

Think Quality - Think Future

Blount County Planning Department

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TO: Members of the Blount County Planning Commission

FROM: John Lamb

DATE: April 26, 2007

SUBJECT: Sports Complex Zone item for May 1 special called meeting.

By call of the Chairman, the Blount County Planning Commission will meet in special called session at 6:00 P.M. on Tuesday, May 1, 2007 in room 430 of the Courthouse for discussion and possible recommendation on a new sports complex zone. Legal notice for the special called meeting ran in the Daily Times April 25.

This item was subject of a recommendation by the Planning Commission at the February 22, 2007 meeting. The Planning Commission recommended adoption of a new section for commercial sports complex district. The recommendation was subject of public hearing by the County Commission on April 10, and the County Commission voted to refer the item back to the Planning Commission on April 19. This item comes by referral for further discussion, and possible revision and recommendation.

This memo is divided as follows: 1) wording of original February recommendation as reference, 2) analysis of original recommendation from a separate April 17 memo, 3) other additional considerations, and 4) suggested new sports complex zone wording for discussion.

1) The wording of the original recommendation was as follows:

9.11 Commercial Sports Complex District: It is the purpose and intent of this district to regulate outdoor sports complexes and their supporting

commercial uses along major arterial roads in the County, consistent with the overall purposes of this resolution.

- A. Permitted uses: Athletic fields and their customary accessory structures; general retail sales and rental of goods and merchandise; gas stations; laundry mats; restaurants; medical office/clinic; motel/hotel; and multifamily developments associated with these facilities.
- B. Uses requiring site plan review: All uses found in section 9.11 are required to submit a site plan for review by the Blount County Planning Commission.
- C. Minimum Lot size and density: The minimum lot size per unit for development shall be 30,000 square feet. For more than one unit per lot, or planned unit development, the density shall be no greater than 1.2 residential units per acre. For more than one unit per lot, or planned unit development serviced by public utility sewer, both municipal and sand-filtration systems approved by the State, the density shall be 3 residential units per acre.
- D. Setback requirements: All uses shall comply with the following setback requirements.
 - 1) Front setback: The minimum front setback shall be 60 feet from any arterial road right-of-way or easement line and 30 feet from any other road right-of-way or easement line.
 - 2) Rear setback: The minimum building setback from the rear property line shall be 40 feet for all principle and accessory structures.
 - 3) Side setback: The minimum building setback from the side property line shall be 20 feet for all principle and accessory structures.
- E. Maximum Height of Structures: All structures shall be no greater than 55 feet from the ridge line and 45 feet maximum for flat roof construction. Light poles shall not exceed 90 feet.
- F. Additional site plan requirements: In addition to the site plan requirements found in section 7.2, all site plans must be drawn by a qualified professional.

G. Off field lighting requirements:

- 1) When a residential use is 200 feet or less from a field perimeter line, foul line, or outfield fence line.
 - A. Maximum permitted initial vertical spill.....0.3-0.8 foot-candles
 - B. Maximum permitted initial glare..... 7,000-10,000 candles

- 2) When a residential use is greater than 200 feet from a field perimeter line, foul line, or outfield fence line.
 - A. Maximum permitted initial vertical spill.....0.8-1.2 foot-candles
 - B. Maximum permitted initial glare.....10,000-13,000 candles

2) The following is staff response to a request for planning analysis of the above previously recommended new zone, taken from memo to Commissioner Wendy Pitts Reeves dated April 17.

The nominal primary use is sports or recreation, particularly athletic fields, which is a use that is not inconsistent with adopted plans. Considering past accommodation of golf driving ranges and outdoor shooting ranges, both of which are land extensive uses, athletic fields could find appropriate accommodation in both urban and rural areas of the county.

I understand that the impetus for the proposed amendment is a sports complex in process of being planned along Hwy 411 South in the rural area of the county. The complex intends to integrate athletic fields with commercial and residential uses.

The proposed new section of the zoning regulations does not specify intent for density or intensity of development, and is silent on location in relation to urban and rural areas. Parts of the text would indicate intent for high density development. If so, the zone would be consistent only with areas in the urban growth boundary of cities under the 1101 growth plan. The indicated density for residential development would not be consistent with plans for rural areas in the county.

The proposed text contains an intent that the regulations would apply only to situations along major arterial roads in the county, but contains no direct regulatory

text that would give specificity to the intent. In addition, what constitutes major arterial roads is not specified.

