

Study Group Meeting (#3)  
Big Woods EDA-owned assemblage North Side of Victory Blvd  
830 Poquoson Avenue – January 17, 2017

Attendance

Donald Booth, EDA Chairman, Alan Meetze, EDA Vice Chairman, Tim Trant, Henry Freeman, Katie Patrick, Walt Apelt, EDA Directors, Carey Freeman, Vice-Mayor, Gus Goddin, Planning Commission, Rick Weddle, HREDA, Dave Callis, Director ED, Charity Gavaza, ED, Deborah Vest, Director Comm Dev., Dannon O'Connell, Planning

NOTES

Chairman Booth opened the meeting with a DRAFT document based on previous meeting discussions reviewing the Guiding Principles for Development (see attached). This opened the discussion on a primary topic introduced last meeting on gateway standards, balancing use and aesthetics. The Legacy development, being the first to rise in the Big Woods, should assist in setting some development standards for the area. Community Development Director Debbie Vest reminded the group that Legacy is likely to evolve over a 7+ year timeframe and that the aesthetics of development along the Victory Boulevard corridor are reviewed and guided through the Architectural Review Board (ARB). She agreed that the Victory Boulevard corridor could be placed in a special architectural overlay with specific design standards.

Chairman Booth stated that the plan might be to refine the DRAFT document and prepare to present it to City Council at a regularly scheduled meeting during February.

Director Meetze stated that in order to protect the corridor, some guidelines/standards need to be set. On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that anything considered needs to be not so onerous or limiting as to discourage developers from interest in the property.

Chairman Booth provided an example to the dilemma regarding parking and landscape. Should parking be restricted to back of property; what should landscaping requirements be? Debbie Vest responded that VC zoning offers zero lot line to enhance streetscape, but changes would be required to the GC and R&D Zoning District to allow for reduction of the front yard setback. Director Apelt offered that developers were often more aware of design trends, such as the New Urban Design parameters and we don't want to restrict them from current trends.

Director Meetze reminded the group that we don't want to open Pandora's box and spend a year investigating details such as color and specifics. These details are too limiting and will discourage developer interest. Chairman Booth reminded the group that the Legacy approvals will set the stage for all following development. Director Meetze considered that one of the primary elements to be considered by the EDA

conjunction with this group, will be who to court and who to reject? What uses will be desired for Gateway? Item #3 on the DRAFT discusses who it is believed we DON'T want. We also need to consider who is appropriate and who we DO want. Dave Callis reminded the group that the property is currently FOR SALE and listed and we deal with those who contact us and express interest in the property. Director Meetze stated that we'd like to be proactive, not reactive, to potential buyers/developers.

Input was provided from several members of the public gathered for the meeting including a suggestion that a Vision for Poquoson-and the EDA six (6)-parcel assemblage-include the wetlands that are a reality and should be included as a feature in the development. Chairman Booth stated that developers are very in tune with these situations/opportunities and tailor them to the development planned. Director Apelt stated that covenants or zoning district could control, but property must be owned to enact these measures.

Rick Weddle stated that one of the most important factors to developers is being Predictable. Having minimum standards that are adhered to can help the sales process, enabling developers to analyze the potential of the property. ARB could demonstrate through approvals what we do want.

Chairman Booth addressed the group inquiring if we missed anything on the DRAFT that should be discussed. Regarding the EDA assemblage: 1.) should lot lines be eliminated, creating one large parcel? 2.) should zoning be changed to all same? 3.) should a right of way be established? 4.) should a basic traffic plan be established considering possibility of different major intersection utilizing Legacy plan?

When the suggestion of a possible rezoning request of the EDA assemblage (or a portion thereof) was made, Economic Development Director Dave Callis asked if it might not be advisable to wait until the conclusion of the EDA Study Group's Process and City Council's response and direction for the property before proceeding with this course of action. HREDA President Rick Weddle opined that General Commercial (GC) is the most flexible zoning if the entire six (6) parcel assemblage were converted to one with the same zoning. Adding covenants could assist in controlling development. Director Meetze stated that for the Big Woods/Victory Corridor to offer the desired Gateway, more than the EDA parcel(s) need to be controlled. Director Trant suggested that changing through the Conditional Use Permit, more than 15,000 sf and restricting certain uses, could control aesthetics along the entire Poquoson Victory Blvd. corridor.

Chairman Booth presented the DRAFT's 5 suggested uses and suggested brainstorming and discussing these uses to evaluate their merits. Director Meetze stated that it would be short sighted to be too specific in the options and miss out on other uses. General commercial/retail could cover most bases and be left open to others. Rick Weddle reminded group that certain retail, big box especially, has certain requirements that are unavoidable for their success including, but not limited to: city size, rooftops, income, traffic counts, location. Traffic count is a major driver to many desirable uses. Chairman Booth requested information on where data could be

obtained to drill down on required information. Most of what the city currently has was obtained through HREDA and VEDP. Director Trant stated that most commercial real estate/developer interests have access to an amazing amount of data. Dave Callis reminded the group that the last professional consultant study was completed in 2011. Planning Commissioner Goddin stated that although Legacy could provide some data, it may need to be separated into two sets: current and 7 years out. Director Trant and Commissioner Goddin reviewed the topic of Destination Retail use such as movie theaters. Director Apelt reminded group that infrastructure needs should be reviewed as to what needs to be done and who pays and cited examples of infrastructure creating major developer bankruptcies. Chairman Booth explored the potential to locate unique niche businesses that would attract people to area creating a destination appeal. Examples discussed previously include sports venues such as WISC. Vice Mayor Freeman suggested that income generation on the EDA six (6) parcel assemblage needs to be kept in the forefront of consideration. He also reminded the group that statistics show the Poquoson population aging and wondered if this could be a factor to consider. Director Trant stated that York County is very similar in demographics such as this to Poquoson and the topic of assisted living and medical facilities was discussed, which are not allowed in General Commercial Zoning.

The next meeting date is set for January 31. The goal of the next meeting to finalize the plan for presentation to City Council and to suggest categories of development to be considered.