



Legislation Text

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TITLE:

Report on Hwy 54 Development for Affordable Commercial

PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item is to update the Board on progress in regards to creating affordable commercial development.

DEPARTMENT: Economic and Community Development; Planning

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INFORMATION: Since Town staff last updated the Board in September 2015 regarding the barriers to development in the Hwy 54 corridor, several events have occurred. In late December, a landscaping company that was considering the Safelle property met with staff and attended two development review meetings regarding developing the property. After several weeks of review it was determined that although the site could meet the current needs of the company, the impervious regulations would limit growth or expansion. During this due diligence period, the question of water service from OWASA was raised. Initially, there was a positive response and OWASA staff indicated the site could be served, which was later overturned in a second review by OWASA. Therefore extension of water, for other than use in fire suppression of properties adjacent to the water line, in this area would require an amendment to the Water and Sewer Management, Planning, and Boundary Agreement (WASMPBA).

Possible amendments to WASMPBA have been noted in association with this area - to allow very limited changes to water and possibly sewer service - and a couple of other locations within the boundary area. Staff of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Orange County have had a few meetings to discuss and have tentatively identified the fall Assembly of Governments as a meeting where a discussion of the matter could occur.

Even if water is provided for fire suppression, staff understands there is a concern about water pressure. Town staff has approached the Orange County Economic Development Director, Steve Brantley, about the possibility of using quarter cents sales tax revenue earmarked for economic development to install an elevated water storage tank that could serve multiple properties in this area. Mr. Brantley thought it could, but noted there would need to be a cost/benefit analysis prepared on the economic impacts of development in the corridor. Carrboro staff will be working with Orange County staff to undertake the analysis.

Most of the properties on the north side of Hwy 54 are split by Town and County jurisdictional boundaries. Real estate professionals have indicated that this split of boundaries is perceived as a barrier to development by potential buyers of commercial properties. The Town could request Orange County to extend the ETJ in this area or encourage owners to request voluntary annexation.

As suggested by Alderman Slade, attached please find a table summarizing the issues and suggested actions to consider pursuing in relation to supporting the creation and maintenance of affordability for Hwy 54

commercial properties.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: None at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Board accept the report