JOINT WORK SESSION AGENDA
FOR THE
OAK RIDGE MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
AND
OAK RIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Municipal Building Court Room
Thursday November 8, 2018
5:30 p.m.

1. Steve Whitson, PC Chair - Welcome/Agenda Review

2. Warren Gooch, Mayor - Welcome

3. Staff review of current PUD & amendment request

4. Staff analysis (to include Blueprint priorities for City Center) and highlighted priorities

5. Discussion of priorities / PC and CC agreement on policy – not design by joint committee

6. Next steps
BACKGROUND

The Main Street Oak Ridge PUD is the site of the Oak Ridge Mall, first constructed in 1955 and expanded in the late 1980's into an indoor mall that eventually declined.

2013 November Council approved the Industrial Development Board's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District governed by the Economic Impact Plan for the Redevelopment of the Oak Ridge Mall Economic Development Area. Negotiations with a developer resulted in a plan to demolish the mall and develop a retail-driven, multi-use project.

2015 March & April Council approved rezoning the B-2 PUD to UB-2 PUD and Master Plan Revision proposed by Crosland Southeast, which removed some commercial uses and added multi-family uses. Variances were granted at this time to reduce parking to 1.5 spaces per multifamily unit, to reduce the dimensions of parking stalls to 9' X 18', and to reduce aisle widths to 24'. (CURRENT ADOPTED REGULATING PLAN)

2015 August PC approved the Preliminary Plat and Site Plan proposed by Crosland, including variances for road tangent lengths and freestanding signage. Conditions of the approval included staff determination of appropriate design of pedestrian connectivity, such as raised crosswalks or colored/textured paving.

2015 October Council amended the Economic Impact Plan to recognize the new developer, RealtyLink / TN Oak Ridge Rutgers, LLC, and redefine the retail-driven, multi-use project to reflect the 2015 amended PUD Master Plan.

2016 April PC approved resubdivision proposed by RealtyLink.

2016 July PC approved a modified Site Plan for Phase 1 of Main Street, proposed by RealtyLink, which reflects what has been built: roundabout, parking lot landscaping and street trees, buildings with TJ Maxx, Ulta, and PetSmart.

2016 July PC approved Site Plan for TownePlace Suites by Marriott.

2016 December AMSE property conveyed to City

2017 March 7.4 acres of AMSE property conveyed to TN Oak Ridge Illinois, LLC.

2017 November Council accepted Main Street East, Main Street West, and Wilson Street as public streets.

2017 December Council approved rezoning the 7.4-acres portion of AMSE property to UB-2 PUD with Master Plan proposed by RealtyLink / TN Oak Ridge Illinois, LLC.

2018 March PC approved Final Master Plan for 7.4-acres portion of AMSE property.

2018 April PC approved Site Plan for Tire Discounters.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
14 September 2015

RealtyLink announced as the new developer for Main Street

OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE - The Greenville South Carolina based real estate development firm, RealtyLink, has replaced Crosland Southeast as the master developer of the sixty acre Main Street multi-use town center project in Oak Ridge.

RealtyLink currently has nearly 2,000,000 square feet of space in various stages of development including The River Landing, a sixteen acre retail project on Winfield Dunn Parkway in Sevierville. In addition to Greenville South Carolina, RealtyLink has offices in Charleston South Carolina, Birmingham Alabama and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"RealtyLink first showed interest in the project as early as 2012", said Steve Arnsdorff, the chief manager for Oak Ridge City Center LLC, the current owners of the property. "We are delighted that they have had continuing interest and are now able to assume the position of the previous developer", Arnsdorff said.

City of Oak Ridge officials met with the new developers last week. Mayor Warren Gooch took the opportunity to welcome RealtyLink while expressing to them the critical importance of project to the community and the expectation that the project will continue on schedule. "RealtyLink has shown the ability to develop projects of this size and attract a wide assortment national retailers", Gooch said. "Their project portfolio is extensive. The Coastal North Town Center in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina is particularly impressive".

Neil Wilson, a principal with RealtyLink, indicated that his firm intends to move forward quickly with the same plan and same tenant mix as had been previously proposed. "We continue to be committed to the community and to the tenants with the goal being completing the first phase in time for the Christmas season 2016", Wilson said. "We look forward to working with the community in an effort to develop a truly great town center for the city".
Main Street PUD – Primary Issues/Objectives
Joint Planning Commission & City Council Work Session 11/08/18

1. Pedestrian Connectivity – designated pathways and sidewalk connections within MS, plus safe connections to AMSE PUD and Woodland neighborhood.

2. Vehicular Connectivity – maintain connection to Rutgers Ave along the E/W lane running through the roundabout and on to Tulane. (With future connection through new AMSE PUD housing to Bissell Park/CRAD area.)

3. Centralized Gathering Space – establishment of a centrally located, community gathering space (including green space) somewhere in the center of the MS PUD. This may be incorporated into the mixed use area identified along Wilson Street.

4. Commitment to developing mixed-use district, including residential, along Wilson Street corridor, as part of a broader effort lead by City. This has advantages in terms of connecting to properties beyond MS PUD and also connecting the new AMSE to an active ‘town center’ to help generate visitor traffic. Characteristics to include:
   a. Mix of retail, restaurant, residential, office and gathering space;
   b. Multistory buildings at back of sidewalk (vs behind parking);
   c. Articulated, independent storefront appearance rather than monolithic facades;
   d. Attractive streetscape including: generous sidewalk area for circulation, gathering, street furniture, etc; crosswalks; street trees/urban landscaping; decorative lighting; on-street parallel parking;
   e. Quality open space/community gathering space incorporated effectively into design.
Honorable Mayor Warren Gooch and members of City Council
200 S. Tulane Avenue
PO Box 1
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

REF: Main Street PUD – Primary Issues/Objectives

Dear Mayor Gooch and members of Council,

On behalf of the Planning Commission, thank you for joining us in work session to review the Main Street (MS) project.

