

10-28-2020 Town Council Meeting

Responses to Council Questions #1

ITEM #12: Consider an Application for Conditional Zoning at 125 East Rosemary Street Parking Garage from Town Center-2 (TC-2) to Town Center-2-Conditional Zoning District (TC-2-CZD)

Council Question:

The bicycle improvements will only occur if the office building is built. Why are they included in the zoning application for the parking deck? Is there a specific requirement re. bike improvements that is tied to the conditional zoning for the deck?

Staff Response:

The proposal does not include bicycle improvements along E. Rosemary Street. There are a minimum of 40 bicycle parking spaces that are to be installed as part of the parking deck construction.

Council Question:

The cover memo refers to an updated budget - can that be shared with us?

Staff Response:

Staff is working on the budget and it remains in draft form for a number of reasons: we just received our third party review of the plans and Spec from Walker and we desire to make sure that none of the items they have commented on will affect price, we are continuing to work on both the charging stations and solar and hope to have those items finalized in the coming month, we are re-evaluating the Final TIA to make sure we have priced all improvements needed as a part of the Deck project, and we are awaiting the appraisal on 108 North Street to make sure the value isn't higher than what we budgeted. We anticipate that we could have a draft budget in early December to share, and then expect to finalize our construction numbers in late February for review by the Local Government Commission and can share another budget update at that point.

Council Question:

E. Rosemary St. is not a DOT road, correct?

Staff Response:

East Rosemary is a Town road.

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Council Question:

Does the subject property up for proposed rezoning include the Fine lot?

Staff Response:

The rezoning includes the Investors Title property.

Council Question:

What is the Urban Designer's assessment of the design and appearance of the parking deck?

Staff Response:

A parking garage is a difficult building to design in terms of aesthetics because of the inherent type of construction (large pieces of concrete), a use devoted to automobile accommodation, and repetitive forms that make it difficult to break down the building in terms of scale.

The architects have addressed these issues of scale in massing by making a clear distinction in terms of form and articulation between an upper component (the parking floors) and the ground floor level, where the office and retail porch uses are. Changes were made in the most recent design to further reduce the boxiness of the building by emphasizing the front façade as a separate plane. The stair tower and other notches out of the façade help counter the sense of a long uninterrupted building façade along Rosemary Street.

Including office and the retail porch along the Rosemary frontage should help provide a more activated pedestrian edge. The use of wood in the ceiling and along the wall behind the porch provide a "warm" natural material where people congregate. There will be lighting in the ceiling of the porch to provide ambient light, with accent lighting focused at the pedestrian level.

The front façade along Rosemary is screen wall consisting of perforated metal panels and terra cotta panels, within a "frame" of precast concrete panels. The vertical emphasis of the panels helps balance out the overall horizontality of the building. This is an appropriate strategy to cover the parking levels. Discussions at a recent meeting outlined some ideas as to how to continue to refine this facade by providing more articulation on the concrete panels and considering masonry colors to complement some of the buildings in the historic district. Other changes discussed were to open up and reduce the "boxiness" of the area near the exterior stairway on the east façade.

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Council Question:

Regarding the full traffic signalization at North Street and MLK mentioned during the staff presentation on Sept. 30th, to what extent has this been or is being considered? Is this something that would be subject to formal Council approval and to what extent will residents along North Street be engaged on this before a decision is made?

Staff Response:

Staff has been instructed to begin working toward developing a plan for the North Street improvements that would include the signalization of North Street and MLK. After information has been gathered and potential solutions developed, a community meeting would be held to share information with those that are interested and gather feedback. A final recommendation would be made to Council for consideration. We have included the following stipulations in the attached Revised Ordinance A:

10. Traffic Management: Prior to issuance of a Zoning Compliance Permit, the Town shall initiate traffic calming discussion with interested stakeholders. Discussions should include pedestrian crossing of E. Rosemary Street, potential bicycle improvements, traffic impacts and improvements on North Street, and other streetscape improvements. Necessary improvements shall be installed prior to Zoning Final Inspection for the parking garage. Final design and construction details must be approved by the Town Manager.

13. Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and North Street/Columbia Street Intersection Improvements: Prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, the Developer shall:

- Install a traffic signal with pedestrian and bicycle amenities*
- Include street scape elements including street lighting*
- Improve North Street as required*

The design, and construction standards of the above shall be approved by the Town Manager and N.C. Department of Transportation prior to issuance of the Zoning Compliance Permit.

Council Question:

North Street: Will there be ingress and egress on North Street or only egress – or is this yet to be decided?

Staff Response:

The North Street connection will be a full movement connection, both ingress and egress.

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Council Question:

What provisions have been made to ensure pedestrian and bicycle safety within the deck?

Staff Response:

The design has level decks around the entire perimeter and adjacent to all stairs and elevators for walkability.

Striped crosswalks will be provided at all key crossing points in the drive aisles.

LED lighting will provide excellent illumination throughout the deck.

Clear lines of sight are maintained so that pedestrians can see and be seen by drivers.

Bicycle parking is provided at street entry levels so bicycles do not need to ride on ramps. The parking was laid out based on industry standard spacing to ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle traffic. This spacing achieves adequate site distances and includes additional striping at any potentially hazardous locations such as where the bike racks and elevator are found.

Council Question:

It appears that 5,000 feet of office space are to be included (page 145). Is this for the parking office and a police substation? Has that decision been finalized?

Staff Response:

We have included the Parking office but only made provisions for any other office space in the Deck. This means we have made structural changes to support if desired but it is not currently included.

10-28-2020 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions #2

ITEM #12: Consider an Application for Conditional Zoning at 125 East Rosemary Street Parking Garage from Town Center-2 (TC-2) to Town Center-2-Conditional Zoning District (TC-2-CZD)

Council Question:

The project overview (p. 102) still has an outbound right turn onto North Columbia and inbound only on North Street; I thought we had abandoned that egress? It also still has the pedestrian overpass, which I believed Council agreed to remove. If this is true, can the document be corrected and posted prior to the Council meeting?

Staff Response:

The North Columbia Street connection was removed for a number of reasons including conflicts with our planned BRT.

Council Question:

We are installing 20 charging stations (40 spaces) and running conduit for 20 more. Can we get an idea of the expense of running conduit to accommodate more charging stations in the future? My understanding is that it is much more cost-effective to run conduit during initial construction than to retrofit.

Staff Response:

We will explore the option of adding more conduit for additional charging stations.

Council Question:

Page 104 has us committing to install conduit for PV rooftop. Do we know if/how much PV would increase the structural requirements for the building and cost for the deck?

Council Question:

The stipulations call for providing conduit for eventual PV arrays on the roof. Does anyone know if the deck is currently being engineered to support such arrays, and whether those structural requirements can be met within the existing budget??

Staff Response:

The current structure and plans includes the structural component to have the solar if our budget allows and Council desires to proceed with it.

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Council Question:

If we purchase property on North Street to allow deck access, will we be losing some of the tree buffer we've been counting on? If so, what are the plans to replace that buffer?

Staff Response:

Efforts will be made to provide a buffer between the deck access driveway and adjoining residentially zoned properties.

Council Question:

On page 110, section 5.8, we're committing to bike lanes on E. Rosemary as part of the future office building; has this been decided, or are we still working on this issue with the Downtown Partnership and other stakeholders?

Staff Response:

We are continuing to work on the right solution to our bike lanes through downtown and are looking to the Downtown Partnership to help guide that conversation.

Council Question:

On page 133, there are homeowner's association stipulations – should they be removed?

Staff Response:

This is part of the standard stipulation section of the Ordinance. A homeowner's association is not a required component of the project and we can remove it from the Ordinance (updated version attached).

Council Question:

When will Council see (and approve) final deck design elements?

Staff Response:

Council will be discussing the design as a part of the Agenda for CCES in November.

