

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR
CONOVER PLANNING BOARD MEETING
June 17, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Conover Planning Board was held on June 17th, 2008 at the Conover City Hall.

PRESENT: Chairman Abernathy, Board Members Janette Sims, James Ten Kate, Joe Kaylor, Ken R. Hilderbran, Mike Long, David Brown, Jan Herman and Steven Kiger.

ABSENT: Board Member Helen Whitfield

STAFF: Planning Director Q. Lance Hight
Planner Daniel Robinson
GIS Coordinator Erik Schlichting
Environmental Coordinator Terry Lail

City Clerk Cara C. (Chris) Reed swore in Board Members Mike Long and Jan Herman to the Planning Board.

Chairman Abernathy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ITEM 1: Approval of Minutes

Chairman Abernathy presented the minutes of the regular meeting on May 20th, 2008.

Upon a motion from Board Member Ten Kate, Seconded by Board Member Brown: It was unanimously resolved:
That the minutes of the regular meeting on May 20th, 2008 be approved.

ITEM 2: Public Meeting – Zoning Map Amendment – Blackwell Property located at 106 & 108 Thornburg Dr SE

Mr. Hight opened and discussed the following item:

Andy Wells, representing the property owner has submitted an application for the rezoning of properties located at 106 & 108 Thornburg Dr SE. The two (2) properties consist of 0.65 +/- acres and 0.58 +/- acres respectively, and are currently zoned City of Conover B-2 (Highway Business). The proposed zoning classification is City of Conover CC (Corridor Commercial).

The properties are located in the southeast area of Conover at the intersection of Thornburg Drive and Emmanuel Church Rd. The properties are bound by B-2 zoning to the north, east and west and M-1 (General Manufacturing) zoning to the south across Emmanuel Church Rd. The surrounding land uses include the Cross Country Shopping Center (Food Lion) to the north, Conover Veterinarian Clinic and a vacant house to the east, light industrial offices to the south and vacant open space owned by the YMCA to the west.

The permitted uses of B-2 and CC are similar. Uses such as offices, restaurants, service stations as well as general commercial uses and retail are permitted in both districts. The primary difference between the two districts is the lot dimensional requirements. For example, the minimum front set back for parcels zoned B-2 is forty (40) feet, whereas the front setback for parcels zoned CC is a maximum of twenty (20) feet. The CC setbacks are actually more consistent with the existing buildings in this vicinity than the B-2. The properties along Thornburg Dr are zoned B-2, however when Thornburg Dr was widened the existing building's setbacks from the right-of-way was reduced to distances more consistent with CC zones. Rezoning these parcels to CC would allow the development of these parcels to be more consistent with the build-to lines of existing commercial buildings along Thornburg Dr SE in the immediate vicinity.

This request is compatible with surrounding land uses as well as compatible with the 2003 Land Development plan. Staff reviewed the proposed zoning map amendment #R08-4 and recommends approval to the Planning Board.

Board Member Brown – How will the proposed zoning district affect the setback from Emmanuel Church Rd?

Mr. Hight – In Commercial Corridor districts the sideyard setback is 10 feet. However, since this is a corner lot, the setback increases to 20 feet. There is also a sight triangle on the corner of Emmanuel Church Rd and Thornburg Dr so the building cannot encroach on that area either.

Board Member Ten Kate – Is the entrance to the properties a little close to Emmanuel Church Rd?

Mr. Hight – When Thornburg Dr was widened, curb cuts were placed to provide access to properties. The driveway cut already exists for this site. NCDOT will look at it when plans come in and may make some alterations. These two parcels will share a driveway.

Chairman Abernathy opened the public meeting.

Andy Wells, developer – We have had medical office demand in this area. This area makes sense and the land north of I-40 is too expensive. We want to build a nice project and we are asking you to allow us. We want to have the buildings pushed up closer to the road and have the parking behind.

Chairman Abernathy – The YMCA brought plan concerning this area before. Do you recall this and have any information?

Andy Wells – I am not aware of those plans. They may have been before my time with the YMCA. However, there are plans for some soccer fields on the land that the YMCA owns directly west of these properties. We want to provide parking in the evening for these fields because the YMCA parking lot would be a long walk. By having the buildings in front, it would provide a buffer for the fields so it doesn't feel like you are playing soccer next to a highway.

Phil DiCasolo – I am the President of the YMCA of Catawba Valley and wanted to say that we are very supportive of this project.

With no further comments, Chairman Abernathy closed the public meeting.

Chairman Abernathy – Mr. Hight, what are the additional permitted uses allowed in the CC zoning district from B-2?

Mr. Hight – The two districts are very similar. Commercial Corridor is the TND version of the B-2 district. The differences are that CC allows technical and vocational schools, government buildings, music clubs and night clubs.

Upon a motion from Board Member Kaylor, Seconded by Board Member Hilderbran: It was unanimously resolved:

That the zoning map amendment be approved.

Mr. Hight presented the permit report for May 2008.

Mr. Hight informed the Board that Conover was selected to be Catawba County's depot for the Western North Carolina passenger rail service.

Mr. Hight informed the Board of the action taken by the Council at their last meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting ADJOURNED at 7:29 pm.

David Abernathy, Planning Board Chairman

Q. Lance Hight, Planning Director