

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF MINT HILL, NORTH CAROLINA
April 24, 2008**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Mint Hill met in regular session on Thursday, April 24, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the John M. McEwen Assembly Room, Mint Hill Town Hall.

ATTENDANCE

Mayor: Ted H. Biggers, Jr.
Commissioners: Lloyd Austin, Carl Ellington and Tina Ross
Town Manager: Brian Welch
Deputy Town Manager: Lee Bailey
Senior Planner: Karen Dunn
Deputy Clerk: Doris Miller
Absent: Brenda McRae
Planning Board: Chairman, Tony Long; Members, Jack Bryan, Roy Fielding and Tom Gatz

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Biggers called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., ruled a quorum present and the meeting duly constituted to carry on business.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Ellington offered the invocation and Mayor Biggers led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Addition, Deletion or Arrangement of Agenda Items: None.

Approval of Minutes of April 10, 2008 Meeting: Upon the motion of Commissioner Austin, seconded by Commissioner Ross, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the April 10, 2008 Meeting.

Mayor Biggers introduced the following students visiting from Butler High School Civics class working on a citizenship project: Luke Wallwork, Erick Hall and Jordan Prince.

Public Comments: Mr. Darrell Harrison stated the primaries were coming up on May 6 and that it was critical that everyone get out and vote.

Mayor Biggers introduced Larry Hale who stated he was a candidate for the House of Representatives. He said the representative for this area for the past twelve years ranked 117 in attendance and he wanted that to change. His primary issue was education but he also wanted to see a lower tax rate for senior citizens and a fair sales tax and there were ways to do that. His motto was “lets get things done.”

Presentation Regarding The Bridges at Mint Hill Project - Representatives of Project

Developers: Mayor Biggers stated representatives from The Bridges at Mint Hill project would be giving a presentation, not a public hearing. They would entertain questions from the Board and there would be a public information session set up when they have everything approved from traffic engineers. The following representatives were present: Mr. Chris Thomas, representing Childress Klein; Mr. Rhett Crocker, Mr. Adam Tripp, Mr. Ron Den Adel, Vice-President of the developer for their Chicago stores and Mr. Bruce Yeager representing General Growth Properties; Mr. Jeffrey Wright, On-Site Property Manager, also from General Growth Properties; Attorney Chris Oates, of Moore and Van Allen, assisting General Growth Properties; and, Mr. M. J. Namin, representing Mecklenburg County Engineering Department.

Some of the information presented included: In June, 2005 the Board of Commissioners approved a two-step plan for The Bridges of Mint Hill, a planned unit development. The specific site was approved along with a Preliminary Plan which would guide the Planning Staff and Board with future development of the site. In 2007 the developer received approval of the grading and began BMP's. Staff had reviewed the plans and confirmed it was consistent with the previously approved plans. NCDOT had approved a temporary drive-way permit in order for grading to begin. It was now about 95% completed as far as drainage infrastructure was concerned and the road plans must be consistent with those plans. The Ordinance required elevations to be approved before the commencement of construction. It was the duty of the developers to do that. They would consist of at least 50% glass store fronts on the inside stores where metal and EFIS could not be used for the facades except for decorative purposes. They presented examples of what was planned, stating what they were showing them were only representative of what would be used. They had looked at Belk, Gap and Limited and these were stores that already articulated their store fronts.

A number of steps had been taken in the development of the property. The project, 215 acres, was now owned by the developer and the site plan was very similar to what was originally approved. They had established the Belk store along with the theater, book store and other department stores as well as a five story hotel along the I-485 and Lawyers Road frontage with a cluster of restaurants on main street. The project had gone through a great deal of scrutiny with the Goose Creek basin. They had received permits from the United States Corps of Engineers (USCOR), North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), Department of Water Quality (DWQ), North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Land Use and Environmental Service Agency (LUESA). Each step had been reviewed by these agencies as well as the design of the roadways. The roadway plans had been reviewed by the Town of Mint Hill and State and County engineers. Flood and erosion control barriers had to be put in place as well as catch basins which

was a first step in the grading process. When completed they would construct a bridge to serve the area closest to I-485. They had taken great care to protect the impact on Goose Creek.

