Agenda Item: Public Improvement Variance – Rice Road

DATE: February 6, 2017
FROM: Mary Jo Gollnitz, Planner II

Background/Issue:
At the December 12, 2016 Town Board meeting, Rice Road LLC Public Improvement Variance for a proposed subdivision was discussed. The + 6.583 acre tract of land is across the street from the future Town park on Rice Road.

The property owner requested a two month deferral at the December meeting. Rice Road LLC has not revised their Public Improvement Variance request to waive the widening of pavement and installation of curb and gutter along Rice Rd for a distance of + 636 ft.

- Planning Board recommended denial of the Public Improvement Variance as submitted with a 6-1 vote at their November 22, 2016.
- Public Works Director CJ O’Neill has stated that the same street cross section is required at any other proposed development, including the Rice Road Park.
- A Planning Board member had noted concern that widening the road in front of the subject property would cause drivers to run off the road at the end of the widened pavement. The pavement will be marked and the widening will not be a full car width.
- There are several curves along Rice Road where the road has been widened at subdivision entrances and no accidents have been reported because of this.
- Other developments along Rice Road have already made these improvements on their portion of Rice Road frontage, allowing the street to be incrementally improved.
- Rice Road has changed over the years from a rural road to a more urban road.
- Rice Road functions as a residential collector street, connecting Sam Newell Road to Idlewild Road, therefore also serving as a direct connection for area residents not starting or stopping within the Rice Road limits.
- Matthews PD accident report for the last twelve months only shows 4 accidents: 2 involving deer, one where the driver dropped a cell phone, and one at the intersection of Rice Rd and Williams Rd where a car ran a stop sign.
- Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard could not find data to support the idea/concern that road widening along a curved area of a road increases accidents. However, she noted that installation of curb and gutter in a curve can help delineate to drivers the horizontal curvature of the roadway, therefore making the widening and curb and gutter more desirable.
- The developer has proposed a meandering sidewalk within the 20’ frontage buffer, which would not line up with sidewalks on either adjacent properties.
- If variance request is denied, the sidewalk would be placed in front of the tree line and within the right-of-way.
Proposal/Solution:
Planning staff and Public Works still do not support the variance request.

Related Town Goal:
Public Safety
Transportation
Economic Development/Land Use Planning

Recommendation:
Deny the Public Improvement Variance request for waiving the installation of widened pavement, and curb and gutter along Rice Road.
VIEW AT SUBDIVISION ENTRANCE TO END OF ROAD WIDENING ALONG RICE RD

SUBJECT PROPERTY ON RIGHT GOING TOWARDS SAM NEWELL RD
October 31 2016

Town of Matthews
232 Matthews Station Street
Matthews NC 28105

Subject: Rice Road Preliminary Subdivision @ (Parcel Number 19353207) Request for Variance for Curb and Gutter

Dear Matthews Township Board,

We have prepared this letter in order to request a variance from the "Curb and Gutter” requirement for the proposed subdivision.

We are requesting a variance to omit the curb and gutter to the proposed subdivision to allow the neighborhood to maintain a tree-lined buffer along the front of the neighborhood. This will allow us to save as many trees as possible and will also allow the sidewalks to meander thru the property tree save area.

It is our goal to save as many tree as possible for the proposed seven lots. No trees, other than those located within a building envelope, within a proposed street, driveway or parking area, or within a utility easement, will be removed to keep the natural look of the subdivision.

We hope that you will agree that the requested curb and gutter variance is justified and acceptable to the Town of Matthews. If you should have any questions during your review, please don’t hesitate to contact me at (704) 226-6884.

Sincerely,

Bobbie Anderson Fisher