

Think Quality - Think Future

Blount County Planning Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Blount County Planning Commission

FROM: John Lamb

DATE: November 13, 2006

SUBJECT: Staff report on items for long range planning agenda for the November 21, 2006 rescheduled regular meeting..

1. Recommendation on amendment to zoning regulations concerning front setback requirements in steeply sloping land

At the last regular meeting the Planning Commission directed staff to formulate a proposed amendment to the zoning regulations. The following is proposed for recommendation to the County Commission:

That the Zoning Regulations be amended by addition of the following new Section 7.14.

7.14. Front Setback Requirements on Steeply Sloping Land.

Notwithstanding other provisions in this Resolution, for lots without defined front setback established by registered plat or by deed or subdivision restrictions, and which have average slope greater than 15%, the front setback may be reduced upon finding by the Building Commissioner that the average slope of the land is greater than 15%. Front setback shall be no less than 35 feet from centerline of fronting road, or 10 feet from front property line, whichever distance is greater from centerline of fronting road. Information to be supplied by applicant to the Building Commissioner to avail of lesser front setback under this section shall include a topographical map of the property of

at least five foot contours, slope analysis showing extent of land greater than 15% slope, and proposed placement of structures. The Building Commissioner shall make written findings in applying this section, to be attached along with other supporting information to any related building permit.

2. Recommendation on amendment to zoning regulations concerning side setbacks for residential lots.

At the last regular meeting the Planning Commission directed staff to formulate proposed amendments to the zoning regulations. The following are proposed for recommendation to the County Commission (note that ten feet minimum building side setback has also been incorporated into the commercial zones for commercial uses):

That the Zoning Regulations Sections 9.1.G.3 for the S-Suburbanizing District, 9.2.G.3 for the R-1-Rural District 1, and 9.3.G.3 for the R-2-Rural District 2, be amended to read as follows:

3. Side Setback: the minimum building setback from the side property line shall be ten (10) feet, provided that the side setback shall be 20 feet, or greater as may be required by the Board of Zoning Appeals, for any special exception.

That the Zoning Regulations Section 9.4.G.3 for the C-Commercial District, and 9.10.G.3 for the RAC-Rural Arterial Commercial District be amended to read as follows:

3. Side Setback: For any commercial use under Permitted Uses abutting another commercial use or land zoned C-Commercial or I-Industrial or RAC-Rural Arterial Commercial, the minimum building setback from the side property line shall be ten (10) feet. For any commercial use under Permitted Uses abutting a residential lot or land zoned S, R-1 or R-2, the minimum building setback from the side property line shall be 20 feet. For any special exception, the minimum building setback from the side property line shall be 20 feet, or greater as may be required by the Board of Zoning Appeals. For any residential use the minimum building setback from the side property line shall be ten (10) feet.

3. Consideration of plans by South Blount Utility District for water line extensions and improvements.

Each Planning Commission member should have as separate enclosure with this memo a letter from Henry Durant, District Manager of the South Blount Utility District, summarizing plans for water line extensions and improvements. The body of the letter is reproduced below:

Since 1961 South Blount County Utility District (SBCUD) has been providing water service to the residents of South Blount County. Today we provide water to almost 14,000 customers including homes and businesses in Friendsville and Louisville.

In order for us to continue to provide an adequate water supply to our current customers and prepare for the future growth of our service area, SBCUD recently announced plans to place new water lines along Carpenter's Campground Road, Blockhouse Road and Montvale Road, to construct a 500,000 gallon Richmond Hill Water Storage Tank, and expand our water transmission lines along State Route 129. It is understandable that some of our customers may have questions and we want you to have the facts.

- The nine mile water transmission line expansion along State Route 129 will allow us to provide over 40 families with reliable public utility services, who are currently using a well system for their water needs. It will also allow us provide an abundant water supply to our customers for many years to come.
- Economically it makes sense to begin the construction process as soon as possible while interest rates are at an all time low. Because of the complexity and lengthy construction schedule for a project of this size it is important that we begin Phase I in January 2007 in order to adequately prepare for our community's growing needs.
- Our Water Treatment Facility has the capability of producing 8 million gallons of potable water each day although the water transmission lines currently in place will only allow us to transport 5 million gallons per day. Our current transmission lines are almost at capacity, as our customers use about 3.5 million gallons per day.
- The particular projects referenced above will not cause an increase in our current customer's rates and will have a very minimal impact on daily traffic along State Route 129. Failure to recognize our community's growing needs and not proactively plan will result in unreliable water service and water shortages for the customers in our area.

