

COLUMBUS PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Tuesday, December 3, 2019

The Town of Columbus Planning Board met on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 6:02 p.m., at the Columbus Town Hall, 95 Walker Street, Columbus, North Carolina.

Roll Call:

Kathleen Nowakowski
Jimmi Buell
Virginia Green
Catherine Elliott
Marshall Watkins

Staff Present:

Timothy J. Barth, Town Manager
Shana Atkins, Assistant Town Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. A roll call was taken, and the chairman acknowledged all present except Brent Jackson.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Consideration of a Special Use Permit for Thermal Belt Outreach Ministries

George Alley from Thermal Belt Outreach Ministries (TBOM) was present and stated that he is requesting approval of a special use permit for a planned unit development from the Board of Adjustment. Mr. Alley stated that TBOM would like to construct nine houses on their property that will be used for low income and transitional housing to help people after a crisis. Mr. Alley stated that he attended a housing conference at Isothermal Planning and Development Commission and stated that there is a very significant affordable housing shortage in our region. Mr. Alley explained that TBOM would like to build nine single-family detached homes on property owned by TBOM, but the zoning ordinance does not allow single-family residential units to be built in that zoning district. Mr. Alley requested that a special use permit be approved to allow the construction as requested.

Mrs. Elliott asked if TBOM has a grant that will help pay for the grading and to get the land ready. Mr. Alley replied that TBOM does have a grant in place that will help prepare the land for use. Mrs. Green asked Mr. Alley what the distance would be between the houses. Mr. Alley replied that the distance between the houses should be around twenty feet. Mr. Watkins asked Mr. Alley if TBOM planned on keeping some green space. Mr. Alley replied that TBOM planned on keeping green space around the new homes. Mr. Watkins asked Mr. Alley if TBOM planned on having different style porches on the houses. Mr. Alley replied that each house will have different aesthetics.

Planning Board member Brent Jackson arrived at 6:33 p.m.

Ms. Buell asked Mr. Barth how long it would take the Town to install the six-inch water line on White Drive that is needed to provide utility service to the proposed development. Mr. Barth replied that the six-inch water line on White Drive does not have to be completed right away because no one will be moving into the new houses until September 2020. Mr. Barth explained that the water line will not take long to install on White Drive, but that the paving, curb, and guttering will take longer. Mr. Barth stated that the Town Council will approve or deny the installation of the six-inch water line contingent on the approval of the special use permit request that will need to be approved or denied by the Board of Adjustments.

Mark Blanton, a resident on White Drive, asked on which side of the road the gutter and sidewalk would be installed. Mr. Barth replied that the gutter and sidewalk will be adjacent to Mr. Blanton's property and that the road width will be eighteen feet with curb and gutter.

Robert Williamson, a resident on White Drive, suggested that curb and gutter be installed on both sides of White Drive to control the water runoff. Mr. Williamson also suggested that a sidewalk be installed on one side of White Drive. Mr. Blanton suggested that speed bumps be installed on White Drive to control speeding. Mr. Alley stated that he will pass along the requests to the engineer.

Ms. Buell made a motion to approve the special use permit to allow single-family residential homes to be built on Parcel # P60-162, owned by Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry as requested. Mr. Watkins seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Buell stated that the Planning Board members had proposed a sign ordinance that would require signs to be fifteen feet off the road at a previous Planning Board meeting, and she is wondering what the status on that proposal was. Mr. Barth stated that he will add it to the Town Council's agenda in January.

Ms. Buell asked if Blue Water Pools and Spas is going to landscape their property that leads to the sidewalk on Mills Street. Mr. Barth stated that Blue Water Pools and Spas informed him that they did plan to add landscaping their property near the sidewalk.

There being no other business to discuss Mr. Watkins made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Green seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Kathleen Nowakowski, Chairman

Shana Atkins, Assistant Town Clerk