

Board kills overlay

Residents object to regulations

By Ron Page

The people spoke and Morrisville town officials listened. A move to make Airport Boulevard a "showplace entrance" is dead.

In a special mid-week meeting, the Morrisville Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to abandon its proposed zoning overlay that carried stringent regulations for new construction along a major portion of the busy roadway.

The latest action followed a meeting earlier this month in which several residents of the area appeared to again voice strong opposition to the proposed zoning overlay just as they had at previous town board and planning and zoning board meetings.

Town Planner Leisa Powell reported at the earlier meeting that the planning board recommended against the amendment to the zoning ordinance.

But after hearing the opposition and the planning board's feeling, commissioners tabled the subject for further study, despite a plea by one of its members to recognize the public's opposition and kill the proposal.

"The planning board understands this is not something that has to be done," said Commissioner Mark Silver-Smith, who voted against tabling the issue. "I don't feel tabling this will do any good."

In a final decision last week, the board voted unanimously to drop the plan. The proposed overlay would have covered a portion of Airport Boulevard from its intersection with I-40 to its intersection with the Cedar Fork Outfall sewer line. It would have included all land within 1,000 feet on both sides of the road.

Town Manager David Hodgkins explained at an earlier meeting that the proposed overlay was a guide to protect the character of one of the town's major thoroughfares.

"Airport Boulevard has always been considered the main entrance to Morrisville," Hodgkins said.

But Charles Conklin of 514 Airport Boulevard said he's never considered the roadway a major entry to the town and that he's lived here for 25 years.

"If there's a major road, it's N.C. 54," he said. "And besides, the new district only goes to a certain point and stops. Eighty-five to 90 percent of that is already developed."

Conklin said the move would put an undue hardship on the people who live there. "I think it's a bad practice for commissioners to pick out spots for special designations, and I urge you to turn down the plan."

Another resident along the roadway, Randy Watkins, said the planning board "turned (the idea) down totally. We are against this. Why it stops at Cedar Fork, well, I won't ever go into that, but please turn it down. The people of Airport Boulevard need not be subjected to this. We don't need it."

Watkins had appeared at the initial hearing on the showplace zoning, as did resident Bill Buchanan of 109 Marcom Drive. Buchanan was also back, this time to emphasize he felt the new overlay would devalue property. "This will happen because of restrictions," he said.

The overlay plan would not have changed the existing mix of underlying districts such as industrial, commercial, business and agriculture, except for certain prohibited uses under the showcase designations.

Manufacturing, for example, would have been prohibited, as would construction of businesses and storage of construction materials and heavy equipment. Warehouses and activities related to agriculture, such as storage of grain and other agriculturally grown products, leasing of farm equipment, and selling feed and grain products would not be permitted.

Landscaping comes under more scrutiny and no land-disturbing or site-improvement activities, grading or timbering would have been allowed within the proposed overlay prior to the approval of either a site plan or subdivision plan by the town board.



TALENTED TRIO—Outdoing moviedom's Kevin Costner, center, photo, was a tall order for former N.C. State basketball star Tom Gugliotta, top, who enjoys a between-NBA-seasons round of golf at Sunday's Jimmy V Golf Classic at Prestonwood Country Club. Photographer Kirk Kirkland also captured television personality Gary Collins, who was making his second visit to the Triangle after appearing in the Duke Children's Classic in May.

Soil contamination a concern at site for new fire station

By Ron Page

Morrisville's town commissioners have agreed to look a little more deeply into the proposed site for a new fire station they want to build at the intersection of N.C. 54 and McCrimmon Parkway.

They want to double-check the possibility of underground fuel tanks that could create an environmental problem.

Commissioners had unanimously approved \$230,000 to buy a 4.1-acre site owned by Charles and Nancy Zimmerli. During the initial phases of the purchase process, studies indicated the existence of one underground fuel oil tank as well as the possibility of additional fuel tanks and/or contaminated soil on site.

Town Manager David Hodgkins told commissioners that the owner's environmental engineer confirmed environmental problems

and recommended additional work be done.

Hodgkins said he and Fire Chief Tony Chiotakis and Town Attorney Frank Gray agreed that closing on the matter could not take place with so many questions still unanswered. He emphasized the Zimmerlis have been cooperative and have agreed to take care of all problems uncovered to date.

Hodgkins said additional conditions have been recommended to the original contract which should be met before closing, and that the owners are willing to meet them so long as they know the town is moving toward closing on the property.

Gray noted that environmental engineers have determined that petroleum contamination is present in the ground water in concentrations exceeding standards set by the state.

Elementary sets Last Fling Sept. 7

September 7 is the date for Morrisville Elementary School's annual Summer's Last Fling, a day set aside for food, games, and other activities for students and their families. Tickets are on sale at the school and parents have been encouraged to help make the event successful by donating books,

homemade crafts, baked goods, or their time.

