



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=zh6zx06hbi0>.

Members Present:

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

City Staff Present:

Ashley Ownbey, Development Director	Franz Holt, City Engineer
Briana Perkins, City Planner	Mitch McKinney, Chief of Police
Kirk Montgomery, IT Director	Jamie Joseph, Deputy Fire Marshal

1. Call to Order

At 6:31 p.m. Chair Tulauskas called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of November 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

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

3. City Council Actions Update

Ashley Ownbey informed the Board that the City Council had unanimously approved the rezoning and special use permit for the Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF). She said that the mandatory amendment to stormwater regulations in the Mebane Unified Development Ordinance was also approved. Ashley Ownbey stated that the adoption of Planning Board Rules of Procedure was not approved since a Council member requested additional research on the role of the Planning Board.

Judy Taylor asked if the Planning Board would review the recommendation before the document returns to City Council. Ashley Ownbey responded that she could consult with others about the timeline.

4. Request to rezone the +/- 32.087-acre property with a preliminary address of 1425 Trollingwood-Hawfields Road and frontage on I-40/85 (formerly GPINs 9804810638 and 9804720640), from LM



(CD) to HM (CD) to allow, contingent on the approval of a special use permit, a travel plaza by CSMS Management, LLC.

- 5. Request for a Special Use Permit to allow for a travel plaza on the +/- 32.087-acre property with a preliminary address of 1425 Trollingwood-Hawfields Road and frontage on I-40/85 (formerly GPINs 9804810638 and 9804720640) by CSMS Management, LLC.**

CSMS Management, LLC is requesting to conditionally rezone a property, which is owned by the applicant, totaling +/- 32.087 acres and preliminarily addressed 1425 Trollingwood-Hawfields Road (formerly GPINs 9804810638 and 9804720640) from LM (CD) to HM (CD). The property is located in the Mebane City limits and in an industrial growth strategy area. CSMS Management, LLC is also requesting approval for a Special Use Permit to allow for a travel plaza on the property.

The site-specific plan and staff report are provided in the meeting agenda packet available [here](#).

Ashley Ownbey provided a more detailed overview and PowerPoint presentation of the requests.

Amanda Hodierne, attorney from Isaacson Sheridan representing Buc-ee's, first introduced the team who would be speaking and then presented a brief overview of the rezoning request. She emphasized that although Buc-ee's is considered a travel plaza use, no truck parking is allowed.

Stan Beard, Director of Real Estate for Buc-ee's, provided a brief overview of the extensive process through Mebane's Technical Review Committee. He then provided a brief history of Buc-ee's from the first store opening in Clute, Texas in 1982. He emphasized again that Buc-ee's was not a truck stop and more of a destination for families to stop during road trips. He also provided a brief overview of the store and highlighted what Buc-ee's offered.

Amanda Hodierne provided that Buc-ee's would make a commitment to Mebane through branding, promoting local products in their store, and partnering with local agencies to advertise the area around Buc-ee's. Amanda Hodierne then explained the proposed site-specific conditions relating to signage. She provided that for the wall signs, the condition was to exceed the maximum area of 200 square feet as required by the Mebane Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The wall signs would adhere to the first condition of one square foot per linear foot of wall length. She described the next condition of the proposed pole sign to exceed the maximum height of 60 feet and maximum sign area of 200 square feet. Amanda Hodierne explained that the Buc-ee's logo on the sign would be 300 square feet since it would be the only sign visible from the highway, and they included the branding of "Mebane" at 100 square feet to promote the area. She provided examples of wall and pole signs already located in Mebane and additional information about other Buc-ee's location signs. She then referred to Stan Beard to explain why the pole sign was proposed at 90-feet instead of the allowed 60-feet.



Stan Beard explained that the height of the sign was determined by a “balloon test” which showed how far away the sign could be seen while traveling on the interstate. He explained that the sign would need to be seen from a certain point for travelers to move safely at fast speeds to the exit. He provided that the average height of other Buc-ee’s signs was around 106 feet and provided evidence in his presentation of where the balloon could be seen along the highway. He explained that they presented 90 feet as the maximum height and would reduce the height if another balloon test after site grading was completed showed that the sign was visible at a lower height.

