

Planning and Zoning Commission
HALUP Elected and Appointed Official Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2010

The Harrisburg Area Land Use Plan (HALUP) Elected and Appointed Officials meeting was held on July 29, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. Members present from the Planning and Zoning Commission were Mr. Todd Berg, Ms. Brenda Cook, Mr. Eugene Divine, and Mr. Larry Ensley. Attending from the Planning and Zoning Division were, Ms. Susie Morris, Planning and Zoning Manager, Mr. Jonathan Marshall, Commerce Director, Ms. Arlena Roberts, Clerk to the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Elected and Appointed Officials.

Ms. Meg Nealon and Alec Brebner from LandDesign gave a brief overview summarizing the results from the HALUP Open House held on July 27, 2010.

Mr. Brebner stated that this is Phase 4 – Plan Preparation

There were three stations at the open house: a land use station, a cultural and natural resources station and a transportation station. There were approximately 120 attendees during the 3.5 hours, and the majority of the folks seemed very positive.

Summary of discussion points at the open house below:

Transportation infrastructure discussion points:

Rail road crossings and closures (NCDOT Rail Road Division and Rail Company are working on this).

This plan is reflecting what they are finding. The latest proposal, which is subject to change, but just came out within the last six weeks or so; is that there will be a closure of all at grade crossings in the Harrisburg planning area and there will be three bridges. Caldwell will be bridged over, Pharr Mill Road will be realigned and bridged over to Blackwelder Road and there will be two crossings closings at Robinson Church Road and Hickory Ridge Road with an extension of Roberta Road over the railroad to Stallings Road.

It was recommended that the public be made aware that the Town of Harrisburg and NCDOT Rail are regularly working together as a team to plan the best case scenario for the town.

Collector roads will be built in time as property develops. There is no proposal to bring any of the collector roads on to existing open land. A specific recommendation was made at the open house regarding collector roads; to extend Farmington Ridge Parkway to Highway 49; roughly parallel to the county boundary and to include a commuter rail station there.

Focus on getting traffic to Highway 27, the south side of the planning area, was also recommended at the open house. Discussion on non-motorized transportation, greenways, their visibility, which side of the creek they would be on. The greenway that experienced the most opposition was the southern most greenway. It is the most remote and farthest down the road in terms of development.

People generally supported the idea of sidewalks. A point was made that the bridge over Roberta Road did not show a sidewalk on the transportation plan there and it should.

Representatives from NC Railroad Company attended the open house and talked about the proximity of transportation facilities to the railroad right of way. He said that the multiuse trail shown on the map that stops at Stallings Road is too close to the railroad as well as the extension of Harrisburg Industrial Park Road is too close to the railroad.

Cultural Natural Resources – topics that came up at this station were parks. There is a parks and recreation plan currently happening in the area. There were discussions about an urban greenway being extended near Pharr Mill Park up to Pharr Mill Road. Scenic roads received positive feedback. There was a recommendation to add Henderson Circle, and a recommendation made to take a more comprehensive look at it. There is a recommendation in the plan to do a preservation plan in the future to follow up on that.

Flood Plains - Stallings Road needs improvement, soil and water management standards still need to be improved. Core preservation, roads, important sites in Harrisburg need to be protected or supported.

Agriculture – a comment was made that Cabarrus County's best farm land is in the Harrisburg Planning Area; that there were steps being taken to protect agriculture elsewhere but that steps were not being taken in Harrisburg. Another suggestion was for community gardens on public land in the planning area.

Land Use – Maps were available showing existing and future land use, and also the suitability of land for residential and commercial units.

Issues that came up about residential land use:

Residential lot size - one person said that nothing should be smaller than ¼ acre. Another person said nothing should be smaller than ½ acre. More than one person supported the idea of very low density residential in the southern portion of the planning area.

Property rights were mentioned several times. Folks were concerned about the idea of condemnation; they do not want to see condemnation for greenways. There was discussion about the implementation strategy for collector streets. There were also some folks who live very close to the railroad near Stallings Road, who are concerned that their home would be taken if the Roberta Street Bridge was to extend over Stallings Road.

There was talk about maintaining flexibility especially for large land owners that might be agriculture now.

Had a couple of people come out specifically opposing the Blume development proposal (Hickory Ridge and Rocky River Road), also opposed the advantage of the UDO.

Other uses that were brought up -

Light industry on Hudspeth Road, agriculture, family style restaurants or recreation centers, affordable housing, discussion of whether this is dictating or guiding zoning; it is guiding zoning.

Transportation/Land Use –

Sidewalks along neighborhoods and schools, infrastructure should be improved prior to approving land development projects.

Land Use and Tax base –

More commercial development to help generate tax base

Comments/Recommendations from Appointed and Elected Officials:

Change the designation of Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) on a portion of Hudspeth Road to Light Industrial (LI); from Hudspeth Road to US Highway 29 to Mallard Creek. Recommendations were also made to extend the Roberta Road extension to Hickory Ridge Road.

Susie Morris stated that an inter-local agreement has been drafted to address concerns if projects come up. The first area would be three to five years, the second area would be five years and the third area would be ten years. There are several sections in the agreement that talk about if the town has entered into a construction contract for extensions, emergency situations, property located within Harrisburg's limit or ETJ, individual buildings adjacent, and where the lines exist as of the date of the agreement. There is also a section in it that talks about extensions for exceptions for employment centers, so if a big development came in, the County and the Town would discuss it and if it is in the best interest, move forward.

The inter-local agreement has to be adopted prior to the HALUP being adopted. The map is an exhibit for the inter-local agreement and we cannot move forward until we get the final draft of the map and it is recorded in the Register of Deeds Office.

Once the changes are made to the map there will be another open house, and then work on the inter-local agreement. It will then go to the Planning and Zoning Board, then on to the Elected Officials. At this point it looks like it may be December before it is adopted. The meeting ended at 7:48 p.m.