The Morrisville School Store is also open Tuesday through Friday mornings from 8:30 to 9 for students to shop for items ranging from pencils to new Morrisville T-shirts.

Scott says Shiloh's sewer setup stinks

Continued from page 1

hours and many days mapping out the projects. He said the funds will come from \$100,000 in a federal Community Development Block Grant and \$225,000 from Water and Sewer Capital Reserve, or Water and Sewer Fund Balance at the town manager's discretion.

"There should be enough already set aside to design and permit this — \$22,000 already approved by the town board," Sauls added. But Commissioner Silver-Smith wasn't satisfied, saying he hadn't received information about the proposals until a day before the meeting.

He stressed that he has long been in favor of getting sewer services to Shiloh, adding later that he felt the financing plan had been put together by the town manager and consulting engineer only four days earlier.

Turning to Town Manager David Hodgkins, Silver-Smith asked: "Where are we getting this money from? As Hodgkins started to reply, Silver-Smith cut him off, with the

question "Any reports from Julia (referring to Julia Powell, the town finance officer) on where we get the money from?"

Hodgkins started again, only to hear Silver-Smith ask: "Any reports? I've got to be covered by where the money comes from. I want to see the figures." He also said he was against it because approval was sought before getting a design and before bidding could determine the actual cost.

The meeting ended after the 4-1 vote of approval. Silver-Smith got up, and glancing at the audience as he walked out of chambers, said, "I know it's political, guys."

Sauls had earlier told a handful of residents at the meeting, most of whom had shown up at the special session to hear the board's decision on a zoning overlay plan for Airport Boulevard which was earlier defeated, that he and Newnam had run into a lot of dead ends and had to go back to the drawing board during the sewer studies. "From

Commissioner Newnam and I, this is the most important project we have had the pleasure of bringing to this board. Somehow, with the help of God, we did get this project together," he said.

Commissioner C.T. Moore called it the biggest project the town will ever see. "It's been wanted as long as I can remember. It was a major topic four years or five years ago at election time. These two commissioners went out of their way and worked months on this and found a way to put in a whole lot of sewer that can be afforded and won't hurt anyone moneyside."

Commissioner Leavy Barbee, whose district includes Shiloh, said he echoed Moore's feelings. "I think this shows the town is on the right track," he said, expressing his thanks for the efforts of both Newnam and Sauls. "There is a lot of potential growth in that area. I don't think the money can be spent much better than this project. It's wonderful."

Contract awarded for sewer line connection

By Ron Page

The long-awaited Cary-to-Morrisville waste water treatment connection is a step closer to reality.

A \$1,174,605 million contract for construction of the connecting system has been awarded to the low bidder, J.F. Wilkerson Construction Company of Morrisville. Five bids were received for the project, which will allow the town to buy services from Cary and close the two waste water treatment plants it now uses.

"We've been waiting for this moment for months and years," Town Manager David Hodgkins told Morrisville town commissioners. He said the bid fell within an original estimate.

Mayor Pro Tem Billy Sauls said the connection was something near and dear to his heart.

"This is another step toward getting this completed. I'm just so proud we're this close," he said.

A public hearing held to gather comment on the project produced

no objections. Immediately following, commissioners voted to send their financing plan, which calls for borrowing money from BB&T Leasing Co., to the Local Government Commission for approval.

The commission, a state agency that oversees the accounting practices of municipalities, is expected to make a decision on the proposal by Sept. 3.

Three lending institutions submitted proposals for financing the project, and BB&T offered the most attractive with a maximum interest rate of 5.12 percent annually on a maximum loan of \$1.3 million.

Bass, Nixon & Kennedy Inc. of Raleigh, the town's consulting engineering company, recommended accepting the lowest construction bid, Hodgkins explained. The firm designed the connection and estimated that overall costs would run between \$1 million and \$1.25 million at current market conditions.

A shortage of sewer capacity has

been a critical problem that has halted development in some parts of town. The connection, construction for which will start within a month, is expected to be completed next year, but the final part of the construction must await Cary's completion of an expansion currently under way at its plant on the north side of town.

The contract calls for a tie-in between Morrisville and Cary so that the larger town can accept the flow, Hodgkins noted, adding that the pact calls for Cary to eventually allocate 2 million gallons of sewage capacity daily to Morrisville and 3 million gallons of water daily from the Jordan Lake plant, which the larger town owns with Apex. That 20-year contract was signed last September.

Morrisville's two waste water treatment plants will no longer treat waste after the connection system is in operation. Located at Aviation Parkway and Perimeter Park, they will be converted to help send sewage to Cary.

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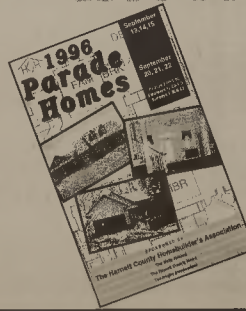
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