

Council to consider rezoning request

Town planners voted against the proposal that includes McDonald's and Walgreens

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WALKERTOWN

The town could gain a McDonald's restaurant and a Walgreens drug store, but opponents say they risk gaining traffic woes in their neighborhood.

So far, the town is siding with the neighbors. At its meeting Dec. 5, the town's planning board voted 2-1 to recommend that the town council reject rezoning land at the corner of U.S. 158 and N.C. 66.

The council will consider the request Dec. 21.

The developer, KA Walkertown Partners LLC, is asking the town to rezone about 11 acres at the southwest corner of the intersection. The land is owned by KA Walkertown Properties LLC, TWP Properties LLC, Frances J. McGee, Robert E. Williams and Phyllis C. Williams.

The land is zoned for houses with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. The developer is asking to rezone a triangular section of the land for highway business at the corner and the rest of the tracts zoned for a mix of office and residential uses. The highway-business use would cover about 4 acres, with the remaining 7 acres in office and residential.

Developer plans show the Walgreens would be at the corner, with the McDonald's to the west on U.S. 158. Two driveways would give motorists access. One would be from U.S. 158 and another from Martin Street to the western side of the property.

Because of the raised median on U.S. 158, eastbound motorists would not be able to turn left into the site. Instead, they would be allowed to make a U-turn at the intersection to approach the businesses from the eastbound lane.

The rezoning request marks the second time that the project has been proposed. The city-county planning staff recommended that Walkertown reject the earlier proposal. At that time, the plan consisted of the business part of the development.

The addition of an office-residential buffer to the project makes the plan look better, said Aaron King, a city-county planner who handles planning for Walkertown. The city-county planners recommend that the town council approve the project, King said.

"We thought it was in conformance with the Walkertown Area Plan, which calls for a community activity center in that intersection," King said. "The second thing we were supportive of is the fact that it would help prevent strip development by keeping the

commercial zoning to the intersection. "The third thing we liked was to provide the transition to single-family homes with the offices," he said.

But Marilyn Martin, who lives on Martin Street, said she is worried that the project would bring too much traffic onto the residential streets. She said that heavy trucks would be turning onto Martin Street to bring supplies to the two businesses.

"I'm not against Walgreens and McDonald's, but I would like to see them catty-corner across the street," Martin said.

The northeast side of the intersection has land that has been zoned for business, but so far no development has taken place there.

Martin is a planning-board member, but she excused herself from the vote.

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