

**Rezoning precedent could be set
A line needs to be drawn somewhere on commercial development, town planners say**

By Wesley Young
KERNERSVILLE JOURNAL REPORTER
Thursday, July 21, 2005

WALKERTOWN

Planners say Walkertown must decide where to draw the line on strip development along U.S. 158 and N.C. 66.

That line hasn't been drawn yet: The Walkertown Planning Board recently approved the rezoning of two properties on the southwestern side of Walkertown Commons Shopping Center. The Walkertown Town Council will consider the matter next Thursday.

Rezoning advocates say that the lots are being used for business purposes or are a logical extension of a commercial area.

Two rezoning cases are involved in the debate. Mark and Wendy Dudley are asking town officials to rezone their 3/4-acre lot on Reidsville Road from residential to high business use.

The Dudleys live on the lot and operate a business, Mark Dudley Performance, partly from a garage on site. The business involves the building and sale of drag-racing engines and high-performance cars.

The other lot being considered for rezoning is part of a tract owned by Glenwood Walkertown LLC, which owns Walkertown Commons. Although the land is beside the shopping center, planners say that it is on the outside of a loop road that eventually will encircle Walkertown Commons.

The two lots are beside each other. Planning-staff members say that the proposed loop road should be the logical outer limit on commercial development to prevent the whole area from becoming a strip development.

Planners also say that the town's proposed land-use plan does not show the area as appropriate for commercial use, but that it should be used for offices or other uses that would create a transition between the retail commercial area and nearby houses.

Rezoning the properties, planners say, would create a precedent for extending commercial zoning.

"It sets up strip development to the south," said Aaron King, a planner with the City/County Planning Board.

During the planning board's public hearing, the Dudleys spoke in favor of the rezoning. They said that although the land is zoned residential, it is actually not in a residential area.

A junkyard lies to the southwest of the Dudleys' house. It is part of Walkertown Auto Parts, operated by Ken Dudley, Mark Dudley's father.

Mark and Wendy Dudley want to move to another house and renovate their current home as office space for Mark Dudley Performance. They would build a new garage behind the house for engine work.

Patrick Hennigan, the president of Glenwood Development Co., said that rezoning the Glenwood lot beside the shopping center was the right approach because it would be adjacent to and a continuation of Walkertown Commons.

The company, based in Morganton, built the shopping center,

Fred Martin of Walkertown said he agreed with the planning-staff members.

"This is a residential section of homes," Martin said.

- Wesley Young can be reached at 992-0067 or at wyoung@wsjournal.com

This story can be found at:

http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FMGArticle%2FWSJ_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1031783954585&path=%21localnews&s=1037645509099

[Go Back](#)