

2-51-07-G  
2-K-07-UR

**From:** "Mike Ward" <ward5@esper.com>  
**To:** <buz.johnson@knoxmpc.org>  
**Date:** 4/9/2007 10:58:25 PM  
**Subject:** MPC Lunch Meeting on Tuesday - MPC Agenda Item #15

Mr. Johnson,

I left you a voice mail late this afternoon. I had planned to be at the lunch meeting tomorrow in case any questions came up regarding my letter and/or the status of the meetings/discussions that I have had with Michael Rhodes and Victor Jernigan, however, I have a business meeting in Nashville tomorrow so I will not be able to attend the MPC lunch. I also planned to share the updated TDOT traffic count info that I have now received, which reports a higher traffic volume than was provided in the Wilbur Smith report

Lastly, I was also hoping to share a simple request in person that I hope you would now be able to print and share with the MPC Commissioners in my absence.

Please consider the desires of the community as put forth in the Northeast County Sector Plan. The Knox County sector planning process was initiated to allow the citizen's of the community to establish a vision for how a community can sustain quality growth. The expectation of the communities is that developers should at least be mindful of the respective Sector's documented plan, and work with the community toward achieving the vision. The Gibbs community understands and respects the need for development, and is looking to the MPC to protect and uphold the original intent of the defined Sector plans. Ignorance and/or neglect of the Sector plan by any developer does not deserve to be rewarded when the Sector vision has not even been taken into consideration.

I look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Respectfully,

Mike Ward

256-4920 (M)

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April 4, 2007

Mr. Mark Donaldson  
Executive Director  
Metropolitan Planning Commission  
Suite 403, City/County Building  
400 Main Street  
Knoxville, TN 37902

Re: Agenda Item #15, Edwards Place – Michael C. Rhodes, 2-SI-07-C & 2-K-07-UR

Dear Mr. Donaldson and MPC Commissioners,

This information is a follow-up to the postponement that was provided last month on the referenced agenda item. Adjacent property owners and community residents would like to provide additional comments regarding opposition to the current Concept Plan/Use on Review (CP/UoR) for development of the James Edwards property located on Thompson School Road in the Gibbs Community.

As a quick recap, I have met with the proposing developer, Michael Rhodes, and the property owner(s) to discuss community interests and options. The primary topics of discussion were the potential for reworking the development plan, and to include improvements to Twin Oaks Lane which would provide a secondary access to the site. While Mr. Rhodes has not expressed interest in changing his current development plan, he has expressed a willingness to meet with others to discuss the potential for cost sharing of the needed improvements to Twin Oaks Lane. These improvements will also be necessary to provide a safe walkway from the development to the Gibbs Elementary, Gibbs High School, and Gibbs Ruritan Park areas.

Developer Victor Jernigan is now in the process of negotiating with Twin Oak Lane property owner(s) with the intent to acquire/develop property on Tazewell Pike/Twin Oaks Lane that is also adjacent to the Edwards property. Mr. Jernigan has also expressed a willingness to discuss the options and potential cost sharing of Twin Oak Lane improvements.

I believe that we are now positioned to work toward achieving the community plan as presented in the Northeast County Sector Plan (NCSP), but need more time to have meaningful dialogue about the plans and the options. It is important to note that during my discussions with Mr. Rhodes, he shared that he had not seen the vision for the community as outlined in the NCSP.

The development opportunity afforded by this property is unique for the Gibbs Community and Harbison Crossroads area due to its size, location, and proximity to the elementary school, high school, ruritan park, and Tazewell Pike – Emory Road intersection. This property will be integral in working towards the vision as outlined in the NCSP. For your convenience, I am including the relevant sections taken from the NCSP that specifically address the documented Knox County vision for this area.

As you can see from the NCSP excerpts below, this area was designated a Special Development Opportunity Area with a recommendation that a village center concept be implemented. With a well thought-out plan, this property could contribute greatly to the vision, and also provide the genesis for achieving the Beaver Creek greenway in Gibbs with connections to schools and the Gibbs Ruritan Park as identified in Table 7: Community Facility Improvements of the NCSP Five and Fifteen Year Improvement Plan.

