



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=IhFyXHG9CkQ>.

Members Present:

Edward Tulauskas, Chair
Judy Taylor, Vice Chair
Susan Semonite
William Chapman
Kurt Pearson
Keith Hoover
David Scott

Members Absent:

Jason VanBuren
Gale Pettiford

City Staff Present:

Ashley Ownbey, Development Director
Rachel Gaffney, City Planner
Briana Perkins, City Planner
Kirk Montgomery, IT Director

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of March 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Judy Taylor made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Susan Semonite seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. City Council Actions Update

Ashley Ownbey, Development Director, updated the Planning Board on unanimous approvals by the City Council of a text amendment to allow "Equipment Rental and Leasing (with outside storage) in the B-2 Zoning District with a Special Use Permit and to conditionally rezone property at the corner of Wilson Road and Forest Oaks Lane to B-2 (CD) to allow for a Tractor Supply store.

Regarding the conditional rezoning approval, Judy Taylor asked if any changes were made to the location of driveways on Forest Oaks Lane. Ashley Ownbey replied that there were no changes to the driveway locations. Kurt Pearson asked if the applicant is still obligated to extend Wilson Road. Ashley Ownbey replied the extension of Wilson Road is a condition of the approval and if not met, then the applicant would return to Planning Board and City Council with a Traffic Impact Analysis.

4. Text amendments to Sections 6-5 and 6-7 of the Mebane Unified Development Ordinance.

Ashley Ownbey refreshed the Planning Board about the project schedule for updates to the Unified Development Ordinance, indicating staff is requesting a recommendation from Planning Board on the item.



Ashley Ownbey reviewed five follow-up items from the previous Planning Board meeting. The first item involved parking for two-bedroom apartments. Staff found that out of the eighteen peer communities researched, nine required similar or fewer spaces than what was being proposed by staff (1.5 spaces/unit). She also provided that according to 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) data, 62.7% of renter-occupied households in Mebane owned one car. She reviewed that nationally, more urban communities are moving to parking maximums instead of minimums including approximately a dozen communities in North Carolina. Ashley Ownbey added that the new standards for amenity area parking would apply to multi-family developments and staff is continuing to recommend the change to 1.5 spaces per unit for two-bedroom apartments.

Kurt Pearson commented that if nine communities required similar or fewer requirements and nine required more, then the City was trying to find an average. Ashley Ownbey referenced nearby communities, particularly that Graham requires 1.5 spaces per unit for one- and two-bedroom apartments and 2 spaces per unit for apartments with three or more bedrooms.

Ashley Ownbey reviewed three more follow-up items: parking for post offices, manufacturing and industrial uses, and hotels and motels. Following research, staff removed minimum parking requirements for post offices as federal facilities are exempt from local zoning regulations and adjusted language associated with the minimum required for manufacturing and industrial uses to include "the type of operations and technology in use." Staff proposed to keep the proposed change to the minimum required parking for hotels and motels, finding that fifteen of eighteen peer communities required the same or fewer parking spaces.

Ashley Ownbey reviewed the final follow-up item regarding the regulation of temporary signage. She consulted with the City Attorney and a faculty member at the School of Government, finding the proposed standards regulate the "time, place, and manner" of signs, which is allowed; however, any challenges pertaining to political speech would trigger strict scrutiny review. After research, staff proposed changes to allow multiple temporary signs with a political purpose on private property or in the right-of-way for ninety (90) days prior to elections, with signs being removed within thirty (30) days after an election. This would allow an individual to post multiple signs for almost one third of the year.

Susan Semonite asked if the wording included how many signs would be allowed. Ashley Ownbey responded that there was not an exact number as multiple would be allowed.

David Scott asked if he was correct in that one sign was allowed year-round and multiple signs would fall into the ninety days. Ashley Ownbey responded that yes, there was no restriction on allowing one temporary sign year-round. David Scott asked if the number of days after the election could be changed to around ten days. Ashley Ownbey replied that other communities do have shorter removal time. Staff proposed thirty days since State law requires removal of political signs in the right-of-way within that time. David Scott asked if the City is required to follow the State. Ashley Ownbey replied that municipalities are allowed to be more restrictive.



Judy Taylor asked if the 120-day period could be used twice in one year since there was a primary and general election. Ashley Ownbey replied that it could be used twice.

Kurt Pearson stated that with this proposal four-foot by seven-foot signs would not be permitted. David Scott asked if there could be a provision to have a larger sign. Ashley Ownbey replied that staff were open to eliminating the maximum square footage to allow for larger signs to be included. David Scott replied that he would like to only consider allowance for one or two larger signs.

Judy Taylor asked if the flag type signs were considered temporary political purpose signs. Ashley Ownbey replied that those type of signs were allowed for temporary events and would be required to not exceed nine square feet as a sign with a political purpose.

Susan Semonite asked if someone had multiple signs in their yard that did not serve a political purpose if that was allowed. Ashley Ownbey responded that one temporary sign was allowed year-round and other events may allow for more. She said that examples would be construction signs for home renovations or realty signs. She also explained that the “political purpose” wording was intentionally broad.

David Scott asked about adding a provision for a larger sign. Ashley Ownbey replied that the provision could be added with Planning Board’s motion. David Scott asked if it would still fall within the ninety-day period. Ashley Ownbey replied that the provision could stay within the ninety days like the other signs or could be reduced.

Susan Semonite asked if another provision would be made if the removal of the signs were changed from thirty days to something less. Ashley Ownbey replied that the Board could recommend reduction of the number of days with the motion.

David Scott asked if Graham and Burlington had a ten-day removal period. Ashley Ownbey replied that she was not sure but knew Wake Forest had a ten-day removal period.

Susan Semonite commented that it would be good to have standards mirroring surrounding communities. Ashley Ownbey replied the Board could include the recommendation in the motion.

David Scott asked if a temporary business along Mebane Oaks Road was allowed to leave signs in the right-of-way when not open. He asked about restrictions for placing signs in the right-of-way. Ashley Ownbey replied the individual was not allowed to place signs in the right-of-way and should remove the signs when not actively at that location. She indicated she would follow up with the Code Enforcement Officer.

Susan Semonite made a motion to recommend approval of the amendments to the City of Mebane Unified Development Ordinance as follows:

*Motion **to approve** the amendments to the City of Mebane Unified Development Ordinance as presented, with the following recommendations to Section 6-7.4 (R-1.c):*



- 1) *Change removal of temporary signs with a political purpose from thirty days following an election, to ten days or a number that mirrors surrounding communities.*
- 2) *Allow one larger sign serving a political purpose not to exceed 32 square feet.*

*Motion to find **the amendments are consistent** with the objectives and policies for growth and development in the Comprehensive Land Development Plan "Mebane By Design."*

Judy Taylor seconded the motion and the recommended motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

Ashley Ownbey announced advertising for the annual appointment of Planning Board members would begin for four positions with terms ending in June. She also informed the Board of the new Development Map that the City recently launched.

6. Adjournment

Chairman Tulauskas adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:52 p.m.



Planning Board
Minutes to the Meeting
April 10, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