The men and women at South Blount County Utility District want you and our customers to know of our commitment to provide reliable water service to our community. We will be holding a Community Awareness Meeting on Thursday, December, 7th in the Lanier Elementary School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. I hope you will join us.

A representative has scheduled to be at the meeting to discuss this. The Planning Commission may be called upon to take formal action approving plans for extension in any public right-of-way.

4. Presentation of 2006-2007 School Capacity Report from the Blount County School Board.

The new 2006-2007 School Capacity report has been forwarded by the School Board to the Planning Commission and is reproduced on the following pages. This item is for information and is open also for discussion.

2006-2007 School Capacity Report

Approved by the Blount County Board of Education on November 2, 2006
 All information is based on the State defined (F2) second twenty-day school report which occurred on September 29, 2006.

Chart 1 – Design Capacity

School	Enrollment	Design Capacity	Percent	Over 80%
Carpenters Elementary	565	1000	56%	No
Eagleton Elementary	481	660	73%	No
Fairview	407	487	83%	Yes
Friendsville	489	540	90%	Yes
Lanier	430	600	72%	No
Mary Blount	679	835	81%	Yes
Middlesettlements	380	460	83%	Yes
Montvale	415	580	71%	No
Porter	721	740	97%	Yes
Rockford	407	540	75%	No
Townsend	150	220	68%	No
Walland	314	346	91%	Yes
Carpenters Middle	699	910	77%	No
Eagleton Middle	403	924	45%	No
Heritage Middle	776	910	85%	Yes
William Blount Middle	754	910	83%	Yes
Heritage High School	1671	1420	118%	Yes
William Blount High	1792	1320	136%	Yes

Chart 2 – Square Ft. Capacity

Elementary students.....150 square feet
 Middle School students.....170 square feet
 High School students.....180 square feet
 Special Ed. students.....180 square feet

School	Enrollment	Total Square Feet	Sq.ft per student	Overcrowded
Carpenters Elementary	565	102,826	190	No
Eagleton Elementary	481	97,500	203	No
Fairview	407	78,000	192	No
Friendsville	489	67,000	137	Yes
Lanier	430	86,939	202	No
Mary Blount	679	108,000	159	No
Middlesettlements	380	66,348	175	No
Montvale	415	77,040	186	No
Porter	721	139,229	193	No
Rockford	407	60,898	150	No
Townsend	150	39,254	262	No
Walland	314	71,940	229	No
Carpenters Middle	699	114,340	163	Yes
Eagleton Middle	403	107,500	267	No
Heritage Middle	776	114,340	147	Yes
William Blount Middle	754	107,288	142	Yes
Heritage High School	1671	250,000	150	Yes
William Blount High	1792	241,278	135	Yes

Chart 3 – Academic Capacity

School	Enrollment	Academic Capacity	+/- of Academic Capacity	Overcrowded
Carpenters Elementary	565	650	-85	No
Eagleton Elementary	481	650	-169	No
Fairview	407	495	-88	No
Friendsville	489	440	+49	Yes
Lanier	430	570	-140	No
Mary Blount	679	820	-141	No
Middlesettlements	380	425	-45	No
Montvale	415	460	-45	No
Porter	721	652	+69	Yes
Rockford	407	420	-13	No
Townsend	150	175	-25	No
Walland	314	370	-56	No
Carpenters Middle	699	770	-71	No
Eagleton Middle	403	790	-387	No
Heritage Middle	776	770	+6	Yes
William Blount Middle	754	720	+34	Yes
Heritage High School	1671	1620	+51	Yes
William Blount High	1792	1330	+462	Yes

Chart 4 - Blount County Schools Capacity Classification

School	80% Standard	Square Footage Standard	Academic Capacity Standard	Classification
Carpenters Elementary	No	No	No	Low
Eagleton Elementary	No	No	No	Low
Fairview	Yes	No	No	Watch
Friendsville	Yes	Yes	Yes	INTOLERABLE
Lanier	No	No	No	Low
Mary Blount	Yes	No	No	Watch
Middlesettlements	Yes	No	No	Watch
Montvale	No	No	No	Low
Porter	Yes	No	Yes	High
Rockford	No	No	No	Low
Townsend	No	No	No	Low
Walland	Yes	No	No	Watch
Carpenters Middle	No	Yes	No	Watch
Eagleton Middle	No	No	No	Low
Heritage Middle	Yes	Yes	Yes	INTOLERABLE
William Blount Middle	Yes	Yes	Yes	INTOLERABLE
Heritage High School	Yes	Yes	Yes	INTOLERABLE
William Blount High	Yes	Yes	Yes	INTOLERABLE

5. Discussion on comprehensive planning process.

The Planning Commission undertook a review of the 1999 Policies Plan in 2003. This was interrupted by the Growth Strategy process (Hunter Interests study). The Growth Strategy was delivered November 2005, and the Planning Commission started a review of the Growth Strategy and other planning documents early in 2006. The review was interrupted by the elections.