To quote another section of the NCSP, “new development should respect the sectors landscape and heritage, not destroy the very quality that makes it a desirable place to live”. We agree with the NCSP principles and believe that more collaboration and planning should be done to establish the next layer of a foundation for the Gibbs Community. Encouraging development that utilizes more open space will also effectively minimize some of the traffic volume and safety concerns associated with this CP/UoR. Based on data from the TDOT, the intersection of Thompson School Road and Emory has an accident occurrence rate that is 11 times greater than the State of Tennessee average for a state high-way.

I also attended the “Plain Talk on Quality Growth” conference last Friday and was encouraged that the Knoxville/Knox County area is now taking steps to address both the short-term and long-term issues that surface in such a growing area. During the opening keynote address by Mr. Daniel Williams, a graphic of a compact development was used and he commented that a husband was going to “run out to get an aspirin, and would be back in a couple of hours” after making his way thru a maze of houses, roads, and traffic, all caused by ineffective planning. I believe the current development use proposed for this property reflects a similar, inefficient design, and is exactly what we should not be allowing to occur.

Based on guidelines presented at the conference, we also need to be considering the impact of issues associated with re-development costs after 30 to 40 years have elapsed and an ineffective development needs to be reclaimed to achieve community goals. I believe that missed opportunity today, will have a detrimental, long-term impact to the Gibbs Community, and ask that you not allow this to happen. We need to pause for a moment and work to achieve the goals that are already in place.

In closing, while we have made progress over the past month, the community would like to have more time to collaborate with the developers and work toward the vision as presented in the NCSP. Upon further review, we believe that you will also agree that the proposed development use does not align with the vision and several key principles outlined in the NCSP, and as such deserves additional time to allow a more comprehensive plan to be designed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Ward  
Spokesperson  
Thompson School Road and Gibbs Community Residents

Excerpts below were taken directly from the **Northeast County Sector Plan** and are specific to the Gibbs Community. Key points have been underlined for emphasis.

## **Special Development Opportunity Areas**

### **Tazewell Pike: Future School Sites**

The civic components of a village center should be created at Harbisons Crossroads. (definition of village center provided below)

Traditional Neighborhood Development style should be considered for residential land around school sites. Sidewalks should be built in all new subdivisions approved around both of the future school sites in anticipation of the parental responsibility zone. (see definition provided below)

Safe pedestrian connections need to be identified from the new Gibbs Elementary site to the High School complex. Refuge islands should be included as part of the planned improvements to the intersection of Emory Road and Tazewell Pike. A branch library on Tazewell Pike in the Gibbs community will serve the growing population and add to the mix of community services in the area. Opportunities for park and recreation facilities to compliment the school grounds exist and should be pursued before the land becomes developed.

Civic components including a new school, branch library and recreation facilities should be created, with safe pedestrian connections linking all sites.

### **NCSP Excerpts - Land Use and Development Concepts**

Development is encouraged to concentrate where services can be efficiently provided. Land-consuming sprawl and scattered, 'leap frog' type developments are discouraged. Over time, the urban service area should be extended to allow for efficient patterns of development. Based on the recently updated General Plan and numerous public meetings throughout the sector, types of development to be encouraged are described on the following page.

#### **Village Center**

Neighborhoods are created around a village center so people can walk to centrally located schools, public space and shops. Public buildings are prominent, fostering civic pride. Public open spaces provide areas for athletics, play and community events. Apartments, townhouses and offices are located near the center, providing customers for the retail space and a transition to less intense housing.

#### **Traditional Neighborhood Developments**

New development in these areas should follow the principles of traditional neighborhoods – wide sidewalks and narrow, tree-lined streets, front porches and rear garages, central squares and shopping districts. These neighborhoods are community- and people-oriented. The architecture of traditional rural buildings provides a possible theme,