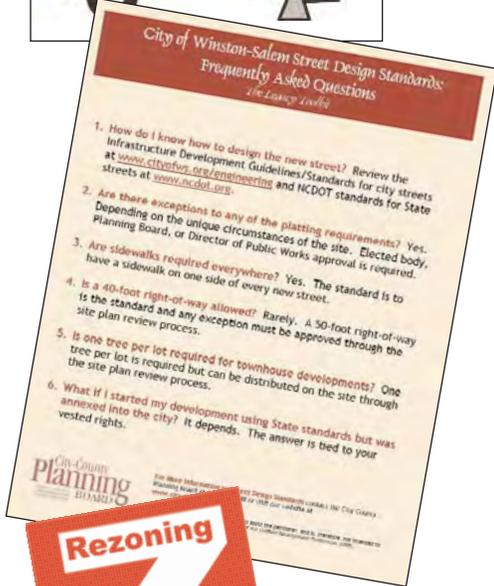




Public Participation – It’s a Good Thing!



We want you to participate! We want you to feel informed and to know how and where your voice can be heard. That’s why over the last few years planning staff has really ramped up its efforts to get the word out. This newsletter is just one example. Varied forms of informing people and inviting their participation are key to successful public input. Some of our techniques thus far include: mailings for rezonings that go to adjacent property owners and one or more ‘Z’ signs installed on the subject property; an email text distribution list to

anyone who wishes to know about and comment on proposed changes to the *Unified Development Ordinances* (UDO); public hearings; a greatly expanded web site (www.cityofws.org/planning); the Legacy Toolkit; TV 13 productions – the list goes on. And, it’s not only about zoning stuff, but all things planning. Planning staff particularly invites citizen input during all stages of an area plan drafting and adoption through informational meetings, soliciting volunteers to be on a committee, and/or keeping track of it on our web site.

Why is public participation so important, and why are we trying so hard to get the word out? It’s really quite simple: as a citizen, business owner, or civic association member, everyone has a stake in this community and an interest in how our community will look and function in the future.

As an example, for the last several months the Planning Board has been dealing with a proposed on-premises sign ordinance change that was identified as a need in our comprehensive plan, *Legacy*, and in the City Council’s Strategic Plan. The process of developing the proposal began in 2003 with an advisory committee composed of diverse interests – business, design, neighborhoods, environmental, and even the sign industry. That was followed by interdepartmental staff review, two different rounds of community meetings, a TV 13 program on signs, a Planning Board public hearing last September, several months of careful Planning Board

consideration of comments and issues raised at the public hearing, a Planning Board bus tour of signs, and a revised Planning Board draft that will go to another public hearing on March 8. Once the Planning Board makes its recommendation, the City Council and County Commissioners will have their own hearings and consideration.

Yes, this proposal is taking a long time to “get through the process,” but the benefits of the varied public participation along the way far outweigh the time it is taking. Will all agree as to the outcome? Probably not; but that doesn’t change the tangible benefits of being involved in the decision-making process. The Planning Board has been listening; changes have already been made to the draft.

At the end of the process, the Planning Board will make their recommendation to the elected bodies based on their collective assessment of everything presented. The same careful consideration will happen at the elected body level.

This is just one very involved example, but almost all of our processes involve elements of opportunities to exchange information, and have input into planning-related initiatives.

In the end, public participation is really what it’s all about as we move forward as a community to shape the future. We want you to be informed, to feel welcome to share your opinion, and to have a stake in the outcome.

Legacy Development Guide Update 2006

The Legacy Oversight Committee, established to monitor progress in implementing the *Legacy Development Guide*, completed its annual report to the community.

The Committee reported that at the 5th anniversary of its adoption, *Legacy's* benchmarks charting the progress of the community's vision reveal many positive steps toward our goals of promoting sound economic development, livable neighborhoods and environmental quality. Benchmarks are targets used to measure our community's success in achieving its goals and objectives.

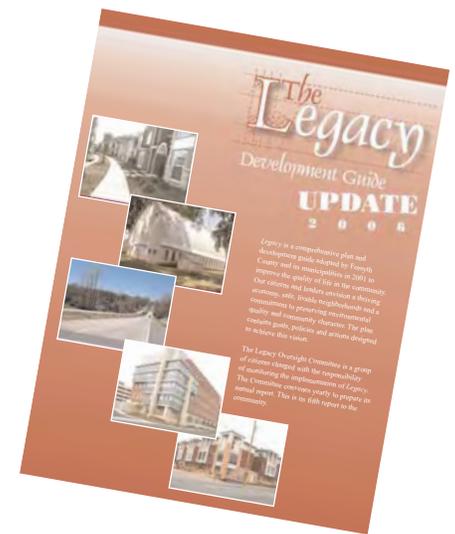
The report notes, however, that some proposals already in development such as On-premises Sign Regulations, Open Space Subdivision Regulations, Tree Preservation Standards, new Street

Standards, and Infill Development Standards deserve prompt consideration and implementation before more opportunities for improving the community's quality of life are lost forever.

Major achievements 2006

The *Walkertown Area Plan* and the *Parks and Open Space Plan* were adopted. The draft *North Central Winston-Salem Area Plan* has been adopted by the Planning Board. Work on area plans for Northeast Winston-Salem and the Southwest Suburban area are underway. A handbook for Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts has been drafted.

Recent amendments to existing ordinances adopted by elected officials allow the development of an urban biomedical research park downtown and the development of Traditional Neighborhood Developments and Transit-Oriented Developments in accordance with *Legacy*.



Staff has completed a separate 5-year report, available online, on the community's progress in achieving *Legacy's* benchmarks.

The Legacy Development Guide Update 2006 is available from the City-County Planning Department, public libraries, or on line at www.cityofws.org/planning.

Friday Morning Meetings

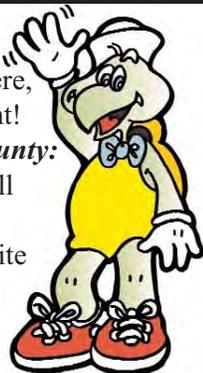
Beginning in July, 2001, representatives of some of the interdepartmental review departments began meeting informally with developers and land planners on a weekly basis concerning potential projects. The purpose of these sessions is to promote early communication with the major review departments in a single meeting to discuss site planning and development coordination issues before the formal filing date for rezoning/site plans/subdivision applications.

The five departments that were involved in the beginning were Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Inspections, and NCDOT. Since that time, representatives from Utilities, Streets, City and County Fire Departments, and Stormwater have begun attending regularly. The private meeting times are half-hour time slots each Friday morning beginning at 8:30 a.m. Fourteen (14) copies of a sketch plan, including a location map, are required by 5:00 p.m. on Monday in order to be scheduled for that Friday. However, some weeks, the five available time

slots fill up quickly, so the early bird gets the worm. While these informal meetings are not required prior to formal submission, they have proven to be of great use to both the development community and to staff in avoiding separate, uncoordinated discussions with various departments prior to plan submittals. Also, these meetings provide an earlier opportunity for applicants to learn of any potential issues involved with projects that many times surface only during the formal plan review process.

Coming Soon!

Hiram, the Historatoroise here, with an important announcement!
Historic Resources in Forsyth County: A Sourcebook, your new guide to all things preservation-related, will be available soon. Check out our website at www.cityofws.org/planning in March for more information.



Want more information?
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The City-County Planning newsletter is produced and written by Planning staff in order to spread the word on the variety of things that we do and all the people we work with. If you have comments or questions, please contact us by phone or by email, GLYNISJ@cityofws.org