The Growth Strategy recommended that the County undertake a comprehensive plan, noting the need for a more detailed plan for physical development. The 1999 Policies Plan is overdue for review and revision. Other plans of the County could benefit from incorporation into a comprehensive framework. There are several outstanding issues of land use and development that also would benefit from incorporation into a comprehensive planning framework. Staff requests initial discussions on such an undertaking for 2007. Staff will provide a preparatory introduction at the meeting.

6. Information on prospective regional growth summit in Spring of 2007.

Staff has continued activities in the Friends of Quality Growth, a group of planners, design professionals and others who are facilitating discussions of regional growth issues. The Friends of Quality Growth conducted a facilitated consultation with the Planning Commission in 2005. Results of that consultation and other consultations in the nine county region around Knoxville are attached to this memo for your information.

The Friends of Quality Growth, along with other interested parties, has initiated planning for a regional growth summit to take place in the Spring of 2007. This is in part an extension of the consultations with the Planning Commissions in the region. The summit has gained a wide range of support, including the Howard Baker Center at UT and Maryville College. Maryville College is planned to be the venue for the regional conference targeting local decision makers, including local planning commissioners. The consultations begun in the individual sessions with planning commissions in the region will be continued at the summit, and will include responses from select panels of experts. Staff will provide other information at the meeting.

7. Staff reports. Staff may report on other activities at the meeting.

Friends of Quality Growth – Summary Report of Facilitated Consultation Meetings with county planning commissioners in Anderson, Blount, Grainger, Jefferson, Loudon (including municipalities at same meeting), Roane, Sevier, and Union Counties, and Knoxville/Knox County MPC, along with several municipal planning commissions (Maryville, Alcoa, White Pine, Townsend, New Market) in the various counties (late 2005 early 2006).

Question 1. What do you consider to be the major growth issues in your community?

Inadequate infrastructure to accommodate growth and development
Wide differences in infrastructure and services available in different parts of the county
Adequate controls over industrial locations
Conflicts between land uses
Inadequate coordination of public improvements

Traffic management.
Infrastructure – roads, schools, etc. – recent impacts.
Sprawl.
Impact on environment.
Proactive or reactive response to growth.
Conflicting land uses.
Aesthetics – natural and developed.
Open space re: property values
Mountain development (aesthetics) – mountain top skinin’.

Inadequate or problems with roads, sewers, schools, water quality.
Ground water contamination from septic systems and the need for public sewer.
Agricultural preservation and the loss of prime farm land.
Hillside development and its aesthetic effects.

Lack of business and clean industry

Schools, roads, infrastructure not adequate to handle growth.
321 – how is it going to be developed.
People move here for rural setting and then want to shut door (no more development).
Preservation.
Local government (does) not understand how growth revenues fund balanced operating budget – if growth slows then base operation will be underfunded.
How to take care of explosive growth.
Zoning changes.
Vacant building with growth spread.
Suburban sprawl.

Narrow existing roads
Lack of progressive thinking and resistance to change
Infrastructure improvements to support growth & maintain quality of services
New subdivisions

Industries

Improving county services to facilitate growth

Lack of public water

Schools, roads, water and sewer

Mountaintop removal/ strip mining

Stormwater runoff

Traffic

Not having enough growth – limited (in past) but growth boom last 5 or 6 years – but could turn into problem.

Traffic.

Roads – all two lane.

Schools (except retirees).

Water.

Sewer.

Law enforcement – need more money and people (personnel).

Schools.

Infrastructure – schools, sewer, roads, utilities.

Storm water.

Density – residential – how dense should development be – especially infill in residential neighborhoods in city.

Economic development – quality jobs.

Annexation

Overcrowded schools.

Continued growth at a manageable rate.

Safe road width.

Infrastructure in general.

Sprawl.

Accessibility to services, e.g., aging population.

Open space.

Aesthetics.

Affordable housing.

Education about growth issues.

Transportation.

Routes of Roadways

Schools and Education

Preservation – slopes, streams.

Not outgrow infrastructure – e.g., sewer, water, electric.

Clear directional signs.

Sustainable community.

Signage and billboards.

Sprawl and impact on transportation and infrastructure.

Growth in Townsend and effect on water source.

Pollution

Alternative modes of transportation.

Preservation of environment.

Quality buildings – (how structures look).

Need for diverse housing, e.g., condos – lack of suitable sites.

Increasing traffic and inadequate roads.

