

Plans for mixed-use development have neighbors concerned

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NW GUILFORD COUNTY – A plan for a large-scale mixed-use development along N.C. 68 has neighbors up in arms over what they see as a potential threat to their quality of life.

A request to rezone 66 acres on N.C. 68 at Edgefield Road will be heard by the county planning board on Aug. 13. The board delayed making a decision at its July 9 meeting until it could get more specific information from the Department of Transportation about the route of I-73 through the area.

“We are expecting a response from DOT prior to the scheduled public hearing,” says Bill Bruce, a planner for Guilford County.

Plans for the development on the west side of N.C. 68 near Edgefield Road call for up to 274 multifamily residential units and a corporate park with up to 275,000 square feet of space. As much as 200,000 square feet of retail space also would be available on the part of the tract closest to N.C. 68.

Although the property lies in unincorporated Guilford County, it is just outside the Greensboro city limits in an area cited for possible future annexation. The tract, which would be developed by Huntington Run Development Co., is eligible for water and sewer service from Greensboro.

Nearby property owners are concerned about the large development’s impact on nearby residential areas. Gary Silverstein, developer of the adjoining Sanfords Creek neighborhood, says the subdivision was rezoned as a Rural Preservation District at the recommendation of county planning department staff. The zoning allows homes to be built on smaller lots but requires that half the land be left undeveloped.

“Our concern is that this is in strong contrast to what was recommended to us,” Silverstein says of the proposal. Although not opposed to mixed-use zoning, neighbors want to be assured that such a development would not affect current residents’ quality of life.

“It’s important that responsible development be applied. You can get the golden egg and kill the goose (that laid it) in the process. We want to make sure that beautiful northwest Guilford County is preserved,” Silverstein says.

“Traffic is already a big issue on 68, Edgefield and Pleasant Ridge roads, plus we’re worried about northwest schools already being overcrowded and clear-cutting of trees to

build,” says Mary Fabrizio, who lives in the nearby Quail’s Creek subdivision. Other concerns cited include parking and buffers for noise and light.

Jed Firestone says neighbors know development is inevitable. With plans for I-73, a new GTCC campus on N.C. 68 and other airport-area growth with the coming of FedEx, the area is set to explode in coming years. “Our hope ... is to have the area treated like Oak Ridge rather than treated like High Point,” Firestone says, alluding to Oak Ridge’s small-town feel. The area already has ample warehousing, commercial and retail space, as well as apartments. “Why do they need to develop more in our area when there is already plenty of space available elsewhere, all within minutes of the airport?”

According to Silverstein, neighbors presented the developer with a list of “what we felt were compromise conditions. They really didn’t meet any of them except what they would have had to meet anyway. We are extremely disappointed with their lack of earnest compromise.”

“This will be a precedent-setting rezoning,” Silverstein predicts. “What happens here will set the bar on what happens in this area in the next few years.”

The Details

The Guilford County Planning Board will meet Aug. 13 at 7 p.m.

in the commissioners’ meeting room

in the old Guilford County courthouse

in downtown Greensboro.