

Walgreens site approved by Louisa town planners

By Pat Wilson

The town of Louisa planning commission approved the site plan submitted for a Walgreens drugstore in the town of Louisa at its Monday, Aug. 28 meeting. In his role as zoning administrator, Brian Marks, town manager, also signed off on the submittal as being in accordance with the Louisa Town Code.

The review was first presented by Scott Chapman, a senior project manager for the Richmond engineering firm of Vanasse, Hangen, Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), at a commission meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 8.

Planners postponed approval and requested additional information on the 50-foot wide ingress/egress at Jefferson Highway (Rt. 33) just south of the intersection with East Main Street (Rt. 22).

The drugstore will be situated on two acres on the south side of East Main Street at the curve with Jefferson Highway, adjacent to the Glen Marye Shopping Center.

Commissioner H. Manning Woodward III had raised safety concerns about vehicles turning left from that exit and stacking up at the traffic signal. He termed the location as "the worst intersection in town."

Woodward also contended that motorists turning south from East Main Street onto Jefferson Highway would have to deal with both merging vehicles and cars leaving the store.

VHB has conducted a traffic flow survey of the intersection, and the Virginia Department of Transportation has approved three site plan entrances.

Chapman, along with Charles Proctor, VDOT district transpor-

tation planner for district 10, and Jamie Glass, assistant resident administrator, Louisa residency, attended Monday's meeting to answer questions and clarify statistics from the traffic flow surveys.

"We did a standard study under the guidance of VDOT," said Chapman.

Chapman addressed the key issue of cars stacking on Jefferson Highway waiting for a green light at the intersection. Concerns were that this would not allow cars leaving the Walgreens parking lot the opportunity to get in line.

The project engineer showed data that the average stacking distance from the light is 135 feet during peak hours. The exit will be approximately 150 feet from the intersection, leaving room for the estimated number of cars that are expected to egress and queue

in that direction.

"We analyzed the study and have a good feeling to make it function," said Proctor. "We may need to make improvements to the intersection [in the future]"

Glass and Proctor agreed that fine-tuning the timing at the signal will also assist with the traffic flow.

"We can make the signal function better than it does now, ... and we can do that now," said Proctor.

With two other exits from the parking lot, traffic will be split, said Proctor.

"A peak hour will have about 127 trips in and out of the site," he said. "By splitting it up and looking at the distribution in different directions, it actually minimizes the impact at any one location."

Another ingress/egress would

be located just before the curve on East Main Street in the right-hand lane, next to Virginia Community Bank.

This entrance would be limited to eastbound traffic with right-hand turns only. Exiting motorists would also be restricted to right-hand turns only. Motorists driving westward on East Main could not turn into the site.

A traffic separation triangle will be painted in that area to indicate the restrictions.

The third entrance, which will enter/exit from the shopping center parking lot behind the bank branch, presented no controversy. A stop sign will halt vehicles before entering the shopping center parking lot.

The traffic flow survey estimates that 50 percent of the vehicles will travel westward on Main Street, 30 percent will head eastward on Main Street and 20 percent will go south on Jefferson Highway.

Town Police Chief Stan Batten commented on the congestion at the traffic signal, but expressed that the additional entrance/exit should not be "a major problem."

The officer added that the four accidents reported at the intersection by either his officers or Louisa County Sheriff's Office deputies this year were minor and the fault of "driver inattention or error."

Walgreens

Through the efforts of Bob Gibson, Louisa County's director of economic development, and other town and county officials, a partnership of developers purchased 3.5 acres at the intersection of East Main Street (Rt. 22) and Jefferson Highway (Rt. 33) in the town of Louisa.

The property, comprised of three small parcels, was owned by James N. and Gail W. Plotkin of Richmond.

Earlier this month, Mid-Atlantic Commercial Properties of Arlington, an affiliate of Morgo Property Group of Florida, and Randy Reynolds Jr. of Louisa Holdings LLC, based in Richmond, announced plans to construct a building in which a full service Walgreens drugstore would operate.

Walgreens Company has agreed to a 25-year tenant lease on the property, and site work anticipated to start in mid-fall with a tentative store opening summer 2007.

