

MEMO

Date: December 1, 2017
To: Alexandria Town Board
From: Ben Oleson, Hometown Planning
Zoning Administrator, Alexandria Township
Re: Zoning Administrator's Report

Dear Town Board Members:

The Planning Commission held its regular meeting on November 27, 2017. There was one public hearing held and the Planning Commission is passing on their recommendation to the Town Board in relation to this application.

Attachments, drawings and photos related to the application is available at: www.hometownplanning.com. Public comments (if any) are also at the same location.

PUBLIC HEARING #1

Application: Rezoning of an approximate 5 acre portion along Geneva Road from Urban Residential (UR) to Commercial - Urban (C-U).

Applicant: Evan Amundson

Property Owner: David Nelson

Proposal: The rezoning application involves what would be an approximate 5 acre split off of a 29+ acre parcel of land located along Geneva Road NE a little more than ¼ mile from the northern boundary of the Township. The property is currently a mix of wetland, meadow and tilled field located just north of a 5.63 acre parcel with a residential dwelling on it.

The proposed rezoning would be from Urban Residential, which would allow for residential lots as small as 15,000 sq ft (if sewer) to Commercial-Urban, which would allow for a number of businesses in areas considered appropriate for areas served with sewer, although the area is not currently served with ALASD sewer.

The properties immediately to the north of the property proposed for rezoning is zoned Commercial-Urban, but is either a tilled agricultural field or an electric power substation (owned by REA).

If the rezoning is approved, the applicant intends to follow with an application to split the land and to make use of the property for his tree business - initially as a place to store his work vehicles and brush/stumps.

Location:

1. Property address: None (Property is located immediately north of 3408 Geneva Road NE).
2. Sec/Twp/Range: 3-128-37
3. Partial legal description: SE4NW4 E OF RR EX 5.52 AC. AC 29.15.
4. Parcel number(s): 03-0032-000

Current Zoning: Urban Residential (UR)

Proposed Zoning: Commercial-Urban (C-U)

Planning Commission Recommendation: Based on the findings of fact and discussion listed elsewhere in this report, the Planning Commission, on a unanimous vote, recommends approval of the requested rezoning from Urban Residential (UR) to Commercial-Urban (C-U).

NOTE: *After consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation, Staff would urge the Town Board to consider whether rezoning the property to Commercial-Rural, rather than Commercial-Urban, would be better suited to the property, the nearby infrastructure (or lack thereof) and the surrounding land use. The reasoning would be because while the property is located within the ALASD sewer service area boundaries, the closest sewer line is 1,500-3,800 feet away (depending on which direction it would come from) and would need to cross under State Highway 29 and a railroad.*

Since the main difference between Commercial-Rural and Commercial-Urban is the availability of sewer, and because the proposed use does not need ALASD sewer service, it may make more sense to limit the number of potential commercial uses that would be allowed "by right" (as opposed to requiring a conditional use permit). The effect would be to make a bowling alley, a health/fitness center, a hospital/nursing home, a laundromat, a motel/hotel/convention center and a restaurant/bar prohibited uses instead of conditional uses. Likewise, it would make professional offices, retail sales (without outdoor storage) and light manufacturing conditional uses instead of permitted uses.

This could help to serve as a better transition between the Commercial-Urban zoning to the north and the Urban Residential zoning to the south, while still allowing for the potential for a future rezoning to Commercial-Urban should ALASD sewer ever become more readily available and Geneva Road be paved.

Town Board Direction: The Town Board can accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission, render a modified decision on the application, or send the request back to the Planning Commission for further review if additional information is needed.

Note that the approval of a rezoning does not automatically represent an approval of the use anticipated by the applicant. The applicant's proposed use (contractor's yard with outdoor storage) would require a conditional use permit and a separate public hearing. Certain other uses would become "permitted" uses however, including:

1. *Automobile accessory store (with no outdoor storage)*
2. *Contractors offices, shops and yards (without outdoor storage)*
3. *Financial institutions*
4. *Mini-storage*
5. *Nurseries/garden stores*

6. *Professional offices, Retail sales (with no outdoor storage), Light manufacturing of parts and assembly (only if rezoned to Commercial-Urban; Commercial-Rural would make these three uses conditional uses.)*

Proposed Findings of Fact: The following findings of fact are presented by Staff for consideration by the Planning Commission:

Will the proposed rezoning be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?

Yes. The proposed rezoning would be immediately adjacent to land already zoned Commercial-Urban, and near the intersection of State Highway 29 and County Road 9, which would be consistent with the goal of having commercial areas clustered around major intersections.

The Comprehensive Plan also identifies a goal of ensuring adequate road, sewer and other transportation to commercial sites. While this site is near a major intersection, Geneva Road itself is gravel and the area is not served by ALASD sewer (although the proposed use if the rezoning is approved would not need sewer and there would not be retail traffic associated with the use).

Another goal regarding commercial lands however, include ensuring a gradual transition between commercial and residential land and there is an existing residential property immediately to the south of the property proposed for rezoning. There is a fairly significant stand of trees between this dwelling and the land proposed for rezoning, which will provide an adequate transition.

Further, the rezoning will continue to allow the Township the authority to review most commercial uses, and potentially deny them during a conditional use permit process, if they are found to be inadequately served by sewer, paved roads, or other infrastructure, or if they are particularly incompatible with surrounding uses.

If you have questions or concerns on the items in this report or any other issues, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach me by email at oleson@hometownplanning.com or by phone at 320-759-1560.

Sincerely,

HOMETOWN PLANNING



Ben Oleson
Planning and Zoning Administrator