

City of Asheboro

COMPREHENSIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Steering Committee

MINUTES - MEETING #5

December 14, 2021 5:30pm
Asheboro City Hall
Council Chamber – 2nd Floor

Attendees:

Kevin Franklin
Owen George
Linda Hill
David Jarrell
Al Laprade

Mike Mize
Joey Trogon
Pam Vuncannon
Luis Viera
John Evans

Justin Luck
Trevor Nuttall
Kelly Larkins (PTRC)
Dawn Vallieres (PTRC)

The meeting started just after 5:30 PM, with dinner being served.

Survey Results Discussion

Kelly Larkins gave a Power Point slide show with an overview of the survey results. Following the overview, the following items were discussed by the committee:

- Desirability of underground utilities for community appearance.
- Having a diversity in restaurant choices
- Parking issues downtown
- Traffic calming and issues of noise pollution from vehicles and enforcement
- Using media to educate young people on laws.
- There was an observation that the demographics of the survey skewed higher in terms of household incomes and education levels and minority populations were not well represented compared to the demographics of the overall community. It was mentioned that paper surveys were mailed to randomized addresses in lower income census tracts (not property owners, but actual residents) to try and get a more diversified response. John Evans indicated that the return rate was in excess of 10 percent, which was favorable compared to typical survey response rates.

Focus Group Discussion and Introduction of Vision Statement

Kelly Larkins then gave a summary of the focus group discussion. He then introduced the vision statement and asked for general comments and first impressions of the vision. Discussion that followed included:

- Comments about the underuse of the US 64 Bypass, and confusion with signage directing traffic to the bypass. There was a concern that the Bypass would cause business to decline. Trevor Nuttall noted that projections from NCDOT when the US 64 Bypass was being planned were that the daily traffic volumes would reach levels similar to traffic levels before the bypass opened within 10 years of its opening.

Megasite Discussion

Kelly Larkins showed a slide with commute times from the Megasite, at 15 minute, 30 minute, 45 minute and 60 minute increments. This was to demonstrate where development pressure, particularly for new residential development may occur, and at a salary range higher than the median in the county, it was expected that many would be willing to commute further than normal.

In order to facilitate Committee discussion, a news story from Fox 8 (WGHP) online was distributed for the group to read. Afterwards, the following general discussion occurred:

- This will bring 1,750 jobs within the first phase.
- There was varying thought on how much of an impact this may have on Asheboro.
- Old Liberty Road may see some growth pressure, but the infrastructure (water, sewer, one lane bridges, etc.) may hamper growth.
- Questions arose on how far this may cause Asheboro or Liberty to expand.
- This will create new opportunities for dining, entertainment (theatres, recreation services, etc.) for workers and new residents.
- Toyota will use the entire Megasite, 1,000 acres out of the 1,700, with the residual area being buffer for air quality or to buffer surrounding properties. There may be some related manufacturing on-site in the future, specifically to support the Toyota plant.
- There was some discussion on whether surrounding areas may see additional pressure for residential development.
- Some discussion on losing small town rural character was occurring, particularly for people who had been in the area a long time. There was some concern to not have the area become an “RTP type” environment where everything looked the same.
- There was some discussion on the need to have infrastructural capacity for the development and development that may follow in Asheboro.
- Discussion on tourism/housing/dining opportunities as a result.
- Discussion on the NC Zoo capitalizing on workers as potential visitors.
- Discussion on having a more direct route from Asheboro to Liberty.
- Kevin Franklin, Randolph County EDC, spoke on how the entire region may be impacted. He mentioned that the EDC group had traveled to Greer, SC, where the BMW plant is located. He mentioned that, while that location, has a different level of supplier, he suggested a need to think beyond just the Toyota Megasite and its direct growth. Having a widely recognized international brand often inspires interest from other potential economic development with the thought that if a location is good enough for one major company, it is good enough for other companies’ investments. He indicated that he had already seen increased interest from developers, including one from Texas, in development opportunities.

Mapping Exercises

In the interest of time, the Goals and Policies discussion on the agenda was skipped to proceed with the map exercises. The first map the group was presented with was the “Growth Strategy” map. The committee was divided into two groups to come up with independent suggestions. They were asked to rank areas from 1 to 4 (with 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest) for prioritization of growth.

Group 1 offered the following general thoughts on why certain areas were prioritized (in addition to specific map recommendations):

- Infrastructural ability
- Access to major highway corridors
- NC Zoo tourism development
- Megasite access
- Need to spread development to South Asheboro
- It is a given that areas immediately adjacent to city limits will naturally grow, so focus was looking at areas beyond that.

Group 2 offered the following general thoughts on why certain areas were prioritized (in addition to specific map recommendations):

- Focus on having nicer hotels near the NC Zoo due to US 64 Bypass/Connector
- Megasite/visitors coming in and capitalizing on the NC Zoo as an attraction
- Focus on people living in the downtown area as the “secret sauce” to having an attractive and vibrant city, so that area was prioritized highly. It was also prioritized that having restaurants and attractions in the downtown area should be capitalized on as a focus for people visiting the zoo.
- As a 2 to 3 priority, North Asheboro was identified due to rail access. It was noted that there were attractive existing housing opportunities in the area, including for multi-family housing.
- Growth will naturally gravitate more towards Ramseur than out US 64 West towards Lexington or further to the South than the NC Zoo.
- There was a discussion about the need to be more walkable, to fix rundown housing, and the lack of services/grocery stores in North Asheboro.

The next set of maps discussed were “Proposed Land Use” maps. After the groups reviewed these maps, Group 2 noted its mapping highlights and led discussion that included:

- Expansion of NC Zoo area
- Light commercial opportunities in area near soccer park.
- Need for commercial in North Asheboro, particularly for basic services such as grocery.
- Avoid uses such as junkyards (potential redevelopment with higher density housing?)

Group 1’s comments on the Proposed Land Use Map followed. In addition to specific notes made on the maps, the discussion summary included:

- Having some residential on the ridge near the NC Zoo Connector.
- Having basic services near the intersection of US 64 Bypass and 42 (such as gas).
- Having some commercial use on the west side of the 64 Bypass at its 64 Business interchange.
- Having industrial/economic development along NC 49 South.
- Residential opportunities near Jellystone Campground off Zoo Parkway at Crestview Church Road.
- Residential development opportunities on the north side of Gold Hill Road.
- Seeing downtown area expand would be positive. Group 1 noted they agreed with Group 2’s thoughts that having residential development downtown would help make the area more vibrant.

It was noted that the difference in focus between Group 1 and Group 2 was that Group 1 tended to focus on the outlying areas of the Asheboro area, while Group 2 was more focused on the existing city limits.

As the meeting wrapped up, it was mentioned that in the interest of time, the Goals and Policies discussion did not take place, but the group was asked to stay tuned to a written communication that would be following to get their thoughts and that they could respond in writing rather than having another meeting. The meeting ended at approximately 8:25 PM.