

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR
CONOVER PLANNING BOARD MEETING
February 15th, 2011**

The regular meeting of the Conover Planning Board was held on February 15th, 2011, at the Conover City Hall.

PRESENT: Chairman Joe Kaylor, Vice Chairman Jim Ten Kate, Board Members Ryan Spleet, Ken Hilderbran, Mike Long, Jim Rice, Helen Whitfield, Janette Sims, and Steven Kiger

ABSENT: David Brown

STAFF: Planning Director Q. Lance Hight, AICP
Planner Josh Frederick

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

ITEM 1: Approval of Minutes.

Chairman Kaylor presented the minutes of the regular meeting on November 16th, 2010.

Upon a motion from Vice Chairman Ten Kate, seconded by Board Member Rice: It was unanimously resolved:

That the minutes of the regular meeting on November 16th, 2010 be approved.

ITEM 2: Old Business:

There was no old business.

ITEM 3: New Business:

Zoning Map Amendment #R11-1: 303 Conover Station SE to be rezoned from M-1 (General Manufacturing) to COI (Campus Office and Institutional).

Mr. Hight opened the item.

The City of Conover seeks a zoning amendment for a 1.4 acre parcel located on the recently constructed but yet to be opened extension of 4th Street Pl SE (henceforth to be known as Conover Station SE). This site is immediately north of the existing Conover Multimodal Center that is currently under construction/renovation. The site to be rezoned is the future location of the new Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC) facility, within the Conover Station redevelopment area. The property is currently zoned City of Conover M-1 (General Manufacturing), and the proposed zoning classification is City of Conover COI (Campus Office and Institutional).

MSC offers a valuable service in assisting both existing business and manufacturers in their daily testing, design and engineering needs as well as assisting innovators and budding entrepreneurs

in bringing their products to market. MSC and the Catawba Valley Community College has partnered with the City of Conover in seeking grant funding for the construction of a new facility on the Conover Station site. This site would house a new approximately 30,000 square foot facility fronting on the new Conover Station SE Street. Their day-to-day operations consist of research and development, involving the use of laboratory space and testing facilities. The facility will also house offices and several incubator spaces for temporary use by new businesses/clientele.

The purpose of the proposed zoning amendment is to allow the new construction and site design to be consistent with the adopted Conover Station Master Plan, which specifies that new construction be harmonious with existing site design and architecture in the area. The COI zoning classification allows for a “shopfront” and “urban workplace” building type, which is in keeping with the setbacks and appearance of existing downtown buildings. Incorporating the existing downtown building style will facilitate the continuation of downtown form of development patterns onto this new street.

Mr. Hight informed the Board that Planning Staff have found the zoning amendment to be consistent with the adopted Conover Station Master Plan and they recommend approval of the amendment. He then opened the floor to questions.

Chairman Kaylor opened the public meeting.

There being no comments from the public, Chairman Kaylor opened Planning Board discussion and questions:

Board Member Hildebran - Why the City doesn't go ahead and rezone the entire 24 acres within the Conover Station development?

Mr. Hight - Staff does not recommend the rezoning of the entire site right now. Work is in progress including site improvements to both the Multimodal building and stormwater wetland/park. Currently these boundaries are not exactly established on the ground. Staff recommends the City subdivide and rezone the area containing the Multimodal site, stormwater / park improvements after the boundaries are established. Staff recommends reviewing rezoning the remaining acreage of the site at a later time, ideally when opportunities present themselves. That being said, such future rezonings should be consistent with the adopted Conover Station Master Plan.

Board Member Rice - Where will the parking for the MSC building be?

Mr. Hight - The approximately 180 on-street parking spaces will provide a great deal of parking, however an off-street parking lot behind the building is planned. He also informed the Board that the City is still seeking funding for the parking lot behind the MSC building, to be built in the future.

Board Member Hildebran – How will deliveries be made to MSC?

Mr. Hight – The vast majority of the deliveries to the MSC facility are either UPS or Fedex. However, larger deliveries that are brief and infrequent will likely be made from the street via a tow motor and a front loaded bay. The bay would be designed to complement the architecture of the building and safety and traffic flow would be strongly considered in the MSC design.

Mr. Hight proceeded to show conceptual renderings of the MSC building and the development around it.

Board Member Long – Will the MSC be able to take deliveries in the rear of the building, off the street?

Mr. Hight - It is very possible that the design of the rear parking area could accommodate deliveries.

Board Member Rice – Does the City own a lot on the north of the property fronting on 3rd St SE and if it could potentially be a driveway cut? Mr. Hight explained that the City does own the property and it could potentially be a driveway.

Board Member Long - Commented about the positive growth and success of MSC and that they will be an asset to Conover.

Board Member Spleet – A possibility could be for a driveway cut off of Hwy 70 for the entire property. This could make deliveries easier for MSC and turning lane improvements at the intersection would ease traffic.

Mr. Hight – Stated that this intersection has always been a concern and agreed with Board Member Spleet’s comments. Mr. Hight stated that any improvements would be approved by NCDOT and typically driveway cuts and intersection improvements costs associated with a development are borne by the developer, which in this case is the City.

There being no further comments;

Upon a motion by Vice Chairman Ten Kate, seconded by Board Member Rice, it was unanimously resolved that:

That the rezoning of 303 Conover Station SE from M-1 to COI is approved.

ITEM 4: Informational Items:

Mr. Hight presented the November 2010, December 2010, and January 2011 Permit Reports.

Mr. Hight presented a recent news article covering NC Bill 13, dubbed the “Balanced Budget Act,” that covers the bill’s approval by the NC Senate. He informed the Board that a provision of the bill is to remove funding for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, from which the Planning Department applied for a grant for Conover Station Park. Mr. Hight also informed the Board that since the article’s publication, the NC House has also approved the bill and it has gone to the governor’s desk.

Mr. Hight offered an update on the Conover Station development, showing recent construction photos of the Multimodal Center and orienting the Board to the recently launched conoverstation.com promotional website.

Board Member Rice commented that the website “looked good.”

Chairman Kaylor and Mr. Hight discussed sources of funding for various projects within the Conover Station development.

Mr. Hight informed the Board that the City has signed a contract for a Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant, and reiterated the current situation of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant application. Mr. Hight then discussed the current state of the process for selecting an architectural firm to build the Manufacturing Solutions Center.

Mr. Hight updated the Board that the City has passed a recent federal audit of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant that is currently being administered for the Multimodal center rehabilitation.

Mr. Hight briefly discussed the plans for a Dollar Tree submitted, commented positively and informed the Planning Board that this would likely be an item on their next agenda.

ITEM 5: Council Action:

Mr. Hight informed the Board that the City Council had approved Zoning Map Amendment #R10-2 during their December 2010 regular meeting.

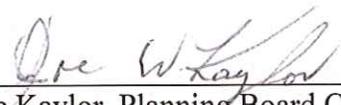
Mr. Hight discussed the annual retreat that took place among City Council and department heads in December, 2010 and offered an overview of Planning Department action items for 2011.

Mr. Hight informed the Board of upcoming code amendments that will be presented at the next Planning Board meeting.

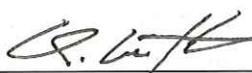
Board Member Whitfield – What is the process of nuisance abatement? Mr. Hight responded about proposed changes upcoming.

ITEM 6: Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting ADJOURNED at 7:47 p.m.



Joe Kaylor, Planning Board Chairman



Q. Lance Hight, Planning Director