



Catawba

area plan

Advisory Group Summary Meeting Notes for September 23, 2008

Shady Brook Baptist Church/Fellowship Hall

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Advisory Group Attendees: Truett Auten, Sheila Clark, Kevin Ebersold, Suzanne Gosney, Leslie Hare, Sam Lethcoe, Kathy Reinecker, Fran Reinecker, John Springfield, Brenda Stewart, Dan Tyson, Taren Wilkinson, Lesa Houchins, Elaine Powell

Staff:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department - Wendy Martz, Alberto Gonzalez, Alysia Osborne, Melony McCullough, and Tom Drake

Engineering & Property Management Department - Laura Brewer, Michael A. MacIntyre, and Jay Wilson

Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) - Rusty Rozelle, Heidi Pruess, and Jack Stutts,

Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department - Jason Pauling, Donald Sheriff.

Charlotte – Mecklenburg Utilities Department - Barry Shearin

1. Welcome and Introductions

Wendy Martz (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department) welcomed participants, reviewed the agenda and meeting materials. She explained that the purpose of this meeting as well as next week's meeting would focus on existing conditions and policies regarding the natural environment. Ms. Martz reviewed the draft Vision Statement that had been developed at the previous Advisory Group meeting. She also briefly discussed the Environmental – General Development Policies as well as the Planning Terminology handouts. Following the meeting introduction, she introduced Mike MacIntyre with the City of Charlotte Storm Water Services Division.

2. Natural Environment – Part I

- a. **Mike MacIntyre – Post Construction Controls Ordinance Administrator – City of Charlotte Engineering and Property Management Storm Water Division** stated that there are three main ordinances that protect water quality in our area, specifically: **Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Buffer**, **Post Construction Controls Ordinance (PCCO)**, and **Watershed Protection**.

- i. Mr. MacIntyre explained that SWIM Buffers protect streams by means of vegetative buffers. The width of these buffers increase as the area drainage to the stream increases.
- ii. The PCCO incorporates most SWIM Buffers and also includes further requirements such as treatment of the first flush (1") of runoff for 85% Total Suspended Solids Removal and 70% Total Phosphorous Removal in Western Catawba, Yadkin, and Southeast Catawba. Mr. MacIntyre also presented further requirements of the PCCO. In terms of applicability the PCCO applies to almost all new construction, unless certain criteria have been met for prior plan approval. Mr. MacIntyre had in the power point presentation the list of exemptions.
- iii. Western Catawba Watershed standards apply to Low Density Projects, High Density Projects, lots less than one acre, and for natural area requirements. Natural area requirements apply to the following development types: Parcels with less than 24% built-upon area; greater than or equal to 24% and less than 50% built-upon area; greater than or equal to 50% built-upon area. I-1

and I-2 development and redevelopment projects are exempt from the Natural Area requirement in the Central and Western Catawba Districts.

- b. Tom Drake – Planning Coordinator – Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department** shared information on Watershed Zoning Overlay Regulations. Mr. Drake spoke about the different zoning overlay districts that have been established to protect the watershed area. The Watershed Overlay Zoning Districts that impact the Catawba plan area include the Lake Wylie Critical Area, Lake Wylie Protected Area and Lower Lake Wylie Protected Area. Mr. Drake explained the different built upon area requirements as well as lake/stream buffers for both the Protected and Critical areas.
- c. Rusty Rozelle – Program Manager – Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Water Quality Division** presented information on water quality.

 - i. Mr. Rozelle spoke on water quality stressors that impact the Catawba River’s water quality. He discussed the water quality conditions of different locations in and around the plan area. Mr. Rozelle also spoke about the different water quality buffers that have been implemented as protection mechanisms. As part of the presentation, Mr. Rozelle presented a picture of an old dam on Long Creek that was used as a swimming hole. He also presented a picture of another old dam that’s on the Crosland property and asked if anyone knew what it was. Some members of the advisory group informed him that it was used to create a duck pond in the area used for game hunting and fishing.
 - ii. Next Mr. Rozelle presented information on the Catawba River District Certification Program, and explained that it would be a totally volunteer program in which participants would seek to be certified as a river related business, and they would have to follow a two part certification process. Mr. Rozelle then presented information on the historic Tuckaseegee Ford and Tuckaseegee Trail. The Tuckaseegee Ford is the first documented ford crossing of the Catawba River in Mecklenburg County and the oldest and most important point of crossing along the Catawba River. The crossing was part of a major trade route for Native Americans and European settlers stretching from the center of Charlotte to as far west as the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The historic Tuckaseegee Trail and Ford Crossing all fall within the Whitewater Center and within the boundaries of the study area.
- d. Laura Brewer – Senior Urban Forester – City of Charlotte Engineering and Property Management Department** presented information on the City’s Tree Ordinance (Ch. 21 City Code). She stated that the ordinance covers tree protection, tree save areas, and trees in the right of way for both trees in commercial development and trees in residential subdivisions. The current ordinance protects trees in single family subdivision developments by requiring a 10% minimum tree save anywhere on the site. The ordinance also has requirements regarding tree plantings in commercial development such as requiring 1 tree for every 10,000 sq. ft. of impervious surface, and for single family developments where street trees are required to be planted every 40-50 feet along new streets.
- e. Barry Shearin – Chief Engineer - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities** Mr. Shearin started his presentation by explaining that a Mecklenburg Wastewater Capacity Study had been undertaken to project needs through 2030 based upon population growth and flow projections. The study concluded that current capacity would be sufficient only until 2012, and that different alternatives to meet these projections would be needed. Mr. Shearin stated that, at the same time, another study was also looking at the feasibility of a Gaston/Mecklenburg regional facility. That study concluded that there will be capacity issues based on current projections for both the Mt. Holly facility on the Gaston County side, and the McAlpine Treatment Plant and collection system on the Mecklenburg County side, suggesting that a regional solution might be a possible alternative.

According to Mr. Shearin, many different alternatives were studied including expanding the plant in Mt. Holly or building a new plant in Mecklenburg County that could treat the flow coming from the Mt. Holly plant. The conclusion was to build a new plant in Mecklenburg County, next to the Long Creek Pump Station, would be optimal. It would treat flow from the Mt. Holly plant just across the river, if they chose to do so. Mr. Shearin went on to explain that there is still more planning and site design issues to be developed, an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) must be completed, and that further opportunities for public comment will be provided. He assured the group that the proposed plant would use state of the art technology and follow green building technology with a goal to have LEED-certified buildings.

Questions during the meeting centered on clarifying existing environmental regulations such as the tree ordinance and post construction controls ordinance. Many advisory group members also expressed interest and concern about the proposed wastewater treatment plant; Mr. Shearin's presentation answered many of their questions.

3. Wrap Up and Next Steps

Wendy Martz noted that the next meeting, scheduled for next Tuesday (September 30) would focus on air and land quality.