Delay in road improvement projects, especially TDOT.

School overcrowding.

Impacts on "Community Character", new developments do not fit in with community.

Burden on public facilities and services, particularly water and sewer systems.

Existing infrastructure – drainage sustaining future development

Annexation

Lack of workforce

Lack of Sewer

Constructive business growth that fits with character of valley and how to guide without over-regulating

Some residences don't like extra traffic and no sewer

No sewer!!!

Lack of Business – no sewer system

Question 2. What growth issues do you consider to be broader than just your community, and that may be common to other counties or cities in the nine county region?

Development surrounding Norris Lake
Inadequate infrastructure to handle growth
Little coordination between local governments

Air pollution.
Water quality.
Quality in general.
Paying for needed infrastructure.
Better fine system for violations.
Need common guidelines for BMP – not necessarily regulations.
Need for common ideals for region (& local) – not necessarily regulations.
Good design models and concepts.
Raise expectations of what looks good.

Availability of public sewers.
Spill over residential development from surrounding areas and the cost of providing services.
Increased need for revenue sharing.

Education

Same as (question) #1.
Air pollution – non-attainment.
Lack of impact fees.
Infrastructure lags behind tax base.
Water pollution.
Visual pollution.
Noise pollution.
Diverse population and language problem.

Overpopulation that impacts schools
Lack of jobs
Overcrowding in schools
Maintenance of services and facilities
Upgrade of services
Collaboration between all cities and county?
Public services

air pollution
Excessive traffic and congestion

Schools.
Transportation.
Tax base.
Jobs.

Air Quality.
How to balance growth and quality of life.
Improvements of Big Ridge State Park.

Economic growth – jobs (good jobs).
Transportation and major roads.
Air quality.

Pollution – nonattainment in air quality.
Traffic, transportation.
Crime.
Maintaining availability and affordability of housing.
Overcrowded schools (planning issue).
Economic development.

Transportation.
Clean air.
Protection of environment.
Sprawl.
Affordable housing.
Cooperation between all jurisdictions.
Citizen education and participation.
Greenways and open space and recreation.
News media to do better job on reporting positive.

Lack of expertise in local government and on various boards. The "good old boy network" is a problem.
Not thinking long-term.
Not enough coordination and cooperation between local governments. Every local government seems to be just doing its own thing.

Zoning
Growth Plan
Highway Plan – region – important county and cities
School – quality – population growth and schools keeping up with them, and student/teacher ratio

Not enough money to have proper police protection
Park which provides taxes and jobs
Traffic – need better roads
More money for police and road

Question 3. Friends of Quality Growth would like to facilitate regional cooperation consistent with desires to address common growth issues. How could we build such regional cooperation?

Regional forums like Nine Counties One Vision.

Regional funding for regional needs (that which each county may not be able to do).

Not idea of what other planning commissions are doing – begin sharing.

Learn more about surrounding counties.

All groups and programs should encourage people to work together on projects, particularly infrastructure improvements.

Encourage revenue sharing at the state level.

Joint planning commission composed of county, city, state officials and knowledgeable and interested citizens, also chamber of commerce

Newsletter/Communication.

Workshops/Regional 1 or 2 times a year.

Sharing lessons learned (LPO experience).

Web site.

Provide analysis and possible solutions to problems.

Communication of BMP to rest of community.

Advertising campaigns

Articulate a positive spin on info that is presented

Overlook local politics and collaborate together to problem solve

Joint projects to serve the region

Overcome local politics

Overcome resistance to change

Establish a committee with representatives exclusive of the planning commission

Invite guest speakers periodically to address growth issues

Hard (to do) – have not had enough growth – different outlook on growth and jobs.

Don't want to take on anything else.

Do not want regional government.

Create channel for conversation and one point of contact.

Set up opportunity to get together and meet (planning commissions) – place for conversation

One member each from legislative body.

Also involve mayors.

Staff meet on regular basis.

Citizen involvement (locally)

Create opportunity for success in 1 or 2 issues.

Reaching out (FOQG).
Education – understand regional issues.
Attend vision 20/20 leaders meeting (FOQG).
Weblog.

Communication with other governments – more common meetings.
Getting a common understanding on what our region will/could be.
Bringing 9 counties and cities together.
Get something new and interesting to show – e.g., ideas from other places.
A committed group.

It needs to be mandated through state and other programs to get enough people involved.
Once it got started people would probably enjoy it and see the need for it.
Local officials need more training at all levels so it should be done jointly to build relationships.
Government programs and projects should require more joint meetings among participants.

