

Council Committee on Economic Sustainability Meeting Notes

Attendees: Council Member George Cianciolo, Council Member Michael Parker, Council Member Sally Greene, Council Member Ed Harrison, Roger Stancil, Flo Miller, Dwight Bassett, Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Ben Hitchings, Rae Buckley, Meg McGurk, Steve Brantley, Jeanne Brown, Catherine Lazorko, Laura Selmer, Jay Heikes

8 to 10 a.m. Friday, October 7, 2016, Chapel Hill Public Library

Update on previously recommended goals: Discuss rezoning Millhouse Road area for light-industrial/research companies - ask manager to propose process for initiating rezoning. Creation of a zone to accommodate. The committee endorsed the concept at its June 3 meeting.

Mary Jane Nirdlinger (Planning and Sustainability) provided an update on staff work to provide rezoning and zoning simultaneously of a proposed light-industrial/research zone off Millhouse Road. Scheduled for Council consideration at Jan. 18, 2017, public hearing, and potentially scheduled for February 27, 2017, business meeting.

Questions: Do property owners offer feedback on rezoning?
Does OWASA have feedback?
Future site of solid waste transfer station?
Have we talked with the railroad company?
Have we had conversation with Rogers Road residents?

Discussion: All utilities in area will be involved. We want to create a zone that has adequate capacity. Stakeholders meeting in fall 2016. A context map provides more understanding of land uses in the area and potential impacts. The intent is not to promote housing in the new zone.

Discussion on June 2 joint meeting with County Commissioners (Update on previously recommended goals: Consider joint Incentive Policy with Orange County- ask county and town managers to develop thoughts for consideration)

Dwight Bassett (Economic Development) explained that the joint incentive policy addresses how to advance job creation and capital investment while establishing minimum criteria for applicants.

Questions: Can we make policy broader to include start-ups?
Can we incentivize creation of office space?
How do we coordinate actions of both legislative bodies (Town and County)?
How do we justify to the public how we give to one business and not another?
How do we differentiate business expansion versus new business?
Is the County in agreement?
What are we trying to accomplish? Job creation or new buildings?
Is there a way to accelerate the review process?

Discussion: The policy will focus on minimum eligibility, with a focus on new capital and job growth. Orange County has not discussed in detail, but has general agreement of the policy's value. Awardees would have to perform prior to receiving incentives. Some governments give staff discretion to move applications forward with agreement caveat "subject to approval by elected officials."

Office Building on the Wallace Deck

Questions: What is structurally possible to build on top of the deck?

Can we establish criteria that it should be office space, which our community needs?

Discussion: If the Town were a true partner, you need an independent entity to lease the space. This could be evaluated as part of the Town's asset management initiative. Staff talked about a "request for ideas", less formal than RFP, for creative uses for the space. Also discussed possibility of a non-profit to oversee development/partnership. Focus on affordable "Class B" office space creation should be a priority of the project. A previous engineering study found that the deck could accommodate two to three stories. This analysis would need to be updated. If we don't do something on top of the deck soon, we will have to invest more than \$1 million in maintenance.

Other Economic Development Update Info

Update about a Makers Faire planned in spring 2017. The Makers Movement is the umbrella term for independent inventors, designers and tinkerers. A convergence of computer hackers and traditional artisans, the niche is established enough to have its own magazine, [Make](#), as well as hands-on Maker Faires.

Dwight Bassett shared that we are Telling Our Story including need for office space via marketing proposals from ad agencies. To advance our economic development strategy, we are moving forward to use the elements of storytelling. Close coordination with Laurie Paolicelli (Visitors Bureau) and Catherine Lazorko (Communications and Public Affairs). Also, we're looking at how to target workers. They want to work where it's a great place to live. Suggested that a coordinated Town and UNC economic development strategy will create synergy and greater effectiveness.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2016