In subsection A, the proposed text identifies “athletic fields and their customary accessory structures” as a permitted use. The term “customary accessory structures” is not specifically defined and could be subject to broad interpretation. The remainder of permitted uses identifies a set of commercial uses that arguably may be complementary to the function of a sports complex. However, there is no proportionality that would define athletic fields as the primary use of the land and the other uses as secondary in both function and magnitude (area or intensity of use). Without defining proportionality, a minimal athletic field could be proposed as a front for major commercial uses only peripherally related to the athletic field.

Subsection B requires site plan approval through the Planning Commission. It would be more efficient to move subsection F wording under subsection B since both refer to site plan requirements.

Subsection C mirrors wording for a separate proposed amendment to R-1 zone regulations (previously proposed but failing approval in County Commission) and contains density allowances not consistent with plans for rural areas in the county. If the zone were to be applied to areas within the urban growth boundaries, specifically areas now covered by the S-Suburbanizing zone, then the limitation of density to 3 units per acre would be about half of what is allowed already.

Subsection D defines setbacks, and the wording is generally consistent with other zone requirements.

Subsection E mirrors wording for a separate proposed amendment to the S-Suburbanizing and C-Commercial zones intended for high density development situations (previously proposed but failing approval in County Commission). If applied to areas now in the urban growth boundaries, particularly areas now covered by the S-Suburbanizing zone, then the height allowances may be considered appropriate if the other proposed amendments are accepted. However, if applied to rural areas, there is no clear justification for the increased height allowances.

Subsection E also contains necessary allowance for greater height for field lighting, but is worded so generally that security lighting could also be subsumed. It may be more appropriate to specify “field lighting” for 90 foot limit and specify all other lighting to be at building height limits for the zone.

Subsection F refers to present zoning regulation requirements for site plans, and adds that such site plans must be drawn by a “qualified professional.” The term “qualified professional” is not defined. The complexity of designing a sports complex may require several qualified professionals, particularly those competent in designing sports fields and combination of sports fields, those competent in drainage design, those competent in traffic design, and those competent in designing necessary lighting. Given the complexity of design for a sports complex, and potentially large impact, it may be appropriate to specify required professional qualifications.

Subsection G contains “off field lighting requirements.” Night lighting potentially may be the most intensive impact on surrounding properties from athletic field activities. The requirements on their face seem minimal, and do not match the detail found in other regulations available on the internet. Given the potential high impact of athletic field lighting on surrounding properties, much care should go into formulating regulations that will minimize and mitigate impact.

Missing from the regulations is consideration of noise and use buffering. Concentrated outdoor sports activities probably will generate substantial spectator and field related noise, and such elements as bleachers may need greater setback than indicated in the setback section, and may need additional consideration of peripheral noise mitigation measures such as buffering. There also may be some justification in addressing the timing of sports uses, particularly to mitigate light and noise impacts in the late evening hours.

Sports events can generate a specific type of peak traffic load that should be included in evaluating site plans in relation to access requirements.

In summary, I think that athletic field uses may be appropriate for the county, in both urban and rural areas. However, I find that the proposed new zone as presently worded is not appropriate to the rural areas of the county, unduly limits intensity of development in the urban growth boundaries, needs greater specificity in professional qualifications for site plan design, and needs greater specificity in addressing potential impacts of lighting, noise and traffic. In addition, the issues of complementary commercial uses may need further review in the light of unresolved issues of accommodating commercial uses in rural areas.

3) The following are additional considerations after further review of broader planning analysis, and after consultations with proponents of a new sports complex in the initial planning stages. Note that consultation with proponents was intended only to inform discussions on what may be involved in a sports field complex, and not as accommodation to a specific proposal.

Limited commercial use may be desirable for functioning of a sports complex, so that participants do not need to drive off-site for usual necessary activities such as overnight accommodations, eating, convenience purchases, routine sports health care, and purchase or rental of sports related items. This has an element of public interest in that it would lessen the traffic generated by the zone, leaving participants the opportunity to park for much of the duration of their sports participation, particularly when considered in conjunction with on-site sleeping facilities.

Overnight sleeping accommodations may be desirable for functioning of a sports complex, so that sports participants do not need to drive off-site for such accommodations. This has an element of public interest in that it would lessen the traffic generated by the zone, leaving participants the opportunity to park for much of the duration of their sports participation, particularly when considered in conjunction with on-site eating and convenience facilities. The original proposed zone regulations would allow motel accommodations, and this could be justified considering the above. Motel accommodations would not be subject to residential density requirements, being considered as part of the overall commercial structure of the zone.