In an effort to provide each of you with a brief overview of the recurring comments that we have heard both from members of the Planning Commission as well as members of the public, listed below are several comments that pertain to the MS project and proposed PUD amendment. Our hope is that this will help to guide our discussions at the joint work session next week.

1. Pedestrian connectivity in and around the MS site is a recurring theme. In particular, designated pathways and sidewalk connections within MS, plus safe connections to the AMSE PUD and Woodland neighborhood should be considered.

2. Vehicular Connectivity – there is a strong desire to maintain connection to Rutgers Avenue along the E/W lane running through the roundabout and on to Tulane. There is also an interest in having a future connection through the new AMSE PUD housing to Bissell Park and to the ORAU area.

3. Centralized Gathering Space is a paramount element to place-making. The establishment of a centrally located, community gathering space (including green space) somewhere in the center of the MS PUD is desirable. This could be incorporated into the mixed-use area identified along Wilson Street.

4. Commitment to developing a mixed-use district, including residential, along the Wilson Street corridor, as part of a broader effort lead by the City. In the event mixed-use is removed from the roundabout area, it is critical to establish this along Wilson Street. This has advantages in terms of connecting to properties beyond the MS PUD and also connecting the new AMSE to an active ‘town center’ to help generate visitor traffic. Typically, the characteristics would include:
   a. Mix of retail, restaurant, residential, office and gathering spaces;
   b. Multi-story buildings at the back of sidewalk (vs behind parking);
   c. Articulated, independent storefront style of architecture rather than monolithic facades;
d. An attractive streetscape including: generous sidewalk area for circulation, gathering, street furniture, etc; crosswalks; street trees/urban landscaping; decorative lighting; on-street parallel parking, similar to the renderings that RealtyLink submitted as a part of the approved package;

e. High quality open space/community gathering space incorporated effectively into the design.

In closing, the Planning Commission continues to be appreciative of RealtyLink and the investment that is being made in Oak Ridge. It is our desire, to continue to work with them towards a highly successful development that will be beneficial to all parties and enhance our community for decades to come.

With best regards,

H. Stephen Whitson, Chairman

HSW/ctr
11/01/18
Tuesday, November 6, 2018

Honorable Mayor Warren Gooch and members of City Council

200 S. Tulane Avenue
PO Box 1
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Ref: Main Street PUD Amendment-Response to Planning Commission Letter of Issues/Objectives

Dear Mayor Gooch and Members of Council,

In response to the Letter from the Planning Department, I feel the need to address the various differences that currently exist between RealtyLink (as the developer) and the Oak Ridge Planning Department.

1) The first issue is designated pathways and sidewalk connection. Our response: We will add two raised sidewalks to connect the Belk side of the project to the PetSmart side of the project. The site plan with those changes are attached.
2) Vehicular Connectivity-Losing access on one access point off of Rutgers Ave-Our response: This issue has been discussed many times and our response has and will always be the same. This is a Tenant Driven issue and very understandable by retailers that are interested in Oak Ridge. Tenants do not want to be on “an island”. They commit to a project when customers can go from and to different stores via a sidewalk. In addition, one of the issues that we have been dealing with is too much vehicular access points point. Most shopping center, town center or any large shopping destinations have between 1 and 3 access points for vehicles. MS has twelve. This creates a maze effect in which customers that are unfamiliar with the development struggles to find the main entrance and exit. Retailers also want to be as close to the main entrance as possible and having 12 access points also creates confusion. I don’t understand why the Planning Commission stated a strong desire to maintain the Rutgers entrance since the last Planning Staff that I attended there were two high school students and one elderly gentleman that spoke in opposition to the Amendment but neither spoke that this entrance was necessary. To be perfectly candid, if it was needed, I would be the last person to want to close it since we own the development. Our position remains unchanged on this objection from the Planning Department.
3) Centralized Gathering Space- Our response- We will add two green areas to the project The site plan with those changes are attached.
4) Commitment to developing a mixed-use district- The site plan has been adjusted to include residential on Wilson Street and is part of the change in use for the PUD Amendment, so I am not certain why this is still being discussed. We can have our architectural company create some designs that will be complimentary to what is already designed.
SUMMARY

I have attached site plans from four similar projects for you to review and understand what is taking place in the retail world today. These projects have the same or similar tenants, similar amount of total shopping centers square footage, between one and three access points and very similar site plan configuration. Our company has completed many shopping destinations and even though we inherited a lot of the promises that Crosland made, we have honored our commitment to the City of Oak Ridge and will continue to do so.

At this time, I would like the Planning Department to review our revised site plan and recommend approval, however that decision is not ours to make. If this plan does not meet the criteria that we are being subject to then we completely understand that we do not have a meeting of the minds. In that event we ask that City Council determines the fate of Phase 2 for Main Street. In the event that the City Council determines that Phase 2 cannot be approved as presented then we will inform the planned tenants that we cannot develop Phase 2 in the foreseeable future.

Please understand that being a Retail Developer in today’s world is not easy, we are dealing with rising Interest Rates, rising CAP rates, higher construction pricing, Tenants that are low to medium rent payers, store closing, store downsizing and the Amazon effect. It is truly a blessing when we can bring a project to fruition. The reality is that sometimes the Private/City Partnership does not always work and when it doesn’t then it the development suffers. I am available to discuss in more detail if needed.

Regards,

W. Neil Wilson

864-304-8619 (Cell)