Amanda Hodierne presented the four findings of fact for the Special Use Permit.

- 1) The project will not materially endanger the public health or safety.
 - Amanda Hodierne commented the site plan was reviewed five times by the Mebane Technical Review Committee (TRC) to ensure the plan meets requirements of the City and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).
 - Austin Watts, civil engineer with Kimley-Horn, described site details and provided that the site plan was the start of the process and the actual construction plans would go back through TRC review before everything was finalized. Mr. Watts described public benefits, highlighting that a 10-foot multi-use path would provide access to the site, a sewer pipe would be extended consistent with the City’s plans, and there would be significant improvements to the roads.
 - Scott Ratcliff, Director of Engineering for Buc-ee’s, stated that the parking lot was designed for safe and efficient travel. He said that the drive aisles were specifically larger for clearer sight lines to avoid accidents. He also said that wayfinding signs would be used for directing traffic through the site.
 - Earl Lewellyn, traffic engineer for Kimley-Horn, explained the TIA and how they based the traffic impact on the local area and other Buc-ee’s locations. He said that the TIA considered capacity, queuing, and weaving during peak hours. He remarked that the TIA was reviewed by the NCDOT and the City. He showed that there were significant road improvements required by the NCDOT to meet their standards which he showed on the traffic map provided in the presentation.

David Scott asked if there was a traffic signal at the entrance on Senator Ralph Scott Parkway. Earl Lewellyn replied that there was not a traffic signal at that entrance.

Earl Lewellyn also stated that NCDOT assigns grades to roadways from A to F and the current roads were assigned a grade of D. He said that after the road improvements the roads would operate at a grade of C or better.

Amanda Hodierne stated that wayfinding was also a major component to moving traffic efficiently and safely from the interstate to Buc-ee’s.

- 2) The project will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property.



- Marcus Orr, appraiser with McNary & Associates, studied the local area and compared travel centers on other exits in Alamance County and Exit 157 in Orange County. He stated that the study showed a general pattern of higher housing prices around the travel centers. He said that his findings did not show any negative impacts on residential property around travel centers. He commented that he had also looked at industrial uses around travel centers and did not see any negative impacts on industrial uses either.
- 3) The project will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located.
- Amanda Hodierne explained that the primary uses in the area are industrial and that Buc-ee's fits that general pattern.
 - Austin Watts reviewed site plan elements for compatibility, stating that there would be landscape buffers along the road and minimum 100-foot buffers around the streams to the rear of the property. He said that there would be minimal impacts on floodplain and wetlands, with any impacts permitted through the State and U.S. Army Corps. He also mentioned that all lights would be cut-off with zero footcandles at the property lines.
 - Amanda Hodierne commented that as mentioned before, Buc-ee's would not be utilizing all of the allowed signage, further reducing impacts to the area.
- 4) The project will be in general conformity with the land use plan or other plans and policies officially adopted by the City Council.
- Amanda Hodierne explained that the area was designated as G-1, Industrial in the City's Comprehensive Land Development Plan and the site is part of the North Carolina Commerce Park, which supports industrial uses. She provided that Buc-ee's fits the description of uses allowed in the G-1, Industrial growth strategy area and provides a better alternative to another industrial user with heavy truck traffic.
 - Amanda Hodierne showed that the road improvements proposed by Buc-ee's were consistent with a project in the City's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. She also reviewed that the plan is aligned with goals described in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan. The site includes a 10-foot multi-use path across the frontage of Trollingwood-Hawfields Road and around to the access on Senator Ralph Scott Parkway. She said that the path would cross the bridge. The site also includes a bicycle plaza and crosswalks.
 - Amanda Hodierne reviewed the North Carolina Commerce Park, explaining it was an economic development zone serving Mebane, Graham, and Alamance County. She described the shared tax revenue between the jurisdictions, noting Buc-ee's would be generating significant revenue with about five million visitors each day. Amanda Hodierne commented on the park as a shared commitment to economic opportunity that was currently thriving. She stated that Buc-ee's would be a synergetic use with the North Carolina Commerce Park.



