

Approved 11.26.07

VILLAGE OF WESLEY CHAPEL
PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday October 22, 2007, 7:00 PM

The Planning Board of the Village of Wesley Chapel, North Carolina, met in the Fellowship Hall of the Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church at 120 Potter Road South, Wesley Chapel, North Carolina, with Chairman John Grexa presiding.

Present: Chairman John Grexa; Members- Chuck Adams, Ray Davis, Stephen Keeney; Alternate - Bill Fairman (acted as regular member in place of Jackie Morgan), Shirley Wilson (arrived at item 3)

Absent: Jackie Morgan, Sondra Bradford

Others Present: Cheryl Bennett, Clerk; Justin Krieg, Planning/Zoning Administrator, Citizens Carol Mullis, Mark DiBiasio, Gayla Adams, Dwight Hollifield, Tom Slusher

Item # 1

Pledge and Invocation

At 7:00 P.M., Grexa called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Grexa led the pledge and Adams gave the invocation.

Item #2

Additions, Deletions, Corrections and/or Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Chuck Adams to reverse the order of items 4 and 5 and adopt the agenda. Davis seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Item #3

Approval of minutes

Adams made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2007 meeting. Davis seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Item #4

Discuss – Electrical Substations

Dwight Hollifield, from Facilities Planning and Siting, which is an engineering and landscaping firm often employed as a consultant to Union Power, was introduced. Fairman asked Hollifield about the best natural screening. Mr. Hollifield said he found in order of preference:

1. wooded property where you can retain the trees, you might give the applicant credits for retaining trees, and augment existing trees with native species of trees;
2. earth berms – may not work in some places, if the substation pad can be lowered, this helps, you want the top of the berm to be appropriate to the line of sight;
3. combination of earth berms and landscaping; have done scores of projects using this, often use common red cedar;
4. just planting – and has to mature over time, the ordinance might specify the type and density of plants;

5. building a wall- an example is in downtown Charlotte, next to CPCC, Duke's large Elizabeth Avenue substation.

Mr. Hollifield noted one thing that is not in most ordinances is to include wording to encourage substation properties be maintained in a horticultural manner similar to the surrounding areas, i.e. mowing, irrigation, fertilizing, mulching.

Mr. Hollifield recommended keeping trees away from the substation structure; leave room around the fence so that maturing shrubs don't crowd the fence. They often plant the top of the berm. The closer plants and the berm are to the viewer, the more it raises the line of sight and hides the substation.

Asked about plants and maturity heights, Mr. Hollifield noted that transplant shock often causes the first year growth to be one fourth the normal rate, the second year it may be half the normal rate, and not until the third year will the plant reach the normal growth rate. He also noted the Nellie R Stevens holly may be rated to reach 20 feet in some areas and 30 feet in others; he generally sees it between 20 and 25 feet at maturity. It may be better to give the zoning administrator latitude to work with the applicant than to simply specify the type of plants. For instance, in a type A buffer zone, specify types and densities or a plan that meets or exceeds the requirements.

Asked about good ordinances in other places; Mr. Hollifield suggested Greenville County S.C.; Durham; Guilford County; Mecklenburg County, and Blowing Rock.

Mr. Hollifield said small flowering deciduous trees in front of evergreen trees; because they are closer to viewers, raise the line of sight. Even in winter the tracery of branches help make the substation less visible to the casual viewer. Grexa asked him when he gets involved, and he says he likes to get involved early on, choosing the site, site planning, locating the substation on the site, and the grading plan. You can encourage a sunken pad by reducing planting s if you have one. You always have to have drainage to offsite, but you can grade it as low as possible, then use the earth for berms.

Adams inquired as to the height of a berm that makes it difficult to grow plants; Mr. Hollifield recommended at a minimum a drip irrigation system because berms tend to be very dry. Hollifield did not recommend using Leland Cypress because they tend to get canker and blow over; but he uses eastern red cedar a lot.

Keeney inquired as to the typical budget for a substation; Mr. Slusher said 2.5 to 3.5 million dollars inside the fence.

Adams inquired as to a realistic percentage of the substation that you can cover up. Hollifield said it varies dramatically site to site, you need objective measures, it varies from different viewpoints. If you screen the first twelve feet from the pad up, you get about 90% screened. He encourages plantings to be 12-15 feet at maturity above the pad, and additional plants to soften the screening. Grexa asked how many sides would be screened; Hollifield said depending on the site, one to four sides. You can plant under the distribution lines about 14-15 feet at maturity, and under the transmission lines a little higher.

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Adams asked if a 4 to 1 slope on the berms is reasonable. Hollifield said the shallower the slope, the more attractive it will be. Union County goes 3 to 1; he prefers 4 to 1. He suggested relaxing the slope on the back to 2 to 1; it can be stabilized with fabric and grass.

Fairman asked about a shady site; Hollifield said he would just vary the type of grass. Krieg asked about the lines coming to and from the substation; Mr. Slusher said coming in are high voltage lines and must be overhead; going out they can do overhead or underground lines. Lines are often on others property and you can not control what will happen.

The Board thanked Mr. Hollifield and Mr. Slusher for attending the meeting. The Board directed Krieg to look at the ordinances mentioned and send a summary to the members.

Item #5

Rules of Procedure

This was first reviewed last month. Krieg read the changes. Section 3-4, "The terms of office of the members of the Planning board shall be for overlapping terms of three (3) years. Initial appointment of the members shall follow that of the Board of Adjustment as described in Section 11.1.2 of the Wesley Chapel Zoning Ordinance." Keeney made a motion to approve the changes. Adams seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Item #6

Discuss – Liquor by the Drink

Krieg noted at the Council work session meeting this was discussed, and the suggestion was to adopt the ABC Commission's definition of a restaurant that includes a ratio of food to alcohol sales; "an establishment substantially engaged in the business of preparing and serving meals. To qualify as a restaurant, an establishment's gross receipts from food and non-alcoholic beverages shall be not less than thirty percent of the total gross receipts from food, non-alcoholic beverages and alcoholic beverages. A restaurant shall also have a kitchen and an inside dining area with seating for at least 36 people". Also recommended was to take out the use of lounge/bar from B-1 zoning.

Item #7

Individual Research Items

Krieg said Bradford wants to work on Liquor by the drink and substations; Fairman wants to research tree ordinances and brought some information on them. Krieg suggested that he, Fairman, and the urban forester David Grant meet together. Adams said he would like to work on roads; and Grexa chose conditional zoning. Krieg suggested the other members pick an area they are interested in and let Justin know.

Item #8

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Topics to Discuss at Next Meeting

Liquor by the drink and substations will be discussed at the next meeting.

Item #9

Other Business

Krieg said a CUP will be forthcoming for trailers at the new elementary school, and a preliminary plat for about 70 lots at Quintessa 2. Thursday evening is the Visual Survey at the Wesley Chapel Elementary School gym at 7 pm.

Item # 10

Adjournment

Fairman made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Adams seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Cheryl Bennett, Village Clerk

Chairman John Grexa