectly excited about citizens getting behind and coming out to an area plan but I still remain concerned about us coming up with these changes without going back to the process and giving everybody the access and opportunity to talk about these things. I feel like we're going around the corner on some of this and I still want to hear from the citizens that are signed up today about Sides Road because as I asked before, how did you as staff come up with saying the plan you had in there was acceptable when we've been down this road with the neighborhoods on other zoning cases before and have heard we want residential there and so I was trying to be sure there was a comfort level that worked through this process with that. I'm not hearing the methodology of how that happened at this point. Paul Norby: Let me just give you the parallel. We've made a special effort with all the area plans we've done since *Legacy 2030* to take specific areas and do some design ideas about how an area could be developed. We're just illustrating what could happen. You just saw the *Northeast Suburban Area Plan Update* with Ogburn Station. We didn't go to the owners of Ogburn Station and say, "What do you think of this?" But we're just trying to illustrate a way to revitalize that area and make it more of a mixed use center. Just because an area plan makes a recommendation on a land use or gives an illustration like that doesn't mean when it comes down to rezoning the rezoning would be approved. As you know it goes through a very public process and even if the plan said it ought to be exactly that and only exactly that, that doesn't guarantee a rezoning is actually going to happen. Under the existing plan for this area there was a multifamily proposal that came in. It could be argued that it was consistent with the area plan land use recommendation there, but the rezoning didn't go anywhere.

Melynda Dunigan: I had a question related to that. So now the recommendation is office for this piece. If a petition came in for multifamily, how would you analyze that in terms of intensity when the plan recommends office? Would you be more likely to approve multifamily or would that be considered too intense? Paul Norby: It probably depends on the density. The zoning case that came in a couple of years ago was twelve (12) or fifteen (15) units to the acre. Multifamily which is more like five (5) or six (6) units to the acre, not that much denser than single family development, could potentially be considered as appropriate. It really would depend on what's proposed. That's why it's so hard in an area plan to pin down precisely what development is acceptable because you're trying to give some guidance but allow the zoning process to nuance the details.

George Bryan: Ms. Renegar, I've been trying to determine the community input process on Sides Road and should there be a recommendation other than leaving the zoning as RS9. Did you feel like you had agreed with the proposed scenario of changing Sides Road to multifamily use and mixed family use in that area or did you want to change the zoning in that area on Sides Road? Elaine Renegar: We want a park. George Bryan: Okay you want a park and that may or may not occur but what I'm interested in there's a plan in front of us that comes up with a recommendation and regardless of what is said here it does affect what comes up with the plan and when staff says, "Well this is in agreement with the area plan", it does affect my sense of vote so I'm trying to figure if the neighborhood is happy with a recommendation that changes that zoning potentially from what it currently is, which is RS9, which is more like single family homes? Elaine Renegar: No, they won't be thrilled with anything unless it's single family homes

or a park basically because it's sort of like what this gentleman was saying earlier. If it were something like a very low density or low intensity commercial or low density residential that would be one thing but there were crimes committed in the process of all of this on the other side against us. The police were involved. It has been a very dirty and nasty process all throughout and it's not a joke at all. There's a lot of money involved and the other folks are ready to fight and fight big time to get that money. What I'm saying is if they get their money and if they sell it maybe they'll be happy and we'll be happy and everybody can go about their business. George Bryan: I'm aware of that. I think what we're coming about is whether to recommend this plan to the City Council and I want to have a comfort level that the community is in agreement with the plan and I'm not hearing you say that and I think Mr. Allison made one comment that was pretty clear that he did not agree with a change of zoning on that as well and that there had been some discussions in the neighborhood about that so I'm trying to figure out whether I should vote to recommend this to the Council or whether it should go back to the neighbors for more discussion. Elaine Renegar: Yeah, we would hope that you vote against it because the more cars we have there the more lives that are going to be put in jeopardy. When you start having another complex and an apartment complex or multifamily or whatever, how do you control the density? How do you keep it down to a reasonable amount and once you change the zoning then Katie bar the door. Who knows what's going to go on there and it's just going to turn into a free-for-all, so we're against it. Jason Grubbs: So are you saying that the neighborhood would not support a scenario like staff presented where the road was rerouted? Elaine Renegar: I think the road sounded great, but not multifamily. When you're talking about another apartment complex it does not sound great. Having something done about that road would be wonderful so no one else gets hurt but all we're trying to do is to find some way to calm down the traffic and to leave it a nice, quiet neighborhood. Kingstree and that area is sort of a flagship community for that area. It sort of raises the bar so do we want to lower the bar or are we going to keep the bar higher? If you want the southern part of the City to develop in a nice and friendly and higher quality of life manner then we've got to support that somehow.

