

Town delays action on plan Developer wants to explain proposal for busy intersection

By Wesley Young
JOURNAL REPORTER
Thursday, January 4, 2007

WALKERTOWN

Walkertown has postponed action on a request to put a McDonald's and Walgreens at one of the town's busiest intersections, but residents will get their say when the town council considers the issue later this month.

The developer is planning a public meeting to tell people in Walkertown more about the plans for the southwest corner of U.S. 158 and N.C. 66.

The developer, Kelley-Austin Properties of Winston-Salem, wants the town to rezone about 11 acres. The McDonald's and Walgreens would be on four acres near the corner. The remaining seven acres would be a residential and office buffer that planners say would limit the effect of the two businesses.

Some residents have raised concerns about the effect of the additional traffic. At its Dec. 5 meeting, the Kernersville Planning Board voted 2-1 to recommend that the council reject the request.

Michael Kelley, a partner with Kelly-Austin told the council Dec. 21 that he wants a chance to explain the project and make any adjustments needed to the plan, according to the town clerk's minutes of the Dec. 21 meeting.

Kelley asked the council to postpone its decision, and the council agreed by a narrow margin.

Council Member Brenda Mabe made a motion to reject Kelley's request, saying that traffic concerns make the development bad for the corner. She said she supports bringing the businesses to town, but not at that location.

Mabe said she was concerned about a U-turn provision. According to the developer's plans, drivers traveling eastbound on U.S. 158 would have to make a U-turn at the intersection to drive west for a short distance and get to the corner lot.

A raised median in U.S. 158 would prevent eastbound traffic from turning directly onto the lot.

Mabe received no second to her motion. Council Member Wayne Hester then made a motion to continue the request until the Jan. 25 meeting.

That motion tied on a 2-2 vote, with Hester and Council Member Sarah Welch voting for the postponement. Mabe and Council Member Ralph Landreth voted against it.

Mayor Doc Davis broke the tie to allow the request to continue to Jan. 25. The council then asked Kelley-Austin to hold the informational meeting.

In other business, the town postponed action on entering a new annexation agreement with the town of Kernersville. Mabe asked the council to not consider the request, a procedure that automatically postpones action until the next council meeting.

Mabe said she wanted to study the proposed line between the two towns. The annexation agreement would define the areas that may be annexed by either town.

The council voted unanimously to accept the annual audit of town finances by Gibson & Co of Winston-Salem. The audit found the town with a fund balance of about \$3.5 million, including \$2.7 million that can be used for any purpose.

The council appointed Marilyn Martin and Peggy Leight to regular planning-board seats and Don Whitaker, Robert Butler and Larry Marshall to alternate planning-board seats. The regular seats have a three-year term and the alternates serve a one-year term. The council decided to hold a work session at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 18, It may discuss what to do about requests for paving unpaved streets.

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