An alternative mode of overnight accommodations could be standard residential structures allowed in the Rural 1 and Suburbanizing Areas under the conceptual land use plan. Such residential structures are addressed in existing plans at 1.5 units per acre maximum density in the Rural Area, and greater density in the Suburbanizing Area if on sewer. Clustering of units is allowed in our zoning regulations for both the R-1 and S zones with set aside of open space.

Lacking in the April 17 memo was consideration of water quality. The County adopted a Water Quality Plan, and consideration of water quality measures would be appropriate in any new zone. The County and the State have regulations for grading and construction, and the State has regulations for stream crossings and aquatic alterations. In addition, any new sports complex zone may incorporate regulations addressing post construction water quality, particularly buffering from existing waterways. The State, through the Phase 2 Stormwater Program,

recommends a 60 foot buffer from top of stream bank, and other measures such as grass lined swales could be incorporated into overall site design to address water quality concerns (from conversation with Justin Teague our Stormwater Program Coordinator).

Of concern in the past was the design and appearance of commercial structures, particularly along scenic highways. The Planning Commission undertook initial review of measures that could address commercial building design, particularly the model provided by Maryville regulations. Regulations for the new sports complex zone may incorporate design requirements for commercial structures.

State regulations for scenic highways such as 411 South and 321 may be considered for special consideration in any proposed regulations. The state regulations for scenic highways are limited, mainly to regulation of junk yards, signs and height of buildings. Our sign regulations have already undergone amendment to incorporate appropriate sign standards. The applicable height standard of 35 feet for buildings applies up to 1000 feet distance from any scenic highway. This could be incorporated into height limitations in any new regulations for sports complex. It is not clear whether height limitations in TCA 54-17-115 are applicable to location of field lighting, particularly whether field lighting poles constitute a “building” under the TCA section. Staff will pursue further information on this prior to the meeting.

The original proposed new zone wording addressed lighting with one set of spill light standards, reportedly based on standards developed for Fairfax County Virginia. Staff found an alternative set of standards which addressed both rural and urban situations with two sets of spill lighting standards, from “Playfield Lighting Design Guidelines” prepared by Seattle Parks and Recreation (Washington State). In order to address the difference in potential location of a sports complex, such a dual set of standards may be more appropriate. The standards included in the original proposed zone wording allowing .8 footcandles would be applicable to urban areas where one could expect a high level of ambient light, while an alternative allowing .42 footcandles would be more appropriate for rural areas where expected ambient light is low. The Seattle guidelines noted that glare was practically difficult to measure post development, and only required that site plans incorporate elements to minimize and mitigate glare. Tall vegetative buffering or screening was suggested as a good means of reducing spill light and glare onto surrounding properties. The Seattle guidelines recognized that timing of sports activities at night was important, but did not specify standards. The Seattle

guidelines also included provisions for performance verification by direct measurements at perimeter of development after light installation.

Concerning timing of sports events, particularly to mitigate off-site impact of late night lighting and noise, the only precedent in Blount County known to staff is provision that the race track off of Calderwood Highway “will follow a strict policy of keeping any loud events from going past 11:30 P.M. with a 30 minute variance.” (from hand-out on “Proposed Race Track Property Sale”)

The original wording for the new zone specified “commercial sports complex”. A more general zone designation could accommodate any type of sports complex, private or public, commercial or not. The same regulations could apply to either type of sports complex.

4) Suggested wording of sports complex regulations for discussion.

The following is presented only as a vehicle for discussion and choice, and does not necessarily constitute a recommendation from staff. The following incorporates wording to address items of analysis above.

9.11 Sports Complex District: It is the purpose and intent of this district to regulate outdoor athletic field sports complexes and their accessory and supporting uses along major roads in the County. The Sports Complex District shall be limited to land with direct frontage on Highway 411 South and Highway 321, provided that secondary access may be provided on existing roads intersecting with such highways where such intersecting roads are at least 18 feet of paved width with two foot shoulders either side of the road from point of access to a sports complex to intersection of such highway.

A. Permitted primary and accessory uses: The primary use shall be athletic fields. Customary accessory uses and structures for athletic fields are permitted as follows as part of field or field cluster design: food concession stands limited to operation during field sports events, dugouts, restrooms, batting cages, warm-up exercise areas, bleachers, scoreboards, announcer booths, field lighting, public announcement systems, parking. Grounds maintenance shop and storage facilities are also customary accessory uses and will be allowed as part of the overall design of the sports complex.

B. Permitted secondary support uses: Convenience store (including gasoline pumps), restaurant, medical clinic, indoor training facility, sales or rental of sports related items, motel overnight accommodations. Sports complex clubhouse, which may include management offices, laundry facilities, food sales, sales and rental of sports related items, indoor patron entertainment such as video arcade. The total area of permitted secondary support uses combined, including associated necessary parking for such uses, and lot size area if separately lotted, shall be no greater than ten (10) percent of total area of the Sports Complex zone in any one location.

