

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Work Session Minutes
April 8, 2008

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

James Duggan, Chairman
Jim Norton, 1st Vice Chair
Maggie Armstrong, 2nd Vice Chair
Jeff Bulla
Christopher Caso
Michael Coleman
Craig Perry
Beth Weingarden

STAFF PRESENT

Phyllis Jarrell, Director of Planning
Jeff Zimmerman, Long Range Planning Manager
Kate Perry, Sr. Planner

Chairman Duggan called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

1. Discussion and Direction on the appropriate boundaries for the Research/Technology Center District (RT)

Kate Perry, Sr. Planner, briefed the Commission on this item noting that the City Council referred the matter back to the Commission following its recent denial of a request to rezone the area north of the Cottonbelt Railroad right-of-way (DART) and east of Los Rios Boulevard (Area 1) to Light Commercial (LC). The City Council asked that the Commission consider another zoning category, possibly a planned development district (PD) allowing for wider range of uses than the RT district, but without some of the more intense uses allowed in LC zoning. City Council also asked for a recommendation on whether the land area south of the railroad and east of Bradshaw Drive (Area 2) should also be removed from RT.

The following people spoke before the Commission regarding this matter:

- **Doug Johnson**, representing IDI, the owner of Area 2, indicated that he did not think residential would be a viable use for the property even with its proximity to single-family residential development in Richardson and a proposed middle school site. He said that even with access to Plano Parkway, the property was too far from the President Bush Turnpike to attract high profile office and manufacturing users. He noted that IDI has developed 1.6 million square feet in the RT district over the years, but nothing since 2001 because of various reasons including the lack of development flexibility offered by RT zoning. He

noted concerns about the 30%:70% office to warehouse ratio and the 100,000 square foot first floor limitation on current development needs.

- **Alan Smith**, representing homeowner groups in the Los Rios area, suggested there might be some opportunities for “tweaking” the requirements, but he did not want uses such as funeral homes, mortuaries, and automotive service included in any zoning changes.
- **Mike McCartan**, representing Dr. Tom Jeter, who owns property on the south side of 14th Street near Rowlett Creek, indicated that greater flexibility was needed to make the property suitable for service-oriented businesses and small warehousing operations with 20,000-25,000 square feet of space, 4,000-5,000 of which is used for offices.
- **Katherine Brewer**, owner of GeoMap, Inc., located within the district, suggested no retail or automotive uses should be included in a PD to rezone Area 1 or 2.
- **Dale Burton** and his family own a total of 14 acres on the south side of 14th Street just west of Dr. Jeter’s property. Mr. Burton indicated he was willing to consider a PD proposal that offered LC or Light Industrial (LI) as a starting point as long as the result was greater flexibility for prospective users.

After considerable discussion, the majority of commissioners did not wish to consider rezoning Area 2 for residential use. Some commissioners thought it would be appropriate while others thought that noise generated by the Police Firing Range would be detrimental to residences. The Commission directed the staff to draft a PD-RT proposal for application to both Areas 1 and 2 with the following considerations:

- Retain certain standards of the RT district that would extend its image and identity into the areas to be removed such as signage, screening, and shielding of dock areas from view, and limitation against outside storage. Some members indicated that they might be willing to accept outside storage if stronger screening requirements were established.
- Maintain the current 20% minimum landscape area requirement, unless it can be determined that smaller lots in Area 1 will be negatively impacted.
- Generally allow only those retail/service uses that would complement an employment center.
- Most commissioners expressed concerns about automotive uses such as new and used car dealerships with large parking areas. There were a variety of opinions regarding major and minor auto repair. Some commissioners felt that these would be inappropriate uses in the RT district, while others felt it would be reasonable to place automotive repair facilities in proximity to an employment center.

- Opinions on mini-warehousing were mixed. Chairman Duggan, noted that one was previously approved at Alma Drive and Park Boulevard. Ms. Jarrell pointed out that mini-warehouses are often accompanied by truck leasing, and the Commission may wish to take that into consideration.

Staff was asked to forward a copy of the use chart from the Zoning Ordinance to commissioners and audience members so each could identify those uses that are the most suitable for the two areas. Using this information, staff will draft a preliminary proposal for review at an upcoming work session.

Chairman Duggan adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Planning & Zoning Commissioner

xc: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Thomas H. Muehlenbeck, City Manager