A unique approach was being taken for erosion control, going above and beyond the requirements of the Ordinances to get the property stabilized before going forward. About 48% of the property would remain as vegetation along the creek or be used as green space. Water would be filtered many times before it reached the creek. The project would be highly landscaped with trees, decorative pavers, water facilities and perennials. They were committed to the preservation of nature and including it in the architecture for the project. They wanted to create a sense of “arrival” for new citizens of Mint Hill and attract new-comers. There would be fantastic merchants and an ambiance for shoppers, maintaining traditional materials and meeting the 50% brick requirement. Brick and masonry would be used on buildings and spaces in between. They would be using public art and other components to enhance and set apart the number of applications for materials, i.e., masonry and glass. Steel and wood trellises would be used to make this a 360 degree project since it would be approached from front, back and middle. All truck launches would be screened with trellises and brick walls. There would be a showcase for merchants and retailers would use glass fronts to hi-lite their merchandise, creating an ambiance during the day as well as night. In some areas masonry and wooden trellises would be used to enhance and create shade for the sidewalks and a place for relaxation for customers. There would be out-door plazas and seating areas. Art and landscaping would be something that customers would appreciate. Some type water feature would be used to give a relaxing feature, playing up the environment with color and vibrancy, engaging and attractive to families. They were excited to develop the area with perennials and looking to add shade to the store fronts. Because of the recent drought their water feature would be developed in a way that it would be attractive with or without water.

The following information was given in response to questions from Commissioner Ross: In order to incorporate art throughout the project with elements for everyone to enjoy they would be using signage, opportunities in accents for different ways they could capitalize on the landscaping with children and adults in mind, i.e., the fountains at intersections or corners. They did not have plans to work with the Arts and Science Council unless it was cost effective. The developer would complete the notes on development standards regarding the 50% masonry requirement. Other materials would be used, such as wood, stucco and building facades as opposed to EFIS. They would not be able to set a completion date until NCDOT had given them everything they needed. Draining the existing pond on the property had been a requirement for them to get their permits. It had been put in during the construction of I-485. None of the wetlands were being drained. They had to use mesh on the sides of the creek to protect it. Some of the buffering would be done as the project layout was completed but some would be done as it was built-out. They were allowed to grade close to the road, but they would have to replant to the buffer. All permits had been acquired to this point and they were about 90% complete. All grading permits had been received. They would still need to get building permits. NCDOT in Raleigh was requiring a traffic circle and it was having to be redesigned, 90% of those plans had been submitted to NCDOT for review. Commissioner Ross expressed her concern that there were no new improvements to any of the roadways other than what adjoined the applicants property. Road improvements could not be made overnight and she felt they were going to have problems. Mr. Oakes said the traffic study (by

Kubilins Traffic Consultants) had been done at the time of the rezoning in 2005 and it was done with the future in mind and supported by NCDOT. There would be six lanes coming off I-485 directly into the site.

Mayor Biggers asked that the bridges be described: There would be two major bridges, each with accent lighting. They were working with about 12 consultants throughout the building process. They would be pedestrian as well as vehicular friendly and have bike access to the mall. Commissioner Austin said if there was a problem with the roads, it would be as much a problem for the merchants in the mall as it was for the people trying to get there. It would affect their business if it was hard to get to. He had met with Mr. Thomas and some of the others about seven years before and it had been a long process to get them to this point. He had enjoyed working with them.

Mr. Den Adel thanked the Town Staff and all others who had assisted them with this project. He felt they had a great team of consultants. Mr. Oates provided the Board with a packet of materials after the presentation.

Other Business: Commissioner Austin had met with Centralina Council of Governments (COG) the previous week.

Commissioner Ross had attended the Tree Ordinance meeting which was well attended and extended her thanks to all who had come out for the presentation, as well as the Staff who presented it.

Commissioner Ellington had met with the Korean War Vets the previous week at the park and he felt the Town would be proud of the memorial they had planned.

Mayor Biggers said the Clerk, Mrs. Beth Hamrick was out of Town for a clerks conference and that Commissioner McRae had a previous engagement and could not be there. Commissioner McRae had sent a report that she had attended the Tree Ordinance presentation and it was very good.

Mayor Biggers said France had invited a Mint Hill Athletic Association baseball team over. Their Coach would be Tom LePlant and it would cost only \$300 for each of them to stay the week. This was a great opportunity for 15 players and some of their parents who would be going with them. They were getting uniforms with Mint Hill USA on their shirts.

Mayor Biggers thanked all the public who had come out to the meeting and invited them back.

Manager Welch said Barry Moose had planned to attend the meeting of the Bridges Presentation that night but had not gotten back from a meeting he had to attend in Raleigh in time.

Mayor Biggers said they would have a CMS informational meeting in the Fall. Ms. Nancy Bartles had requested they put it off until then - the attendance records would be set and they would have a better idea of how Independence was going to be affected by the new high school on Albemarle Road.

Adjournment: Upon the motion of Commissioner Austin, seconded by Commissioner Ellington, and unanimously agreed, Mayor Biggers adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Ted H. Biggers, Jr., Mayor

Doris H. Miller, Deputy Town Clerk