

Advisory Group Meeting #1
Summary Notes
August 19, 2008
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Attendance

Advisory Group: Truett Auten, Shelia Clark, Kevin Ebersold, Suzanne Gosney, Mike Hanberry, Carlos Johnson, Camille Jones, Duke Jones, Sue Lethcoe, Cora and "Doc" Mullis, Paul O'Toole, John Springsteed, Brenda Stewart, Jeff Wise, Andy Zoutewelle, Karen Bragg, Kathy and Fran Reinecker, and Taren Wilkinson

Staff: Wendy Martz, Alberto Gonzalez, Melony McCullough, Alysia Osborne (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department) and Brian Horton (Charlotte Department of Transportation)

Welcome and Introductions

Alberto Gonzalez, Planning staff, opened the meeting by welcoming the Advisory Group attendees, providing housekeeping details, and reviewing the proposed meeting schedule. The Advisory Group determined that 6 pm meetings at Shady Brook Church would work best. Alberto thanked the Advisory Group members for their time and encouraged their consistent participation over the next 4 - 5 months.

Background Information

Land Use Planning

Melony McCullough, Planning staff, led the discussion on land use planning and zoning. She provided background information on the Planning Department staff and the Planning Commission's role, reviewed what an area plan is, explained what an area plan can and cannot do, and why a plan is being developed for the area. She also shared information on growth in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and the Catawba area.

Zoning

Melony explained what zoning is (a legal ordinance), how it differs from planning documents (provide guidance to elected officials and planning staff), and the rezoning process.

Survey Results

Each Advisory Group member received a copy of the results from the Visual Opinion Survey and a list of all written comments identified through the public input process to date (survey results can also be viewed online at www.charlotteplanning.org). Below is a summary of the opportunities and issues that have been summarized by staff and organized into categories that will guide future discussions. The shaded text indicates Advisory Group changes.

OPPORTUNITIES

Land Use

Housing density / Residential development at varying densities, but predominantly low-density Develop complimentary land uses around the US National Whitewater Center / Develop retail entertainment / recreational land uses around the Catawba River that take advantage of the waterfront location and create a unique destination in Charlotte.

Provide neighborhood retail land uses, such as restaurants, small grocery store

Avoid land uses that encourage crime and loitering

Community Design

Build quality housing

Develop an overall "design theme" reflective of the area's riverfront location and unique character

Transportation

Provide public access to Catawba River; explore NC 27 access

Easy access to Center City and Interstates Mass Transit

Improve road conditions, including repairs, sidewalks, traffic signals and street lights
Completion of I-485 around north side of Charlotte

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

Develop neighborhood parks / recreational facilities with an emphasis on conservation, permanent open space and greenways

Natural Environment

Protect remaining open space and tree cover Environmental impacts should determine future planning decisions

ISSUES

Land Use

Incompatibility between existing industrial and residential uses

Noise from expanded airport runway

Too many industrial areas

Future of mobile home park

Community Design

Loss of rural character Poor design and quality of newer housing subdivisions

Transportation

Traffic congestion, cut through traffic and speeding

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

Not enough parks

Lack of community facilities (such as post office, recreation centers, library, police and fire stations)
Proposed wastewater treatment plant

Natural Environment

Loss of natural areas, wildlife habitat and tree cover

Public Safety

Other

Negative perception of the west side Impact of development on existing residents Lack of constraints on new development Power lines and railroad tracks

Opportunities and Issues Exercise

The Advisory Group, working in groups of 4 - 5 people, were given a copy of the opportunities and issues and an aerial map and asked to validate and prioritize the list of opportunities and issues above. The groups discussed the list and identified land uses that they would like to see on the aerial map. The following summarizes the group discussions.