C. Permitted residential uses: In the Rural Area of the County identified in the 1101 Growth Plan and the Rural 1 Area of the Conceptual Land Use Map, any residential use allowed as a use permitted or residential use permitted as special exception in the R-1-Rural District 1 zone, subject to lot size and density regulations in that zone. In the Urban Growth Boundary of Maryville and Alcoa identified in the 1101 Growth Plan, any residential use allowed as a use permitted or residential use permitted as special exception in the S-Suburbanizing zone, subject to density and lot size requirements in that zone.

D. Site plan review: The uses in the Sports Complex shall be designed as a planned unit in an overall site plan covering all area of the zone in any one location. Prior to any construction or operation of any use permitted in sections A, B and C above, an overall site plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Blount County Planning Commission. Permitted secondary support uses under section B above shall be indicated conceptually on the overall site plan, and a detailed site plan for buildings housing secondary support uses, along with associated parking and accessory elements, shall be required for review and approval by the Planning Commission as individual permit(s).

The site plans required in this section shall conform to requirements of Section 7.2 and other requirements specified in this Section. All elements of use, including associated accessory elements such as garbage disposal areas, heating and air units exterior to buildings, and loading docks, shall be shown on the site plan. Site plan submittal shall contain required plans for stormwater management under this section, other applicable sections in the zoning regulations, and other County and State

grading and stormwater permit regulations. The site plan shall contain specific design of parking areas required in this section and other sections in the zoning regulations. The site plan shall contain specific design for athletic field lighting.

Site plans and site plan elements shall be prepared by qualified professionals. Qualified professionals shall be licensed as one or a combination of architect, landscape architect and/or engineer. The athletic field lighting element shall be prepared and certified as meeting minimum standards contained in this section, by a licensed electrical engineer.

E. Minimum Sports Complex zone size, Lot size and density: The minimum area for consideration for Sports Complex zoning shall be 50 acres. Overall integrated development of a Sports Complex is encouraged. If separate lots are to be created by subdivision, the minimum lot size for Permitted Secondary Support uses in subsection B above shall be one acre. For residential uses, the minimum lot sizes shall be as follows: for residential lots created in the Rural Areas of the county as defined in the 1101 Growth Plan, minimum lot size and density shall be as allowed in the R-1-Rural District 1 zone; for residential lots created in the Urban Growth Boundary of Maryville or Alcoa as defined in the 1101 Growth Plan, minimum lot size and density shall be as allowed in the S-Suburbanizing zone. For multi-family or undivided residential use based provisions of the R-1 and S zones, density shall be accounted only to land not accounted for uses identified in subsections A and B.

F. Setback requirements: All buildings and uses, including any element of an athletic field, shall comply with the following setback requirements.

- 1) Front setback: The minimum front setback shall be 60 feet from any arterial road right-of-way or easement line, and either 30 feet from any other road right-of-way or easement line or 55 feet from center line of any road right-of-way less than 50 feet in width (whichever is greater total distance from centerline of road).
- 2) Other perimeter property boundary setback: The minimum setback for other than road frontage shall be 40 feet from perimeter property lines, provided that any permitted secondary support uses under Subsection B above shall be at least 100 feet from such perimeter property line.

- 3) For other internal lot lines created by subdivision within the sports complex (not sports complex perimeter boundaries) the setback shall be 10 feet for side property lines and 20 feet for rear property lines.
- 4) For athletic field light poles with height greater than 35 feet, the minimum setback from Sports Complex perimeter line shall be at least 40 feet and no less than the height of the light pole.

G. Maximum Height of Structures: All structures shall be no greater than 35 feet in height, except for athletic field light poles which may extend up to 90 feet.

H. Lighting Standards: Proper design of field and other lighting required for sports activities is important in order to address impacts on surrounding properties. A complete lighting plan shall be part of site plan documents, and the Planning Commission may set appropriate conditions for spill light mitigation during site plan review and approval.

1. Maximum spill light (light trespass) at perimeter of a sports complex shall be subject to the following performance standards and requirements:

For locations in the Urban Growth Boundary of Maryville and Alcoa as defined in the 1101 Growth Plan, maximum spill light shall be no greater than .8 footcandles.

For locations in the Rural Areas as defined in the 1101 Growth Plan, maximum spill light shall be no greater than .42 footcandles.

