

**Minutes of the
City of New Bern Planning & Zoning Board
June 6, 2023 – 5:30 P.M.
Development Services Conference Room – 303 First Street**

The regular meeting of the New Bern Planning and Zoning Board was held in the Development Services Conference Room, 303 First Street, on June 6, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

Members Present: Brad Jefferson, Chair
Kyle Dearing
Marshall Ballard
Sonny Aluzzo
Raymond Layton
Margie Dunn
Rusty Ingram

Members Excused (E)/ Absent (A): Pat Dougherty

Staff & Counsel Present: Jessica Rhue, Development Services Director
Seth Laughlin, Zoning Administrator
Jaimee Bullock-Mosely, Assistant City Attorney.

1. Roll Call

Staff member Seth Laughlin delivered the roll call of all members and quorum declared with 7 members present.

2A: Stars and Stripes 4F, LLC has requested consideration of an application to rezone two parcels of land totaling 20.44 +/- acres from R-10A Residential to R-8 Residential district.

Staff member Laughlin presented the item. Stars and Stripes 4F, LLC has requested consideration of an application to rezone two parcels of land totaling 20.44 +/- acres from R-10A Residential to R-8 Residential district. The parcels are located on the east side of Washington Post Road at its intersection with Olivia Road. The properties are further identified as PID #'s 8-223-003 & 8-223-004. The site is 20.44 acres and can be viewed as an expansion of residential development within a growing area. The proposed rezoning from R-10A to R-8 is consistent with recommendations in the 2022 Land Use Plan Update. The proposed rezoning is generally consistent with the character of the adjacent land uses and zoning classifications. Staff has found the proposed rezoning to be reasonable and in the public interest and consistent with City Land Use and Transportation Plans, due to the parcel being located in the NC 43 Focus Area. The proposed change supports the general trend in our community to provide more affordable housing options.

Board member Dunn made a motion to recommend adoption of the rezoning request to the Board of Alderman. Board member Ingram seconded the motion. Chairman Jefferson called for a roll call vote. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

Vice Chairman Layton made a motion to adopt the statement of consistency. Board member Dearing seconded the motion. Chairman Jefferson called for a roll call vote. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

2B: Jason Sanderson has requested consideration of an application to rezone one parcel of land totaling 0.92 +/- acres from R-10 Residential to C-4 Neighborhood business district.

Staff member Laughlin presented the item. Jason Sanderson has requested consideration of an application to rezone one parcel of land totaling 0.92 +/- acres from R-10 Residential to C-4 Neighborhood business district. The parcel is located on the north side of Oaks Road near its intersection with North First Avenue. The property is further identified as PID # 8-031-A-032. The proposed rezoning from R-10 to C-4 is consistent with recommendations in the 2022 Land Use Plan Update. The proposed rezoning is generally consistent with the character of the adjacent land uses and zoning classifications. Staff has found the proposed rezoning to be in the public interest and consistent with the City Land Use Plan.

Board member Ingram made a motion to recommend adoption of the rezoning request to the Board of Alderman. Board member Dearing seconded the motion. Chairman Jefferson called for a roll call vote. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

Board member Dunn made a motion to adopt the statement of consistency. Board member Aluzzo seconded the motion. Chairman Jefferson called for a roll call vote. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

2C. Initial Zoning of Previously Annexed Parcels

Staff member Laughlin presented the item. Staff has become aware that several land parcels within the city's planning jurisdiction did not receive an initial zoning designation at the time of annexation. We have determined that 29 such parcels remain unzoned and are located in three main areas of the City. One group is located adjacent to West NC 55 Hwy and another group adjacent to the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport, and lastly off Hwy 70 in the Carolina Colours area.

Staff sent letters to these property owners on May 11, 2023 letting them know that this process is underway and inviting them to contact staff with any questions. Staff was contacted by several property owners and/or their representatives and the proposed zoning designations were discussed.

Staff evaluated each location to determine appropriate zoning designations. The resultant recommendations are complimentary with the existing uses on the ground and the adjoining zoning districts, as well as in conjunction with the wishes of the property owners that we did have conversations with.

Chairman Jefferson called for a verbal vote. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

Board member Dunn made a motion to adopt the statement of consistency. Board member Aluzzo seconded the motion. Chairman Jefferson called for a roll call vote. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

2D. Discussion Item: Downtown Parking

Staff member Laughlin explained the item background. The City of New Bern Land Use Ordinance requires new commercial developments and “change-of-use” occupancy within existing structures to provide off-street parking for their staff and patrons. In Section 15-343(e) “Flexibility in administration required,” the ordinance exempts a four-block area known as the “central retail core” from minimum off-street parking requirements. This area is defined in the code as “the area encompassing those properties abutting the east side of Craven Street, the east side of Hancock Street, the north side of Tryon Palace Drive, and the north side of Broad Street.” Many cities in North Carolina have removed off-street minimum requirements from their downtowns altogether.

Some of these cities are:

- Raleigh, Ashville, Greenville, Wilmington, Edenton, Washington, and Mt. Airy.

The Planning and Zoning Board may consider changes to the existing code and make recommendations to the Board of Alderman for adoption. Staff has provided a list of talking points below for this discussion:

- Expand the parking-exempt area boundary.
- Special use permit requirement for eliminating existing parking spaces.
- Differences between New Bern and other cities.
- Accommodations for overnight lodging.

After a lengthy discussion, staff recommended that the Board continue this discussion to the July meeting. Chairman Jefferson took staff’s recommendation and asked if it was the pleasure of the Board to continue the item until the following month. There were no objections from the Board.

3. Staff Updates

Director Rhue stated that she did not have any updates for the Board.

4. Board Member Comments

Chairman Jefferson asked what the purpose of the item was as it was new compared to previous agendas. Director Rhue stated that it is common practice for advisory boards to have a member comment period at some point during meetings, so she asked staff to add it to the agendas moving forward. Several Board members agreed that it was a good idea and look forward to having an opportunity to share comments in the future.

5. Adjourn

Board member Dearing made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Board member Dunn seconded the motion. A verbal vote was taken, and the motion passed (7-0).

Meeting time 1 hour and 27 minutes.

Date Approved: 7-5-23


Brad Jefferson, Chair

Attest: 
Seth Laughlin, Land & Community Development Administrator.