Growth Plans – cities fighting over areas to annex
Talk to industries will help surrounding cities/counties
Communication and provide feedback – be aware of other issues and problems – has to be regional
Promote communication on one to one level – county and municipal levels
For a coalition with all gateway communities surrounding the Park as unit

Newspaper, TV and word of mouth to communities
Mega Ind. Development would join several counties together – have a regional industrial committee
Have quality meetings with speakers addressing traffic, air and water quality, roads and safety issues

Question 4. Friends of Quality Growth may organize a regional forum on growth. What would get you there to participate with representatives from other communities in further discussions on growth issues?

Quality speakers and education programs

Just tell us where and when.

Pellissippi State campus on parkway (possible venue).

Need something to happen afterward.

Presentations should not be one-sided. Preservation and growth should both be discussed.

Good knowledgeable speakers.

A phone call ahead of time, though I do not know how much input I would have to offer initially.

Food.

Entertainment.

Concise agenda.

Convenient location (Knox or major city – Loudon Co. Tech Center).

Interchange of useful ideas (applicable to locality).

Day limit.

Break-out/Discussion groups.

Proper meeting support logistics (flip charts etc.).

Include county and city elected officials.

Multiple use guidelines – how others faced same issue.

Proper zoning/planning procedure for governing body (commission) – how to discern will of legislators/people – good planning principles.

How to keep plans current.

Traffic engineer/Architects (technical resource persons).

Grant opportunities.

Trends in new development concepts/models.

Mass transit.

How to address flood plains/stormwater.

Comfortable facilities

Food

Held during the day

Coordinate a well-known keynote speaker

Convenient location

Good location

Food & drinks

Discussion of other communities problems and successes with dealing with these issues

Regional Transportation projects

Mountaintop Protection

Voluntary only.

Meet Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday in P.M. (3:00 or 4:30).

Feed them BBQ

Convenient location (Airport Hilton, Pellissippi State)

Short, concise and productive meeting with focused agenda.

Have idea of what will be done with product

Some assurance that decision makers will be there.

Direct contact – call them and remind.

Hold in Maryville.

Food.

Length of meeting determined.

Mail set agenda – strictly facilitated.

Sense that it would be worth it.

Series of meetings with limited issues each meeting.

Productive meetings.

Newspaper publicity.

Clear agenda – focus on what we want to be in future.

Professionally planned and implemented.

Make clear who will be there – known successful people, e.g., from Chattanooga, John Thornton, Jim Clayton, Pat Summit, Jim Haslam, Peyton Manning, Bill Landry.

One-half day – 2 hours.

Expert guest speakers.

Workshops.

Motivational speakers.

A nice retreat area and good food.

1 to 2 hour lunch meeting – someone take control – people's phones ring less

Time limit – so people don't rattle on and on – stick to it with structured agenda with good facilitator and hire one if need be

Invitation to meeting

Grants and ways to run cities without taxes

Small discussion groups to facilitate the big process

Food or speakers with interesting topics

More grants

Taxes for better roads

Question 5. What kinds of information and technical expertise could Friends of Quality Growth include in a regional resource network that would be of help to you?

Digital access to information about what other local governments are doing to address planning issues

Tell us how to implement Hunter Interests Growth Strategy study.
How to pick and choose issues and solutions.
How to address all 17 issues.

Successful local officials.
People from areas who have experienced growth and dealt with it.

Employment rates
Employment opportunities
Education and skill level requirements needed by proposed or possible incoming employers.

Legal expertise on growth management issues
Availability of a website
Question & Answer session
Short, medium and long term ideas or plans
Short and long term goals

Regulation “toolbox”
Maintain a contact list
Handouts, brochures on addressing local concerns

Information resources.
Examples from other communities.
Design examples – landscape architect.

Get local planners to model plan existing neighborhood to create functional community (model project – how to retrofit good community design – project to get planners to communicate)
Somebody from every utility company – what are their plans.
Explanation of problems and issues – put numbers and facts with general issues.
Identify experts in various fields.
Document successful models – illustrate concepts.

Different means of revenue (taxes, etc.)
Regional summaries and perspective.
Growth management tools.
1101 growth plans.
Transportation planning.

Population etc on web site.
Inventory of structures and change over time.
Resource group.
Frequently asked questions (FAQ) site.

All sorts of information about what is going on in the area and what people are doing about it.

Web site – send out alert if Blount County passed ordinance and increase comm.. and make things similar with other groups

Supply someone to facilitate these meetings

Website to catalogue expertise of what available in 9 counties – lots of groundwork has been done – catalogue this

Catalogue literature resources

More training and community involvement

State and federal officials who could educate us how to bring out resources together

Data basic cities and counties could use to keep them informed of new technology and grants available

More sport and more community work