Kirk Ericson: I just want to point out a couple of things and make sure the Board is on the same page regarding what the current plan recommendations are versus what the previous plan recommendations are and just talk a little bit about the public discourse on this. The previous 2011 plan is the document that recommended either office or multifamily along Sides Road. As Steve mentioned in his presentation, one of the biggest, most well discussed area of the whole plan this time was Sides Road and it became clear very early on that the neighbors didn't want to see commercial or multifamily on Sides Road. By the same token, there were definitely some property owners who came and participated in these meetings and they were certainly advocating, as they had in the previous plan, to make sure they had some useable, non-single family use of the property. At that point, staff basically came up with the development concept to provide an alternative to just office use of this site that would try to address the neighbors' concerns about cut-through traffic and also provide some sort of options for the developers or owners of this property that was not single family in nature. I just want to make clear that what Steve was showing you, this concept here, isn't a by-right concept. Someone would have to piece together this whole area south of the water tower for the plan to even support something that wasn't office here. Also, I think the citizens who participated in this process, as the last speaker mentioned, absolutely would prefer if they had their druthers, for the property to remain exactly as it is now under the current RS9 zoning, but I think during the couple of meetings

where we talked about this there was a general understanding that this sort of compromise scenario would provide some extra protection to the Kingstree neighborhood by including some single family homes and reducing the cut-through potential but would also meet the development faction half-way. The scenario recognizes the fact that from a planning perspective we don't think it necessarily makes a lot of sense to have single family homes backing up to a multi-lane State highway where there's commercial zoning on the other side of the street and to the north and south. I just wanted to clarify that.

Arnold King: And we all need to keep in mind that we're not rezoning anything right now. If any of these things happen they have to come through here for approval anyway.

Paul Norby: Let me emphasize that on page 43 of the plan, there is about two-thirds of a page written on Sides Road and this area. It talks about the possibility of a mixed use development if it was kept pretty low key but it also includes a reference that "A city park may also be incorporated as a component of mixed use development here." Then back over on page 52 under recreation facilities it is also mentioned as a possibility in this area for a new community park. The plan is not devoid of a reference to a possible park. It's just not trying to say that this is the only thing that can happen. A park is one of a number of the possibilities that can happen there.

Melynda Dunigan: I just want to say I appreciate the staff's working on the nonconforming issues because I felt that was very important and I think we got a much better result there. I'm also in agreement with the statement that Ms. Highsmith made about the need to change the area plan process to maybe add at least one more land use meeting. This plan really showed that there were some unresolved issues that didn't get totally worked out in the process and this Sides Road is as I see it one of the unresolved issues that still was not resolved in my mind. I think if we had another meeting we would have worked some of this out but from the public hearing and since Mr. Allison is already gone, it's kind of hard to know exactly what the neighbors would prefer in terms of whether they want this kind of proposed mixed use concept to be included or whether they would prefer just a straight up office recommendation. I thought I heard Mr. Allison say he would like to have the mixed use concept removed. In terms of the issue with the park that's very, very difficult to resolve. I think maybe it needs some more discussion but if we're talking about what is a reasonable recommendation for this land it seems like offices is pretty reasonable to me. There are enough questions in my mind about how the neighbors feel about resolving it that I think it needs some more discussion. I'm prepared to vote on this but I just think between now and the time it goes to City Council there should be further discussions on the Sides Road issue.

George Bryan: Again, I don't feel it's good for us and there's no advantage to us to send something to City Council that has unresolved issues and maybe misunderstandings about particular things in there, particularly when we've had such good outpouring of interest in this. It would seem to me that we should go back to the neighborhood and the property owners and let them resolve this and then bring it in. That's what the planning process is and this is the most democratic, the best opportunity for citizens to really get involved and talk about it. They need another chance to look at this and if they're happy with that fine. I don't see any advantage of sending this to City Council with these kinds of unclear issues so I really can't support it at this time. I'm really not happy about not supporting an area plan. I don't like to be in that kind of a situation.



Arnold King: I would just say two things. I don't think we want to automatically extend area plans. If you have a unique situation like this it might require a fifth or sixth meeting. I don't think staff would be opposed to that but for the most part our area plans are getting accomplished in the time allowed. As far as going back, this Sides Road DMZ is going to exist whether there are three or four more meetings so I don't think that's going to be resolved.

MOTION: Jason Grubbs moved approval of the area plan update with staff's amendment recommendations.

SECOND: Chris Leak

VOTE:

FOR: Melynda Dunigan, Jason Grubbs, Tommy Hicks, Arnold King, Chris Leak, Brenda Smith, Allan Younger

AGAINST: George Bryan

EXCUSED: None

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A. Paul Norby, FAICP  
Director of Planning and Development Services