

Public Meeting on Boundary Adjustment
Questions (Q), Answers (A), and Comments (C)
 July 7, 2015

The meeting held at the County Office Building on Fifth Street began at 5:30 p.m. Lee Catlin presented information on the general area under consideration for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Faith McClintic explained why a community gets involved in economic development and the benefits it can bring. Wayne Cilimberg explained the process used for amending the Comprehensive Plan and the expected review schedule. There were approximately 60 members of the public and 10 staff members in attendance. One Planning Commissioner was present. Four Board of Supervisor members were in the audience to listen. None of the Board members spoke.

Q: In the past, the County has rezoned for certain companies and then we didn't get the company. Will this happen?

A: We are suggesting this place because we need the land to satisfy the needs of our existing businesses. We are trying to set the stage for a future rezoning. Whether the land gets added to the Development Area will be potentially decided at the Sept. 8 Board of Supervisors Public Hearing.

Q: Why wasn't this expansion addressed during the recent Comprehensive Plan update?

A: The new Comprehensive Plan has a strategy to study our inventory of sites which we know has some limitations. We have a business interested that has caused us to need to look at this area sooner.

Q: The Route 29/I64 area is already congested. We need to fix the existing traffic problem. There will be chaos if more traffic is added.

C: VDOT is analyzing this request and will look at it based on the overall system. Once we have a rezoning proposed, a traffic study will be needed.

Q: What's the County's position on building vertically?

A: There are industries that need horizontal space and industries that need vertical space. Our Plan promotes building vertical space and R&D, especially, can use vertical space. If a facility is for production and distribution, most likely it will use horizontal space.

Q: Are we talking about Tyson (poultry processing) or a Google campus?

A: Although food processing is a target market, we aren't thinking about a chicken processing facility. We are talking about our target industries that build on our existing labor force and are dealing with locally produced products. The area lends itself more to small individual sites than one large campus site.

Q: If the optimal tax base is 70% residential and 30% non-residential how does that square with only 52% of the cost of services being provided by residents?

A: While there are more residential than non-residential property owners paying taxes, the residential properties can only pay for about half of what it takes to provide residential services.

Q: How does the state TMDL relate to Moore's Creek into which this property drains? Why not redevelop properties before proposing to expand the Development Areas? We had a lot of industrially designated land, but it was rezoned for residential use.

C: It is true that the Board rezoned a number of properties from industrial use to residential use recently. But, we did an overhaul recently of our zoning regulations to allow for industrial use possibilities. We are ready when owners are ready to talk about redevelopment.

Q: Has the County looked at Tax Increment Financing for redevelopment?

A: We will be looking at all these things in the future. We will have to figure out how to make redevelopment attractive to property owners and business prospects.

Q: Why is the Development Area boundary being considered for expansion without a specific plan? Has that ever been done before?

A: While most Comprehensive Plan amendments, have included specific plans, the Development Area was expanded in the 1990s for NGIC.

Q: If VDOT were to say that the result of this development will create intolerable roads, would the Board still decide to go through with the expansion? The interchange is really bad and so is traffic. No one seems to be taking into consideration the development at Wegmans and what it will do. Can you reassure us that traffic is not going to be worse?

A: We will analyze the impacts at the interchange. As we said, VDOT is also analyzing the request and has to provide comment.

Q: What will ingress and egress be to the area?

A: Access will be from Route 29.

Q: Why are we not looking holistically and community wide at this issue? Why isn't the community involved in the larger area discussion?

A: We are doing this as a parallel process, both this area and overall. These opportunities don't come along every day. In an ideal world, we should do one process rather than two. But right now, we need to be a little more reactive to a business opportunity.

Q: How much of the area is undevelopable?

A: The Planning Division is doing that work right now.

Q: Isn't all of the area going to be flattened if it is designated for industry?

A: Part of our analysis is to find sites that stay out of the environmental resources.

Q: How do we provide for these possibilities without impacting nearby residential properties? Screening would be nice.

A: The property is in the Entrance Corridor and will have to receive ARB review and approval.

C: The transportation system at Stonefield is dreadful. On-street parking makes it impossible for traffic to move. Parking is far away from the stores. This kind of thing is what we could get.

C: We had a lot of concern back in May when it looked like this was a "done deal". Thanks for not rushing it.

C: We are talking about expanding down Route 29 South. We haven't even talked about the inevitable first stop light. We should not jump for this "great" business when we can't even evaluate a tradeoff. This is a big, big decision for the community.

C: As someone who lives in Sherwood Farms and fought over the Redfields expansion, I must say that one of our main concerns is viewscape. We don't want something that is going to impact resale of our properties. We don't want the things we love to be destroyed. All we have is your word. It seems like a food processing company is being considered. If it is a bottle and distribution facility, ok. If it is wheat processing with smells and lots of traffic, which is a problem.

Q: Will you put the maps you showed us on the PowerPoint on the web or send to us?

A: Yes.

Q: Are there any objective metrics used to review this proposal?

A: Yes. We evaluate potential impacts to our natural, cultural, and historic resources. We look at availability of infrastructure. We look at transportation impacts. We look at both onsite and off-site impacts.

Q: The list of target industries is so broad how could one tell the impact? Can you break down the industries by impact?

A: We will be looking at the variety of potential industries and how they impact the area.

C from Karen Firehock, PC Member: We will be looking at everything that would be allowed at this location.

C: The LI zoning category is way too broad. It would be a lot more useful if we knew what we were talking about. Are we talking about agricultural support or a brewery? What are we talking about?

A: I wish we could share with you more information about the prospect, but, we can't. With a Comp. Plan amendment we can identify who the types of users should be.

The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m. Planning Commissioners and staff invited those present to provide comments to the Planning Commission in addition to attending the July 21 Planning Commission meeting.