Group 1: Truett Auten, Mike Hanberry, Carlos Johnson, and Brenda Stewart

Recognized new and / or planned subdivisions (Crosland, Rapids at Belmeade and Cedar Mills)
Noted the need for complimentary land uses around Whitewater Park (i.e. hotel or restaurant)
Recommended light industrial development with "upscale" offices along Performance and Sam Wilson roads

Suggested medical offices as a possibility on the existing Clarion site

Noted the need for public facilities such as a branch or regional library in the area Suggested a nature preserve

Recommended keeping Snappy's convenience store and gas station

Group 2: Suzanne Gosney, Al Jones, and Sue Lethcoe

Need for better quality housing

More upscale developments

Complimentary land uses around the Whitewater Center

No malls

Need for Light Rail

Need traffic signals

Protection of remaining open space and tree cover

Future of mobile home park

Noise abatement from airport runway

More police coverage needed to reduce speeding Need fire department, police department and

branch post office

Consider needs of the many elderly residents Rural character already gone; replace trees

Access to the river for fishing

Group 3: Shelia Clark, Kevin Ebersold, Mr. and Mrs. Mullis, and John Springsteed

Low density housing only

Neighborhood retail land uses, such as small grocery store

Equestrian area / center as a possible complimentary use to the Whitewater Center Build quality housing Provide public access to the Catawba River No mass transit Improving road conditions is important Develop neighborhood parks – much needed Protect remaining open space and tree cover

No more industrial areas

No more mobile home parks

Traffic congestion

Lack of constraints on new development

Group 4: Karen Bragg, Fran and Kathy Reinecker, and Taren Wilkinson

Low density development, with the Whitewater Center as an area "theme"

Suggested Phillips Place as a possible design concept for the area

Provide easy access to the Catawba River - key Under transportation, add sidewalks as another element to improve road conditions

No more housing subdivisions

Future of the mobile home park

Poor design and quality of new housing subdivisions

Maintain rural character

Lack of community facilities

Suggested changing the name of "west side" due to the negative perception

Group 5: Paul O'Toole, Jeff Wise, and Andy Zoutewelle

Confirmed the need for complimentary land uses around the Whitewater Center such as open space, greenways, but expressed concern over the future location of the new wastewater treatment plant as too close to the River, the "defining singly natural resource in the area." Suggested moving the proposed site 1000-1500 feet upstream Long Creek to buffer the River.

Urged limited development along the river; suggested providing public access to the Catawba River at NC 27 bridge
Work with developers to ensure that residential development maximizes open space and tree cover throughout the fabric of new neighborhoods
Confirmed the need for neighborhood parks but

referenced survey results indicating a greater

preference for open space, conservation and greenways in lieu of playgrounds and ball fields Limit industrial uses to the existing industrial corridor

Need for additional community facilities and suggested that the design of the structures be "memorable" and reflective of the flavor and character of the area.

Advisory Group Questions

Below is a summary of some of the questions asked during the meeting and staff responses:

- 1. Are Advisory Group members allowed to discuss the meeting information with neighbors and neighborhood organizations? Staff encourages Advisory Group members to share information discussed in meetings and share that information with group.
- 2. What weight do citizens' preferences have in the planning process? Are citizens' concerns incorporated in the plan? Staff will consider all comments from the Advisory Group; in rare situations, appointed and elected officials may be presented with two recommendations to consider if staff and the Advisory Group cannot reach consensus on a recommendation.
- 3. Will staff consider a citizen's recommendation that calls for no changes in the area?

 No, staff cannot support a recommendation that calls for no change. It is important to recognize that the area is changing and the growth that is taking place throughout the region. All areas will be impacted by this growth. The purpose of this process is to have a plan in place to guide future growth and development.
- 4. We need a better response time for emergency services such as police and fire protection. These issues will be discussed during the planning process when we focus on plan policies for infrastructure and public facilities.
- 5. Who are the elected representatives for the area? *Council member Warren Turner is the City Council representative and Commissioner Karen Bentley is the County Commissioner.*

Wrap up and Next Meeting

The Advisory Group will be asked to review several draft vision statements prepared by Planning staff at the next meeting. The draft vision statements will be based upon input received at this meeting. Initial ideas / statements suggested by the Advisory Group for consideration when drafting the vision statement include:

Focus on the riverfront
Improve the "west side" of Charlotte
A vibrant community centered around the Catawba River
Expand on the Whitewater amenities
Quality housing for all stages of the life cycle
Quality and responsive public facilities and services

The next meeting will be **September 4, 2008**, from 6-8 pm at Shady Brook Church.