Amanda Hodierno reviewed that a neighborhood meeting for Buc-ee's was held on November 8, 2023, with only three individuals attending. She said that they had addressed questions primarily with traffic improvements and timing. She also said that an in-home visit with the property owners across the street was conducted and resulted in relocating the second entrance to not interfere with the neighbor's driveway.

Kurt Pearson asked if Amanda Hodierno meant to say five million people a year instead of a day. Amanda Hodierno clarified that she did mean five million people a year.

Colin Canell expressed his concern about possible oil or fuel spills and asked how Buc-ee's would handle a situation like a severe storm. Scott Ratcliff explained that the first aspect of the design was to have underground storage tanks meet and exceed State requirements. He said that the second design aspect was designing the parking lot to where any spills would go into a filtration system that separates the oils or fuels from the water.

Judy Taylor asked if Scott Ratcliff could show where the underground tanks would be located on the site plan. Scott Ratcliff showed the area along the left side of the site plan where the tanks would be and also showed that there would be protection around the gas canopies.

Colin Cannell asked about the differences in design between the site plans from before and after they had spoken with the neighbor across the street to move the southern driveway. He said it looked like the tank location had to be moved, the main entrance to the store was moved to now line up with the first driveway to the site, and that crosswalks from the gas canopies to the store had disappeared. Scott Ratcliff explained that there were crosswalks from the canopies to the store that were not showing on the rendered site plan. He said that the moving of the tanks was to make sure that delivery trucks were able to get to the tanks without too much disturbance to customer traffic.

Colin Cannell asked about the sign comparison table and to clarify about the ordinance only allowing for 200 square feet of signage total. Amanda Hodierno replied that the total square footage of 200 was allowed for each side.

Kurt Pearson commented that the Planning Board was looking at the site situational factors of the project for Mebane as a whole. He said that Mebane seemed to be in a growth loop where more developments meant City infrastructure must grow to accommodate the needs of the new growth. He also commented that this proposal had good and bad aspects to it. He said it showed great employment opportunities, and, on the other hand, generated more traffic with the TIA calculating about 2,298 trips (about 38 cars a minute) during peak hour on a Saturday. He said he wanted to point out that the Board should just consider smart growth.

Chair Tulauskas commented that he wanted to reiterate that the Planning Board is an advisory board that makes recommendations, and that the final decision would be by the City Council.

Judy Taylor asked about the eastbound lanes from the interstate and if the lanes would be a free flow right turn or fully signalized. Earl Lewellyn replied that there would be duel right turn lanes fully



signalized. Judy Taylor asked what the length of the ramp was for stacking. Earl Lewellyn replied that the ramp would be 450 feet for three lanes. Judy Taylor expressed concern about traffic backup on the interstate. Earl Lewellyn replied that was a major concern for NCDOT and why the TIA considered queuing in its analysis.

Susan Semonite asked about trucks coming off and turning left into the Pilot. Earl Lewellyn said that the Pilot entrance was also a key factor in the traffic design, especially for the trucks.

Judy Taylor asked if the concrete median extended the entire entrance of the Pilot and if the trucks would be able to make the turn without going across both lanes. Earl Lewellyn said that the signals would be coordinated to create gaps in the traffic to allow trucks to move more easily.

Kurt Pearson asked if Earl Lewellyn was confident that the queuing would not back up onto the interstate. Earl Lewellyn responded that he was. Kurt Pearson commented that he was concerned since Mebane already has issues with back-up from Tanger Outlets. Earl Lewellyn replied that it was true that traffic improvements are not designed for Black Friday type of events. They are designed for peak hours.

Susan Semonite asked if a 100 square foot panel for "Mebane" was necessary since some of the other Buc-ee's location signs had smaller panels of about 70 square feet. Stan Beard replied that they could reduce the city panel to 90 square feet which was used for Athens, GA and Auburn, AL. David Scott expressed his desire for a larger Mebane panel.

Kurt Pearson commented that he had recently been to the Buc-ee's in Alabama and saw the same as what was being presented. He said that it was very clean, the people were personable, and the traffic flow was good although he did not visit during peak hour.

