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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>

Date: Fri Aug 6, 2004 9:45 am

Subject: SE Town Board Recap 8/5/04

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Hi All,

I think that I might be able to keep this recap under three pages as the minutia discussed last night was astounding.

As always these are not official minutes. After the Public Hearing concluded none were taken. The comments that follow are, as always, my own and are both subjective and jaded.

Quote of the evening: While discussing political signage (which has been 'out', 'in', 'out' and now back 'in') Supervisor Dunford said, 'We don't have the guts to do anything about anything.' Bonus points for self-deprecation and serious bonus points for honesty. Thanks John. I'm sure your side of the desk is far more difficult than mine.

The ironic moment of the evening goes to the possible establishment of a Transportation Improvement District on Route 312. When the Town Planner was asked how the Board would know when the bridge over on Rt 84 would need to be 'Improved' (widened) his answer was a simple, 'Now'.

And, of course we haven't even had the pleasure of dealing with the traffic from the as yet unbuilt Ace Endico, Senior Housing, Town Ball Fields, The Campus at Fields Corner and yet another warehouse/distribution center. Possibly 1000 parking spaces added to the Southeast Station and a proposed Hotel/Conference Center right over the border in Carmel. Enjoy!

PUBLIC HEARING:

HISTORIC SITES: There is still a problem identifying some of these sites. Some structures listed in the 90's no longer exist. Until this problem is resolved the Public Hearing will be closed. The Board will reopen the Hearing when the Historic Sites list is complete.

WORK SESSION:

1. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT:

At present the Transportation Improvement District will affect only commercial properties along Route 312. These properties will be responsible for absorbing the costs involved when road improvements

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are needed.

According to the Town Planner, Graham Trelsted, new traffic volumes based on total buildouts will be available. Mr. Trelsted will make a presentation to show where bottlenecks are. Councilman Johnson questioned the area discussed (the north west corner of Southeast) as it seemed too large to him.

It was felt that, although the commercial development should pick up most of the cost, new residential development like 'The Campus' might also be included in the district.

Government agencies appear to be exempt from a TID as does the MTA. Town Attorney/ Assemblyman, Willis Stephens, said that he would check on this. Supervisor Dunford mentioned that Southeast would be an 'interested agency' on nearby projects in neighboring towns. Carmel and North Salem were mentioned.

Councilwoman Mitts brought up 'Special Permits' and stated that these permits were not 'variances' or 'waivers' but rather 'allowed uses' within the zoning code. To be approved these uses must meet certain criteria within the code and 'be in harmony with existing uses.'

2. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT ZONING:

There have been changes made to the draft zoning code. Common driveways were discussed (no conclusion reached). Much time was spent on political signs. They will be allowed. 72 hours notice will be mandatory before land clearing begins on a site.

COMMENTS:

Actually, this was not a dreadful meeting. Except for some cloying, gratuitous and oh-so-obvious back-pedaling on 'Special Permits' it was only the zoning 'micro-managing' (Councilman Bonanno's words, not mine) on political signs that was tedious.

TID: Holy Moly! What can I say...

Minimally two more traffic lights will be added (Zimmer Road and International Blvd) while the possibility of one at North Brewster Road and one at Pugsley Lane loom large.

I wonder how long school buses will take getting through this attractive, well planned corridor (and incidentally, 'Gateway' to Southeast)?

Right now the 'late school bus' defense is one of the favorites used for the widening of Route 22. I imagine at some point, in the not too distant future, widening will become the mantra for Route 312. Oh right, and if I had a crystal ball my guess would be that environmentalists will get to take the fall for this traffic nightmare as well. Somehow poor planning never does.

While it was encouraging to hear that Southeast will take an 'interested agency' role on neighboring projects I'm not sure how effective we'll be outside Southeast's borders since we certainly haven't been effective from within.

Guys, pick up the clue phone. If approved, Gateway Summit (the development planned for Route 6 in Carmel just west of Root Avenue), will have a Hotel/Conference Center, a YMCA, some retail, a

restaurant and 'Senior Housing' (because no self respecting developer would leave this cash cow/ zone breaker' out of the mix). Where will most of the traffic come from for the Hotel/Conference Center? Exit 19? Bingo. It's all regional.

In a brilliant set-up for the future special permitting of 'Senior Housing' at Terravest Councilwoman Mitts and the rest of the Board discussed why 'special permits' aren't 'waivers' or 'variances'.

Note to the Councilwoman: if it walks like a duck and talks like a duck... Look, you can call it whatever you like and, yes, it's in the code but you guys have the power to take it out. Furthermore, will Senior Housing truly 'be in harmony with the existing uses' at Terravest?

Check this out: 60 Three bedroom, two bath, two story homes bisected by a sewage treatment plant within a stone's throw of a food packaging plant and walking distance (albeit uphill) of town ball fields partially located within the wetland buffer. It just doesn't get any more harmonious than this...

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT ZONING:

This was kind of fiddling while Rome burns.

I've thrown in the towel on signs (as has the town) . I mean if all aforementioned garbage is going to be built do we really have the unmitigated gall to even pretend to care about the 'visual pollution' of part-time political signs?

I apologize for the rant but isn't time for all of Putnam County's elected and appointed officials to take a long, hard look at the regional picture? Even if it's not a pretty one...

As always please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments that you might have.

With best regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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