In addition to the drugstore Reynolds is considering other retail enterprises for the remaining acre.

A free-standing building will follow the typical Walgreen brick style, encompassing 14,825 square feet with approximately 11,000 square feet in sales area.

Prescriptions are filled in store and customers are served by a dual-lane drive-thru.

A typical Walgreens drugstore stocks approximately 25,000 items that range from health care and home medical to household and beauty products. Seasonal items, gifts, toys and weekly sales also fill the shelves.

The company averages 25-30 employees per store.

At the conclusion of the site review, Bob Gibson, Louisa County's director of economic development, who has worked with the developers for over six months, complimented the planners on their decision.

"I thank you for your due diligence in the process," he said. "You made an important decision tonight that will send the right signal to others."

Calling the approval a "positive step," Gibson added "perception is reality" in the mind of retailers interested in establishing in a location.

"Walgreens will be a good corporate citizen," he said.

Board

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designated for agriculture.

"A lot of residents in that area were afraid of industrial and commercial activity coming right up next to [their property]," Barnes said. "It's more residential than anything else right there."

The chairman set up the supervisors' discussion so that each board member would focus on their district. But Vice-Chairman Willie Gentry, Cuckoo district supervisor, and Richard Havasy, Green Springs district supervisor, both questioned the move.

"I feel like early on," said Gentry, "that was the general sentiment that I was getting from the public, that we would identify that whole section as mixed-use."

Havasy noted that Fluvanna County supports the mixed-use proposal, and has considered adding a parallel mixed-use corridor to its FLUM.

Barnes argued that the lack of utilities would limit the potential growth of the Ferncliff area.

remain agricultural will pose other dangers to land owners, according to Coffey.

"A-2 development is currently the greatest threat to their quality of life and to the scenic nature of that area," Coffey wrote to supervisors in an August 15 email.

The board has scheduled a September 11 worksession to consider the by-right ordinance in the A-2 district and other related topics.

Mixed-use added near Shannon Hill (Rt. 604)

Barnes also supported input to create a mixed-use center along Rt. 604, against Coffey's recommendation.

Several members of the development community encouraged supervisors to generally expand the FLUM's growth areas.

On August 1, Charles Purcell, local attorney and developer, specifically asked the board to upgrade the Rt. 604 area's designation from agricultural to "either a mixed-use or low-density residential area."

Saying that the area need not stretch "but so far north," Purcell

Gentry, a former Virginia Department of Transportation resident engineer for Louisa and Fluvanna counties, noted that there may be road concerns in the area.

CDD expresses reservations

"I have reservations about expanding the growth areas in the Rt. 632 and Rt. 604 vicinities," Coffey wrote in the August 15

email. "It wouldn't take much expansion for the town of Louisa and Ferncliff growth areas to merge along the 208 corridor nor for the Ferncliff and Shannon Hill growth areas.

"I think this is too much planned growth at this time."

Barnes also added a southern expansion to the town of Louisa's growth area, to include developed areas around Yanceyville Rd. and several untouched tracts to the west of Rt. 208.

Lake Anna area changes

At the request of Mary Johnson, of Bell Surveys, the supervisors agreed to include a parcel of Mimi Rogers, one of her clients, in the Lake Anna re-

district supervisor, suggested an expansion of the western end of the Lake Anna growth area's low-density residential designation.

He noted that several of the

The proposed revisions to the Louisa County Comprehensive Plan would increase the county's growth areas from 15 to 27 percent of the county's land mass.

Source: Louisa County Community Development Department

parcels involved are near the lake waters, and that the addition made sense.

In his August 15 email, Coffey noted that the planning commission rejected the identification of a Buckner/Bumpass growth or the extension of the Lake Anna growth area to include Buckner and Bumpass.

The edge of the proposed growth area now extends to within two miles of the town center of Bumpass.

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SHOWROOM HOURS:
MON.-FRI. 8 A.M.-6 P.M.
SAT. 8 A.M.-3 P.M.
CLOSED ON SUNDAYS

HERNDON

Orange
HERNDON