Susan Semonite also commented that she had been to a Buc-ee's recently and explained that although the food was prepared fresh, that it was not set up to eat inside. Stan Beard replied that it was built around a road trip to where the customer would take the food to their car.

Chair Tulauskas asked about green initiatives such as solar or water. Stan Beard replied that Buc-ee's was as efficient as possible with water and wastewater use. He said power was the same way and said that the facility was not a LEED certified facility.

Susan Semonite asked about the water consumption estimated at 23,000 gallons a day and how they arrived at the estimate. Stan Beard replied that the estimate was based on other Buc-ee's store usage.

Following a break, Chair Tulauskas opened the meeting for public comment.

Patty Dischinger, 96200 Cabaret, Chapel Hill, representing her parents who live across the street commented that her parents would much rather have a Buc-ee's than another warehouse.

Linda Alger, 109 Edenborough Dr., Mebane, was for having a Buc-ee's even with the increase to traffic.



Lucus Babinec, 1021 N. Frazier Rd., Mebane, identified as a local farmer who was concerned about more concrete development, taking away from local goods and services, and not a smart growth component.

Theresa Jensen, 1021 N. Frazier Rd., Mebane, identified as a local attorney and asked if there was a need to have a big attraction such as Buc-ee's and expressed concern if it would benefit Mebane, its impacts to the natural resources, and if the project would really be the best choice for economic development.

Richard Miller, 1718 Old Arbor Way, Mebane, was concerned about the impacts Buc-ee's would have on the other local businesses already operating along Trollingwood-Hawfields Road.

Edward Mazurek, 3469 Bentrige Dr., Mebane, was concerned about more traffic congestion.

Christopher Chung, 150 Fayetteville St, Raleigh, identified as the CEO of Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina and provided that a lot of North Carolina was growing at a high rate and having a Buc-ee's would create a better economic base than another warehouse that was the original intention of the site. He also added on a personal note that after being to several Buc-ee's locations, that it was a destination that also promoted the local area around it.

Janet Eckleburger, 2872 Nereus Dr., Mebane, was concerned about the impact to local businesses especially downtown Mebane.

Omega Wilson, 206 Moore St., Mebane, co-founder of the West End Revitalization Association (WERA), was concerned about the lack of clean energy initiatives. He asked why solar panels on-top of the large expanse of pumps, and other clean energy options were not considered in the overall design.

Mary McFarland, 307 N. Wilba Rd., Mebane, was concerned with the amount of water consumption of the site and if the natural resources would be affected.

Catherine Andrews, 3038 Fieldstone Ln, Mebane, was concerned about the increase in traffic and whether the infrastructure for Duke Energy could support the development.

Laurie Weatherly, 605 Benwich Ln, Efland, said the project was an environmental disaster and was also concerned about the traffic.

Benita Rayner, 614 Border St., Graham, was representing the Indigenous people as part of the Occaneechi Tribe and was concerned with traffic, the impact on natural resources, and building upon the historical Indian Trading Path.

Martha Hamblin, 1726 Foxhall Ln, Mebane, was concerned about the increase in waste going to the Alamance County landfill, public safety at the facility, and the impact on local businesses.



Planning Board

Minutes to the Meeting
December 11, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Sarah Stitsinger, 1637 Old Arbor Way, Mebane, was concerned with the environmental impacts, traffic, noise pollution, and public safety.

Lorraine Werts, 113 Somerset Ct. Mebane, was concerned with having corporate employment instead of local and the project being just a stop deterring people from exploring local businesses in Mebane.

Katie Newcomb, 304 W. Lee St., was concerned about the increase in traffic and asked if the TIA had taken into account the new school.

Del Ward, 6950 Spencer-Dixon Rd., was concerned with water consumption, employee retention, and traffic.

Karyn Newcomb, 28 London Ln, was concerned with traffic and whether the City's infrastructure could sustain the development.

Tim Frank, 1102 Jersey St., Haw River, questioned what percentage of local goods would be brought into Buc-ee's, was concerned about traffic, crime, and also the sustainability of employment.

Debra Kaufman, 207 Holt St, Mebane, was concerned about local business impacts, the environment, noise, and light pollution.

Janine Zanin, 4601 Timberwood Trl., Efland, commented that she had recently been to a Buc-ee's where traffic was backed up and the store was heavily crowded making it dangerous.

Aminha Ghaffar, 1123 Ranger Dr., Hillsborough, was a representative of the Lumbee Tribe and was concerned about the environmental impacts and the historic Indian Trading Path. She had asked if the Occaneechi Tribe had been contacted in the review process. She was also concerned about who would be responsible for disaster management of the site.

Beth Bronson, 1221 Buckhorn Rd., Mebane, asked if the HM zoning was necessary and if the zoning could be B-2 instead. She asked where the public comments that were emailed would go. She also asked whether a 74,000 square foot building was necessary since other Buc-ee's locations were smaller in size.

Kurt Pearson asked Ashley Ownbey to clarify how public comments either mailed or emailed were distributed. Ashley Ownbey replied that all comments were shared with the Planning Board but could not be included as part of the written record of the meeting.

Alice Ray, 1879 Jimmie Kerr Rd, Haw River, was concerned about the excess traffic during school hours.

Mike Garrett, 1103 Copper Cir., Mebane, commented that he was for the project, but was also concerned about the water consumption.



Chris Smith, 3102 Gym Rd., Efland, opposed the project since promises brought up in Orange County were not kept and was concerned about more traffic.

Richard White, 2635 Jamie Baker Dr., Mebane, asked the City and Board to not allow the proposed conditions and make Buc-ee's adhere to the current standards.

Brett Rapkin-Citrenbaum, 106 Cone Dr., Haw River, was concerned about the environmental impacts and traffic.

Charles Stancati, 1034 Longleaf Pine Pl., Mebane was concerned about the traffic and water consumption.

Chair Tulauskas closed the public comment period.

Amanda Hodierne responded to some concerns about the impervious surface with the fact that the project would follow regulations of the State and Mebane UDO. She said one of the regulations was the riparian buffers that would remain untouched by the development. She said the second aspect was the impervious surface that was highly regulated through the State and Jordan Lake Watershed regulations to where the post development was caught, treated, and released at predevelopment rates. She pointed out that the filtration process provided by Scott Ratcliff was extra to what the State and City requirements were for stormwater runoff. She explained that the underground tanks were out of the floodplain entirely and only impacting the floodplain slightly in the left back corner of the site, which would be permitted through the State. She commented on the "leak scenario" of the storage tanks saying that there were two incasements around the tanks with an alarm going off if the first incasement was breached. Amanda Hodierne also addressed the concern of Buc-ee's negative effect on local business to provide that there were no facts showing that issue in other locations. She said that in fact there was an economic increase to local businesses in the locations where Buc-ee's was introduced.

Susan Semonite asked if the comments about the Indian Trading Path had been reviewed by staff. Ashley Ownbey replied that staff did not look at that aspect and would do more research on the matter as well as contact speakers.

Colin Cannell commented that he had joined the Board primarily for more affordable housing and said that a business that offers good jobs, with good wages, and benefits was a key component to affordable housing. He said the other component was controlling sprawl in which concentrating the uses was a better option than the same type of use being spread out through different exits. He said in his opinion that there was not a better alternative use for the property.

Colin Cannell made a motion to approve the rezoning as follows:

Motion to approve the HM (CD) zoning as presented.

Motion to find that the application is consistent with the objectives and policies for growth and development in the City's 2017 Comprehensive Land Development Plan Mebane By Design.



Specifically, the request:

- *Is for a property within the City's G-1 Industrial Growth Area (Mebane CLP, p. 74)*

David Scott seconded the motion, which was denied with a 6-3 vote. Those for the approval were Colin Cannell, David Scott, and Edward Tulauskas and those opposed were Keith Hoover, Kurt Pearson, Judy Taylor, William Chapman, Susan Semonite, and Gale Pettiford.

Chair Tulauskas noted that the requests would go to the City Council on January 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Ashley Ownbey noted that since the rezoning request was denied, that there was no need for a vote on the special use request which would also be considered as a recommendation for denial.

6. New Business

Ashley Ownbey informed the Board that the City offices would be closed for December and January holidays.

7. Adjournment

Chair Tulauskas adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:24p.m.