

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT PLANNING BOARD
March 1, 2016
Whitsett Town Hall

The meeting of the Whitsett Planning Board was held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall. Those in attendance were Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, Board members Joe Wheeler and Craig York, Council Member liaison Jerry Rice, Town Administrator Gary Deal, and local businessman and Brightwood Storage owner Kevin Sasser, later joined by Sasser Companies Commercial Construction Division Chief Preston Massey.

Absent was Board Vice Chairwoman Ella Efird who remained in Florida while her husband was recuperating from emergency hospitalization.

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia called the meeting to order, noting that a quorum was present, and asked Council Member liaison Jerry Rice to offer the invocation with an added prayer request by Chairman Maccia especially for the Efirds.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of Minutes

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia asked for any changes to the minutes from the Planning Board meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 2015. With none made, Chairman Maccia asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written. Board member Joe Wheeler made a motion to accept the minutes from the October meeting as presented; motion seconded by Board member Craig York. Adoption of the minutes carried by unanimous vote of those members present.

2. Proposed Addition to Brightwood Self Storage

Board Chairman Maccia invited Kevin Sasser to the table to give a “walk-through” presentation of the proposed site plan for construction of a two-story, climate-controlled warehouse storage facility at the corner of Burlington Road and Brightwood Church Road.

Sasser explained that parking areas now used for open recreational vehicle storage would be reconfigured to accommodate convenient customer parking servicing the new facility, including required handicapped parking next to the loading area.

The building would have two opposite corner stairway entrances with a sliding-door loading area on the east side and two freight elevators. The facility would be a non-sprinkler structure with installed fire walls each containing two fire doors to partition off dangers. There would be no plumbing, no occupancy with electrical, mechanical only which would be run strictly out of the office on the premises.

Energy saving LED lighting would be used in the facility with motion sensors to light the long hallways. Entry would use a key fob system, whereby if lease is paid up, entry is activated; if payment not up to date, no access until it is. This system has worked well at the comparable Compass Point facility in Mebane, and so will be used in Whitsett, as well.

In anticipation of further development on this parcel, forethought was given by Sasser to upsizing the sediment pond now to conform to Guilford County environmental requirements, to accommodate planned facility expansion. Town Administrator Gary Deal explained that the town had issued its development clearance certificate for this project so that county environmental reviews could proceed.

Sasser then presented conceptual architectural renderings still in the “working” stage, though. The facility’s outside first story would be brick veneer, then upward would be metal of some sort with a color similar to the existing self-storage cubicles on the adjoining parcel. So far, Sasser was most attracted to a smooth textured panel, giving the appearance of stucco.

The roof would be membrane roofing with a single slope for efficient storm drainage into the pond rather than numerous installations for drainage. The roof, however, would have a wall built around it to give a clean appearance. Lighting of surroundings should not present a problem, since the building itself will serve as a buffer. All in all, the facility will occupy a footprint of close to 25,000 square feet with two stories offering almost 49,000 square feet of space.

Kevin Sasser and Preston Massey thanked the Planning Board and other present for their time and the opportunity to share plans; the Board, in turn, thanked them.

Following the above, discussions took place relative to ordinance segments on warehouse storage adopted in 2003 and on outdoor storage adopted in 2009. Town Administrator Deal explained that when height requirements for warehouse structures were increased from 20 feet to 35 feet and adopted in October 2015, other requirements for the two type operations were reviewed, but inadvertently not updated.

Deal simply wanted to make sure that all intentions and interpretations by town decision makers in 2003 and 2009 were in agreement. Copies of the excerpts were distributed to those present.

With respect to the 2003 [warehouse] 4-7.18 section, it reads that “No outside storage shall be permitted.” It is believed, that at that time, the Town Council inserted those words to avoid materials and stuff, e.g., pallets, boxes, etc. from piling up around the storage units. To clear up this intent, the phrase “with the exception of 4-7.9 use” or something similar could be added.

As for 2009 adoption of [outdoor storage] 4-7.9 section, the insertion of “No business activity other than the rental for storage of RVs, campers, and boats shall be conducted on the premises” was made during the 2009 June public hearing and regular meeting. It had been rumored, at that time, that Sasser may be interested in locating a gas station on the Burlington Road/Brightwood Church Road corner; and the Town Council, though not averse to storage, more so wanted to assure a say-so in what would go there. A storage facility was palatable and approved; any other type business, i.e., gas station, was not and needed to be controlled.

To clear up this part, the ordinance could remove some words, and simply state under G. Operation: “No business activity other than the rental for storage.”

Deal, who was expected at the Ruritan meeting also in session, encouraged the Board to continue discussion on these sections and be prepared to move on a recommendation for text modifications to be handed down to the Town Council should the county in their reviews of the Sasser proposed project for the two-story warehouse facility consider the current ordinance language a showstopper and halt progress until matters are cleared up by the Town.

The Board could sit tight for now and wait to see reactions from county reviews; but, even so, to be kosher with proper references in the ordinances, should strive to deliver a recommendation to Council by May for the 2016 June public hearing.

3. Any Other Old Business

Board Chairman Maccia asked for any other old business; and there was none.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Election of Officers for 2016

Board Chairman Maccia asked for any nominations for Board officers for 2016 or would the Board prefer current officers to serve for another year. All gave a nod, and a motion was made by Board member Joe Wheeler for Chair and Vice Chair to remain; motion seconded by Board member Craig York. Motion carried by unanimous vote of those members present.

2. Any Other New Business

Chairman Maccia asked if there were any other new business; and Council Member liaison Jerry Rice suggested that the Board begin to address the subject of solar farms that are evolving across the State and nearby. Board member Craig York offered to research and gather information for the next Planning Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Planning Board Chairman Maccia invited a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Board member Joe Wheeler to adjourn; motion seconded by Board member Craig York. By unanimous vote of those Board members present, the March 1, 2016 meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.

The next meeting of the Whitsett Planning Board will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2016 at the Town Hall. [Note: The April meeting was instantly cancelled due to last-minute absenteeism resulting in no quorum available, thereby moving out the next Board meeting to May 3.]

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

/s/

Bob Maccia, Planning Board Chairman

APPROVED: May 3, 2016