

AGENDA
CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
VIRTUAL WORK SESSION
JULY 22, 2021
4:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Bryan, Melynda Dunigan, Walter Farabee, Clarence Lambe, Chris Leak, Mo McRae, Brenda Smith, Jack Steelman
MEMBERS ABSENT: Jason Grubbs
PRESIDING: Chris Leak

I. CITY-COUNTY UTILITIES SEWER SYSTEM DISCUSSION

Courtney Driver, Utilities Director, presented an overview of City-County Utilities, which is managed by the City and governed by the Utilities Commission. Courtney presented a map depicting the current sewer system, and explained the four different ways water and sewer are extended, which include the following:

- Developer extensions
- Assessment projects
- Capital projects
- Intergovernmental partnerships

The responsibility of the Utilities Commission is to manage the growth of both water and wastewater systems.

Clarence Lambe explained that the Planning Board has discussed the potential for extension of sewer into some of the higher growth areas which are currently GMA 4, and inquired as to what a lift station would cost. Courtney stated that this cost is based on the number of gallons that would be served by the facility.

Mo McRae asked Courtney if the Commission ever entered into agreements where a developer would maintain a lift station in perpetuity. Courtney stated that if a developer were to build a private lift station and maintain it, then they would do that on their own and Utilities would not be involved. Mo made the suggestion that an effective way to expand the sewer system would be for a developer to create a connection to an existing sewer pipe and construct and maintain the lift station which would get wastewater to the sewer pipe. Courtney stated that they have had developers and/or homeowners associations who have approached them in the past, who wanted to turn over their private system to the City to maintain. She went on to say that Utilities has taken over the ownership of some sewer systems, but facilities must be in compliance with their standards before the Commission would take ownership. Brenda Smith asked about excess treatment capacity in the system. Courtney stated that the sewer system was currently at 55 percent of treatment capacity.

Walter Farabee asked about exploring new areas of growth in the Utilities Master Plan and stated that Greater Winston-Salem, Inc. has seen a number of requests for industrial sites with sewer access. GWSI staff has had conversations with the Planning Department, as well as other entities, about trying to identify new areas for future industrial growth.

Jack Steelman added that in his 30-40 years of working in this area, our community has always been short of industrial sites, and more often than not, one of the barriers is the availability of sewer. He asked Courtney what master planning is doing today that it did not do 30-40 years ago to impact the ability to create more sewer capacity. He also stated that the available supply of existing buildings and land is less than he has ever seen.

Courtney stated that she recognized some sites have challenges related to sewer service. She has been in conversations with Aaron and the County to increase access to the area near Clemmons with larger lift stations. She went on to say that it will take partnerships with other entities to better serve other areas within the County.

George Bryan asked Courtney to speak to the limitations of development in the eastern part of the county, and what the interplay is when dealing with another municipality regarding wastewater and/or water systems. Courtney stated that development along Wallburg Road is definitely on her radar and it is the ridgeline. Anything to the east of Wallburg Road would need to have sewer pumped over the ridge and into the service basin. She added that the Commission is aware that this is an area of development interest and there are ongoing discussions of whether it makes sense to build a larger lift station in that area as part of our system.

II. CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM STORMWATER DISCUSSION

Keith Huff, City Stormwater Director, provided background related to stormwater regulations in North Carolina and spoke about the local rules for stormwater management. He also discussed how recent climate trends have affected stormwater management in our area.

Keith stated that developers are building on more challenging sites than they were 20 years ago, leading to runoff from newly developed sites draining directly into preexisting developments, which may already have flooding/erosion issues. Melynda Dunigan asked how many years stormwater ponds are designed to last, and whether Keith would suggest going to a higher regulatory standard due to heavy rains. Keith stated that if stormwater devices are properly maintained, they could last for decades. He also stated that an engineer should design a stormwater facility for higher intensity events, but the overriding factor is the maintenance of the device.

Chris Leak asked Keith for guidance on how the Planning Board can deal with new developments regarding stormwater and concerns of how it will affect adjoining neighborhoods. Keith stated that only ordinance requirements can be implemented on a site through stormwater management controls. He also stated that stormwater devices do not perfectly mimic the conditions of the land when it was undeveloped.

In response to several questions presented by Brenda Smith, Keith stated that the 25-year storm and the 50-year storm are locally driven events. In 2008, Stormwater started benchmarking some of our peer cities. At that time, Stormwater contracted with an engineering firm, worked with developers to look at how much land would be needed to manage the 10-year event and the 25-year event, and a compromise was made with the development community, builders and realtors to not regulate beyond the 25-year storm. Any other event would have been too expensive and too infrequent to deal with.

Brenda asked whether Planning Board members have legal authority to require something of developers that is not in the adopted stormwater rules. Aaron stated that Planning Board members do have that authority but that the developer has to agree to the conditions. Aaron also

stated that due to climate change and changing data, stormwater regulations may need to be revisited at some point.

Melynda asked Keith if he thought the City would benefit from a citizen advisory committee on stormwater. Keith stated that he thought it might, although the City Council Public Works Committee has essentially taken on that role.

III. SIGN ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT (UDO-CC14)

This text amendment is being proposed at the direction of the Community Development/Housing/General Government Committee of City Council to:

- Modify the change rate for electronic message board signs;
- Add brightness limits to electronic message board signs; and
- Extend the amortization period to bring nonconforming on-premises freestanding signs into compliance by 2 years to June 30, 2024

Steve Smotherman explained in more detail the text modifications requested by City Council. There was discussion related to electronic signs in neighborhoods and how distracting they can be, particularly with multiple signs in one area. There was further discussion on the change rate for electronic signs. The majority of the Board was in agreement with a 2-minute change rate proposed by Melynda, with George Bryan being in opposition.

This item will be presented again at the August 12 Planning Board meeting.

IV. DEBRIEFING PUBLIC HEARING MEETING OF JULY 8th

The Board did not have any comments on this meeting.

V. STAFF REPORT

The next Board meeting will be August 12, in the Arnold G. King Meeting Room on the 5th floor of the Bryce Stuart Municipal Building. Aaron reminded the Board to contact staff with any questions they may have before the next meeting. This will help staff better manage the length of the meeting with the high volume of cases.

It was recommended that anyone that has not been vaccinated wear a mask to the meeting.

Aaron discussed the subject of remote meeting participation once the Board returns to in-person meetings. According to the City Attorney, there must be a quorum in place in the meeting room itself, and if any members participate remotely, there must be a qualifying reason. These reasons were listed in the information sent to all Board members.

The *Quarterly Development Dashboard* report was also summarized to the Board.

VI. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER