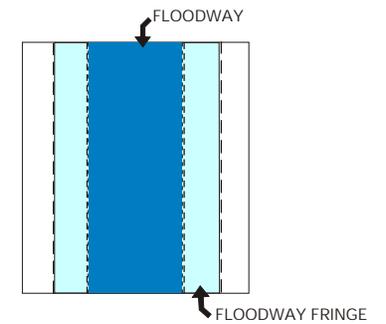


**DOCKET #:** F1381

**PROPOSED ZONING:**  
PB

**EXISTING ZONING:**  
LB and RM12

**PETITIONER:**  
Town of Bethania  
and Michael Leonard



**SCALE:** 1" represents 400'

**STAFF:** Hall

**GMA:** 3

**ACRE(S):** 4.00

**MAP(S):** 600886



## **DRAFT ZONING STAFF REPORT**

**DOCKET #** F-1381  
**STAFF:** S. Chad Hall

Petitioner(s): Town of Bethania and R. Michael Leonard  
Ownership: Same

### **REQUEST**

From: LB (Limited Business)  
To: PB (Pedestrian Business)

Both general and special use district zoning were discussed with the applicant(s) who decided to pursue the zoning as requested.

NOTE: This is a general use zoning petition; therefore, ALL uses permitted in the above requested district should be considered.

Acreage: 4.0 acres

### **LOCATION:**

Street: Southeast corner of Bethania Road and Main Street  
Jurisdiction: Town of Bethania

### **PROPERTY SITE/IMMEDIATE AREA**

Existing Structures on Site: Recently relocated building currently being utilized as a visitor's center. Said building is to remain.

Adjacent Uses:

- North- Historic homes of Bethania
- Northeast- Former Lehman-Butner Roller Mill
- East/Southeast- Small barn and undeveloped land
- South/Southwest- Myers Tract (open space) dedicated to the Piedmont Land Conservancy in 2002
- West- Muddy Creek across Bethania Road
- Northwest- Historic dwelling

### **GENERAL AREA**

Character/Maintenance: Very well preserved active historic residences and businesses.  
Development Pace: Slow

## **PHYSICAL FEATURES/ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Impact on Existing Features: The site currently has a recently relocated building on it. Said structure is to remain.

Topography: There is an approximate change in elevation on the subject property of 12' (from an approximate elevation of 784' in the northeast down to an approximate elevation of 772' in the west).

Streams: Muddy Creek is located just off of the subject property to the west.

Vegetation/habitat: The subject property is mostly vegetated.

Floodplains: Yes – floodway fringe from Muddy Creek is located on the vast majority of the subject property (at least the southern and western 2/3's of the site).

Wetlands: Yes – per the Rural Hall Quads, there are two wetland areas on the subject property. Along the western edge of the site, there is a PSS1C wetland (Palustrine, Scrub-Shrub, Broad-Leafed Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded). Along the eastern edge of the site (adjacent to Bethania Road), there is a PSS1A wetland (Palustrine, Scrub-Shrub, Broad-Leafed Deciduous, Temporarily Flooded)

Natural Heritage Sites: The subject property is approximately one mile north of the Walnut Bluffs area (site #20 from the Natural Heritage Inventory). These bluffs face northward and overlook the historic Town of Bethania. Since this is a general use rezoning request, no determination can be made concerning the impacts of future development on the feature.

Farmland Preservation Sites: The subject property is not located on or near any Farmland Preservation sites.

Environmental Resources Beyond The Site: Since this is a general use rezoning request, no determination can be made concerning the impacts of future development on the feature.

Water Supply Watershed: The subject property is not located within a water supply watershed.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Direct Access to Site: Bethania Road; Bethania Road/Route 65

Street Classification: Bethania Road – Minor Thoroughfare; Bethania Road/Route 65 – Major Thoroughfare

Average Daily Traffic Count/Estimated Capacity at Level of Service D (Vehicles per Day):

Bethania Road between Main Street and Reynolda Road = 5,100/16,100

Bethania Road/Route 65 between North Causeway and Bethania Road = 4,200/16,100

Planned Road Improvements: None

Sight Distance: Good

Traffic Impact Study recommended: No

Sidewalks: None existing

Transit: None

Bicycle Route: None

## **HISTORY**

Relevant Zoning Cases:

1. F-1238; HB to LI; approved July 27, 1998; Off the southeast side of North Causeway, northeast of Reynolda Road/NC 67; 2.86 acres; Planning Board and staff recommended approval.
2. F-1227; LI to GB; approved May 11, 1998; west side of North Causeway, south of Bethania Road; 0.81 acre; Planning Board and staff recommended approval.
3. F-1165; RS-20 to RS-15-S (Residential Building, Single Family; and Planned Residential Development); approved October 14, 1996; West side of Main Street (SR 1611) north of Loesch's Lane; 9.29 acres; Planning Board and staff recommended approval.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

GMP Area (*Legacy*): Suburban Neighborhoods (GMA 3)

Relevant Comprehensive Plan Recommendation(s): *Legacy* identifies boundaries for town centers in each of the small towns. Town centers are envisioned to be compact arrangements of commercial, residential and civic uses that serve the municipality. The southern boundary of the Bethania town center is immediately across Bethania Road from the petition's site to the north. The Environmental Quality chapter of *Legacy* notes that floodplains are inherently hazardous and costly locations in which to build. Approximately 85% of the petition's site is in a flood hazard area.

Area Plan/Development Guide: Site is not within the boundaries of the area plan or development guide.

Other (including plans of other agencies): Bethania Comprehensive Transportation and Land Use Study (2001). The land use component illustrates a limited addition of commercial uses in this area. The associated urban design study illustrates buildings being pulled up near the street to remain consistent with the existing character of the Town and to protect wetlands from any unnecessary encroachment.

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES REVIEW**

Known Historic Resources: Yes

Forsyth County Architectural Inventory Number/Name: Bethania National Historic Landmark District; Bethania National Register Historic District

Known Forsyth County Archaeological Site/Number: See above

National Register of Historic Places: See above

Local Historic Landmark: No

Local Historic District: No

Comments: The subject property is located within the boundaries of the Bethania National Historic Landmark District. Bethania, as originally laid out in 1759, consisted of twenty-four residential lots and an integrated and extensive system of "outlots." Both the outlots and the residential lots were contained within a "Town Lot" allocated to Bethania by the

Moravian church. Bethania is of national significance because of both the residential lots and historical landscape surrounding them. Overall, the area is significant because it illustrates the agricultural patterns of a rare example of a German, "open field" agricultural village. The Bethania Town Lot, when studied in its entirety, is also a significant example of Moravian community planning and development. Bethania is the sole example of an open field agricultural village in the six colonial settlements of Wachovia. National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Only approximately 2,500 historic places in the United States bear this national distinction. Because of its extreme historic significance, any rezoning petition should undergo the most careful consideration.

### **INCORPORATED AREA COMMENTS**

Incorporated Jurisdiction: Town of Bethania.  
Expressed Concern: Very supportive of request.

### **ANALYSIS**

The current request is to rezone 4.0 acres from LB and RM-12 to PB (Pedestrian Business). The site is located on the southeast side of Bethania Road and Main Street. Developed properties surrounding the subject property to the north are primarily zoned RS-20 and are within the National Historic Landmark District. A small piece of LI to the northeast of the subject property is the site of the former Lehman-Butner Roller Mill and is currently used as a seed store. All vacant land around the subject property is within the Bethania National Historic Landmark District and a majority of this land is within conservation easements, although the land directly to the west of the subject property is not.

Bethania, as originally laid out in 1759, consisted of twenty-four residential lots and an integrated and extensive system of "outlots." Both the outlots and the residential lots were contained within a "Town Lot" allocated to Bethania by the Moravian church. Bethania is of national significance because of both the residential lots and historical landscape surrounding them. Overall, the area is significant because it illustrates the agricultural patterns of a rare example of a German, "open field" agricultural village. The Bethania Town Lot, when studied in its entirety, is also a significant example of Moravian community planning and development. Bethania is the sole example of an open field agricultural village in the six colonial settlements of Wachovia. National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Only approximately 2,500 historic places in the United States bear this national distinction. Because of its extreme historic significance, any rezoning petition should undergo the most careful consideration.

In the fall through winter of 2001, the Town of Bethania had a consultant team complete the Comprehensive Transportation and Land Use Study to recommend alternate traffic patterns around the Town and to recommend land use options for the town. The associated urban design

plan identifies the subject property as having buildings pulled up near to the street to match the existing character of the Town. Additionally, by having the buildings pulled up closer to the street, any unnecessary encroachment into wetland areas is mitigated. The requested PB zoning would permit this and would also allow for mixed-use development on the subject property. This, too, was recommended in the urban design study. This study serves as a guide to the town of Bethania, but is not officially adopted by the Planning Board or any of the Elected Bodies.

The current LB designation forces certain actions not consistent with the ideas and ideals of the Town of Bethania. Bethania has a very tight streetscape with buildings near the street. The forced setback requirements of the LB district creates a situation where any new construction would, by default, clash with the precedent of the existing streetscape. Additionally, the forced setback would push any new construction closer to wetland areas that need to be protected. Several conservation easements have been recorded over the past few years within and around the Town. The relaxed setbacks associated with the PB district support the environmental consciousness already demonstrated by the Town.

### **FINDINGS**

1. PB (Pedestrian Business) will allow development consistent with the existing character of the Town of Bethania.
2. The recent Comprehensive Transportation and Land Use Study identifies the subject property as being mixed-use with the building(s) pulled up near the street.
3. PB (Pedestrian Business) will aid in mitigating environmental impacts more so than the existing LB zoning district.
4. The Town of Bethania is supportive of the rezoning request.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Zoning: **APPROVAL.**