

February Minutes  
Commerce Planning Commission  
Commerce City Hall Conference Room  
February 20, 2006  
6:00 P.M.

A regularly scheduled work session of the Planning Commission was held on Monday, February 20, 2006 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Hall Conference Room, 27 Sycamore Street.

Chairman Gregory Perry called the meeting to order and those in attendance were Chairman Gregory Perry, Vice Chairman Joe Leffew, Commissioners Mark McCannon and Ronnie Seabolt, Planner David Zellner, Building Official David Lanphear, Water and Sewer Superintendent Bryan Harbin and Secretary Shirley Willis. Representing A.C. Wilson were Wayne Tilson, Natasha Wilhite, Joe Gaston and Glenn Melvin.

New Business:

A. A.C. Wilson – Subdivision of Property – Map 034, Parcel 28H – B. Wilson Road.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked who the spokesperson was for the subdivision of already subdivided property. Natasha Wilhite of The Webster Firm, PC showed the original plat where the property was just one big parcel. She then showed a plat with two parcels taken out and the division of lots.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked if the property was subdivided what the proposed development by lot would be. Mr. Wayne Tilson said on Lot 4 the proposed use was condominiums but at one time he had looked at office buildings. His proposed plan for the condominiums was that they would be all brick or masonry and have a fountain with sprayer in the landscaping. He planned a very nice development but plans were to sell the condominiums.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked Mr. Tilson if he could develop with only four (4) per acre and Mr. Tilson said no, he was hoping to build twenty (20).

The planned development on Lots Numbers 1 and 2 was a small (17,000 square feet) Save-A-Lot Grocery Store and an O'Reilly's Auto Parts Store. The development would be one building with a dividing wall. On Lot # 3 a Fast Food Restaurant with a drive through was proposed. If a drive through window was not permitted then the plans would be to look at retail.

According to Mr. Tilson, Lot # 5 would be a shopping center layout with possibly a City Plumbing and Progressive Lighting stores. Mr. Tilson said he would like to see retail toward home improvement. Also, a Beals Outlet which was a clothing store and household goods was a consideration.

Mr. Tilson stated that there was a partner of Snelling and Grinnley for some of the lots and The Vision Group would have the condominiums.

Chairman Gregory Perry told Mr. Tilson that they could forget residential unless the total development was going to be residential. Chairman Perry then asked Mr. Tilson what made him think a shopping center would succeed with a Home Depot a few miles away at the interstate and Commerce Hardware across the road. Mr. Tilson said the lighting and plumbing; tiles, etc. were the type of items that could not be bought at Lowe's or Home Depot. Mr. Tilson said that his development was based upon the projected growth that was coming.

Chairman Gregory Perry stated that on the original layout there were three buildings. He asked if the developer had anyone lined up to go in the buildings. Mr. Tilson said he did multiple stores/shopping centers and the type of stores locating in one normally followed his developments. Mr. Tilson said to compare the growth in Jefferson. He felt that Highway 98 was the area that would be prime location for the development.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked how many jobs would be created by the development. Mr. Tilson said that Beals employed around 36, Fred's employed 40-42 (not included in this development), Progressive Lighting employed 12 and he did not give a number for City Plumbing. He did say that a great number of outside representatives would work for the lighting and plumbing. There would be approximately 6-8 representatives outside the stores and possibly in Jackson County.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked Mr. Tilson if he had his own construction team. Mr. Tilson said "yes, but he was 51 years old and was cutting back on his construction." He named the company of Crystal Cove out of Jefferson as the construction team. The owner was Chris Wilhite, the husband of Mr. Tilson's daughter, Natasha Wilhite. Mr. Tilson said the company was very capable of building anything they wanted to.

Mr. Tilson said he was developing a shopping center in Jasper on Highway 53 and he was very capable of the construction. If there were any questions the Mayor of Jasper could be called for a reference.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked Mr. Tilson if he had any ownership with Mr. A.C. Wilson and the reply was no. Mr. Tilson said he could have in five minutes but they had never worked that way. He said Mr. Wilson was worth \$320 million dollars and they had completed many developments together but did not work as co-owners.

Chairman Gregory Perry asked Mr. Tilson how many Progressive Lighting Stores he had built and Mr. Tilson said zero. Chairman Gregory Perry said are we going to bring in someone who has never built a shopping center, leasing it to someone they have never leased to before. Mr. Tilson said no sir we are not.

Mr. Tilson said let me stop you right here. I have leased all of the Silo Center in Royston and have built shopping centers for seventeen (17) years. I don't think it is your job to say I can't meet my obligations. I think your questioning is out of line.

Chairman Gregory Perry said we are inviting you into our home. Mr. Tilson said no you are not. It is a free world. Chairman Gregory Perry asked Mr. Tilson where he had lived for the past thirty years. Mr. Tilson said I have lived in the United States the same place you do. You can call the mayor of Jasper or Royston and they would tell you I am very capable of doing the development and meeting my obligations. If Mr. Wilson is putting \$8M - \$10M in the project he would like to make it look good for the town.

Chairman Gregory Perry said we have a nasty reputation here. Mr. Tilson said you actually do have a nasty reputation. Chairman Gregory Perry said yes we do and we are proud of it. Mr. Tilson said I'm sorry but you should not be proud of it. Your questioning in my opinion is out of line. Who builds my buildings is not up to you. Chairman Gregory Perry said it is my job to keep Commerce from becoming Atlanta. Mr. Tilson said no sir it isn't your job. Chairman Gregory Perry said if he went to the town of Cumming to do a development they would want him to construct something that was nice and good for the town and not just for the dollar.

Mr. Tilson said they had property on Highway 160 that they could build on but they could also build here. He said "we may stay in court for the next fifteen (15) years but we can build here." Who builds my building is none of your business as long as he is licensed and I want you to understand that before I leave here tonight. If it is someone from California or your brother it is not your responsibility. Again, Mr. Tilson said he felt Chairman Gregory Perry was out of line.

Chairman Gregory Perry thanked Mr. Tilson for his observations and asked for any further statements.

Hearing none Chairman Gregory Perry said the work session was adjourned on a motion.

Commissioner Ronnie Seabolt made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairman Joe Leffew to adjourn the work session.

The vote was unanimous.

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Gregory M. Perry, Chairman

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Shirley Willis, Secretary