



**Planning Board
Minutes to the Meeting**

December 13, 2021
6:30 p.m.

The Planning Board meeting was held at the Glendel Stephenson Municipal Building located at 106 E. Washington Street, Mebane, NC 27302 and livestreamed via YouTube. The video can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO4JEDAhvg>

Members Present: Chairman Edward Tulauskas, Vice Chair Judy Taylor, Kurt Pearson, Larry Teague, Keith Hoover, Susan Semonite

Also Present: Audrey Vogel, Planner; Cy Stober, Development Director; Kirk Montgomery, IT Director

1. Call to Order

At 6:30 p.m. Chairman Edward Tulauskas called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of October 11, 2021, Minutes

Judy Taylor made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes. Larry Teague seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. City Council Actions Update

Cy Stober, Development Director, provided an update on the City Council's recent action at the October and November City Council meetings. This included an introduction to Susan Semonite, the newly appointed member of the Planning Board.

4. Request Request to rezone the +/- 0.5 acre (21,780 sf) property addressed 122 S Lane St (PIN 9825214594), from R-12 to R-10 by Gryffindoor Properties, LLC.

Staff presented the above general rezoning request. The Planning staff has reviewed the general rezoning request for harmony with the zoning of the surrounding area and consistency with the City's adopted plans and recommends approval.

Audrey Vogel provided a brief overview and PowerPoint of the request. The applicant Michael Griffith addressed the board, explaining that the purpose of the rezoning request is to allow the lot to be subdivided into two ¼ acre lots to build two homes. One home would be sold and the other kept as an investment rental property. He brought a map that highlighted the properties in the area of a similar size. Mr. Griffith also showed some example photos of the style homes he would like to build.

Larry Teague asked about the orientation of the homes. Mr. Griffith responded that both homes would have driveways on S. Lane Street, if that is what is required.



Dennis Miller, 119 S Lane St, questioned the intention to build two homes on the lot. Mr. Griffith showed Mr. Miller the sketch that he provided with his rezoning application, highlighting where the property would be split. Mr. Griffith confirmed for Mr. Miller that the homes would be 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom units, with the same homebuilder as those homes on Holt Street. The homebuilder, Derek Murray, was in attendance and confirmed that the homes would range from 1500 to 1700 sf.

The adjacent property owner Chris Watkins, 435 E Webb, expressed opposition to the proposed rezoning, expressing concern about change to the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Watkins explained that it is an old, family-oriented neighborhood in which the existing homes have been there very for a very long time. He added concerns about the request devaluing the neighborhood.

Pastor Barry Morrow, the Mebane First Baptist Church at 110 S Lane St, echoed the sentiments of his neighbors. Pastor Morrow reiterated that the neighborhood is historic and that two homes on one lot is excessive. He added that as a corner lot, two driveways nearby a stop sign and intersection seems unsafe. Pastor Morrow indicated that it seems like an opportunity to make money that will compromise the current quality of life in the neighborhood.

Kurt Pearson asked Pastor Morrow to elaborate more on his reasoning and concern about neighborhood change. Pastor Morrow explained that he's seen a pattern of this type of development that capitalized on a neighborhood and by putting two homes where one existed – one for sale and one for rent – is clearly motivated by financial gain at the expense of the harmony and character of an older neighborhood. He questioned how it would be possible to replace one home with two homes without disturbing the neighborhood.

Kurt Pearson explained that a general rezoning decision cannot take the nature of proposed development into account, whether it's for sale or for rent. Mr. Pearson commented that the existing property would sufficiently accommodate the minimum R-10 lot size, with nearly 11,000 sf for both lots and that there are lots in the area of similar size. Mr. Pearson noted that from his point of view, the home types shown by the applicant would conform to the existing neighborhood's character and has the potential to benefit the neighborhood.

Pastor Morrow questioned the financial motivation to tear down the existing home completely and build two new ones when material and construction costs are so high, as opposed to renovating it. Kurt Pearson responded that it is not a factor to consider for the rezoning.

Benjamin Morrow, 506 S Eighth St, commented that the existing lots referenced by applicant, that do not conform to the R-12 lot size, existed long before the Mebane had a zoning ordinance and were grandfathered in. He stated that this request is something different and that he opposed the proposed rezoning. His reasoning was that he wanted space in his neighborhood, noting that the Planning Board members probably enjoyed having space in their neighborhoods. Mr. Morrow indicated that its an area where children should be able to run free, not crammed up.



Adjacent property owner Marika Wendelken, 118 S Lane St, expressed concern and opposition about increasing density in the neighborhood. Ms. Wendelken explained that she supported and understood the benefit of having a new home on the property, especially because the existing one is in bad shape, however, having two relatively large size homes where one currently exists is concerning. Ms. Wendelken referred to increased traffic, activity, and noise as concerns.

Judy Taylor asked about the average square footage of the surrounding homes in the area. Marika Wendelken noted that its about 1000 square feet. The applicant, Michael Griffith, listed off some of the square footages of the surrounding homes ranging from 700 sf to 1400 sf.

Kurt Pearson stated that Planning Board is a body that makes recommendations to the City Council, and they do not have the final say. Mr. Pearson explained that the request in his opinion “looks, feels, and smells right.”

Kurt Pearson made a motion to approve the R-12 rezoning request as presented and to find that the application is consistent with the objectives and goals in the City’s 2017 Comprehensive Land Development Plan *Mebane By Design*. Keith Hoover seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1. Judy Taylor voted in opposition.

5. Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Revision Information Item

Cy Stober provided a PowerPoint presentation and overview about the Planning and Zoning Department’s UDO Revision project. He presented on amendments being considered for Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, and Appendix E.

Judy Taylor asked if the UDO Open House posters would be posted online? Cy Stober responded that they would be posted on the City Website and that staff will work on getting more opportunities for engagement online.

Kurt Pearson expressed appreciation for Staff’s efforts and the tremendous amount of work this type of project takes.

Cy Stober urged the Planning Board to give feedback and reminded them of their role to advise staff and council on matters pertaining to the UDO.

Larry Teague commented that the revisions can’t come soon enough, considering how fast the City is growing. Mr. Teague noted that Mebane residents often express concerns about change to him, and that it is important for these inevitable changes to be done right.

6. New Business

Audrey Vogel reminded the Planning Board about the upcoming Holiday Luncheon.

Audrey Vogel shared that the City Offices will be closed for the holidays: December 23rd, 24th, 27th & 31st



Susan Semonite asked Cy Stober if more information about by right and routine development that does not go through the public hearing process. Mr. Stober responded that the City is working on making that permitting data readily available.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.