The electrical engineer(s) who prepare the lighting plan shall inspect the installation of all field lighting equipment, and conduct a performance verification to measure spill light illuminance levels of all lighting after lighting installation, to include night-time field measurements of spill light at a vertical height of 6 feet from ground level at points spaced no greater than fifty feet apart along the perimeter of the sports complex within 1000 feet of any field lighting structure. Where lighting installation does not meet required performance standards, the engineer shall coordinate adjustment of the lighting installation to meet such standards and again conduct performance verification measurements specified above. Upon

completion of installation, inspection of installation, and performance verification measurements (with any necessary adjustments), the engineer shall submit a drawing showing the final measured spill light illumination levels specified at points along the perimeter of the sports complex identified above, with professional stamp and signed certification letter that lighting installation and performance meets all applicable standards and the approved site plan. For phased installation of lighting, new measurements for all lighting, drawing, and certification shall be required for each phase as specified above.

2. Means for minimizing and mitigating glare shall be part of the lighting plan submitted for site plan review and approval. Plans shall be prepared so that no greater than 12,000 candlepower from any given luminaire will be designed to be visible from the perimeter of a sports complex.

3. All security and safety lighting structures shall be full cut-off type to minimize unnecessary scattering of light.

4. The site plan for lighting shall include all lighting pole locations and luminaire mounting heights, all security and safety lighting structures, and projected spill light illuminance and glare of all lighting combined at sports complex perimeter, meeting standards above.

5. Tall shrubs and trees may be considered as screens to reduce glare and spill light.

6. Field lighting shall be limited to use in the P.M. hours up to 11:30 P.M. with extension of 30 minutes if necessary to accommodate event delays.

I. Design of buildings within 500 feet of road right-of-ways: To mitigate the impact of building appearance along scenic highways and other existing roads within the county exterior to a sports complex, the following design requirements shall apply to buildings constructed to house uses identified in subsections A and B which are within 500 feet of such highways or other existing roads.

1. The front, side and rear elevation of any building which is within 500 feet of any road exterior to a sports complex shall be provided as part of site plan submission for review and approval.

2. The front (facing highway or road) and side wall planes of buildings shall be staggered by occasional changes in surface planes or changes of materials or architectural features to avoid monolithic “box” appearance. Walls and roof visible to public roads shall have changes of wall and roof planes with at least a three (3) foot projection or recess no less than every thirty (30) feet horizontally. In addition, any of the following elements shall be integrated in walls visible to public roads at no less than thirty (30) feet spacing, both horizontally and vertically: porches; awnings; stairwells; doors; windows; chimney; changes in construction materials. Excessive repetition of only one or two architectural features above is prohibited.

Elements that are not acceptable as a means to comply with the requirement above include, but are not limited to: gutter downspouts; garage doors; retaining walls; changes in paint color, color bands or small (less than two (2) square feet) accent materials using flat tile; narrow trim; common hallways parallel to outside walls not including stairwells; window and door frames; shutters; structural or decorative columns; and narrow extensions (less than three feet wide) of fire walls.

3. Exterior walls visible from public roads may not be comprised of aluminum or flat-faced concrete block. Exterior glass shall compose a minimum of five (5) percent of the façade of the building, unless the building is an open-air structure such as a produce market.

4. All accessory garbage and disposal facilities (dumpsters, etc.) and accessory heating and air facilities shall be screened with materials compatible in appearance to the principal structure. Loading docks shall be placed away from fronting roads, and shall be screened if visible from residential uses.

J. Traffic and access study: As part of site plan submission, a traffic and access study shall be conducted and submitted by a qualified traffic engineer, with recommendations for any necessary traffic mitigation

measures or road improvements, particularly sports complex entrance treatments and exterior roads and road intersections within 1000 feet of the sports complex. Entrance points to a sports complex along arterial roads shall be spaced no less than 400 feet apart, provided that pre-existing driveway entrance points may be acceptable.

K. Stormwater plan. Each submission for approval of a site plan shall contain a stormwater plan. There shall be designated and restricted against any disturbance other than walking trails and necessary crossings, a 60 foot buffer from top of stream bank for any stream within the sports complex. The stormwater plan shall incorporate any and all elements required by State and Local regulations for grading permit, erosion control plan, SWPPP, ARAP, and other stormwater management measures. The stormwater plan shall also include a post construction stormwater quality element incorporating appropriate best management practices to address water quality on a continuing basis.

L. Noise and use buffering. Based on evaluation of impact on surrounding residential uses at the perimeter of a sports complex, the Planning Commission may require screening and buffering, or both, and extended setback to mitigate expected noise and other impacts of the sports complex as condition of site plan approval.