

## Project Summary

<b>Location:</b>	1200 South Trade Street
<b>Owner(s):</b>	Matthews Athletic and Recreation Association
<b>Agent:</b>	Joel Causey, Cole Jenest Stone
<b>Current Zoning:</b>	RU Rural District
<b>Proposed Zoning:</b>	R/I (CD)
<b>Existing Use:</b>	Athletic Fields
<b>Proposed Use:</b>	Same
<b>Community Meeting:</b>	Occurred January 27th

## Summary of Request

The applicant requests a change from the old Rural District to R/I (CD) in addition to a request to extend the height of an existing stealth cell tower.

## Staff Recommendation

Staff and the applicant have conducted many meetings in advance of the Public Hearing to ensure that the rezoning is progressing as planned. Through these meetings, we have identified areas of concern and the applicant has revised both the initial zoning variance request and the zoning plan to better reflect the goals of the rezoning. The Planning Department is very supportive of this rezoning request, as it presents an opportunity to rezone the property in conjunction with the construction project on South Trade Street and removes a zoning category no longer present in the UDO.

### Planning Staff Review

#### **Background And History**

The MARA ball fields have a long history, dating back more than 50 years on this site. Aerial photography in Matthews only dates to 1960 but even at that time a ball field shows up on imagery. Over the years, the site has expanded and now features about 14 fields and over 400 parking spaces. The site is zoned RU Rural, and most likely has been since at least the 1970's. The UDO did not carry this zoning category forward last year. Staff requested that MARA embark on the rezoning as it is part of our policy to update the zoning on sites with outdated zoning categories such as the old Conditional district. With the current construction on South Trade Street and change that project is causing on the MARA site, we feel that this is an excellent opportunity to updated the zoning in a way that is beneficial to the athletic association. At this time, the Chaphyn Lane connector road is already under construction and the sign for MARA has been demolished.

In addition to the rezoning request, a cell tower company is working with MARA to extend the height of the existing stealth cell tower. This is an independent request that is related to the rezoning application. In December, the Board of Adjustment granted a variance that allows a preexisting stealth tower in the R/I district to have the 40' height addition that is allowed in the UDO.

#### **Details of the Site Plan**

The revised site plan from 1/21 shows 4 distinct parking areas. Two of the areas are existing, the main lot near the traffic light and the long, linear lot along South Trade. Two addition future parking expansions are identified; one to the north near the front of the site and another to the north near the rear of the site adjacent to the Hampton Green swim club and common open space. The plan also indicates where existing improvements are located within the 50' side and rear yards for the R/I district. The previous Rural district only required 20' yards thus allowing these improvements to be located where they are today. Three access points are shown; two that serve the aforementioned linear parking area along South Trade and the main entrance at the traffic signal.

#### **Summary of Proposed Conditions**

1. Proposed 120' cell tower (expansion of existing tower in same location)
2. The applicant commits to supplemental screening when necessary when constructing improvements within 30' portion of the 50' side and rear yards
3. Any new parking areas that are not expansion of existing park areas are subject to future approval of the Matthews Town Board.
4. Although not yet indicated on the conditional notes, the applicant commits to the installation of parking barriers along South Trade so that cars do not overhang and block the sidewalk.

## **Planning Staff Review**

### **Outstanding Issues/Planning Staff Comments**

**(Please see additional comments in staff memos for more detail)**

1. To achieve the rezoning as proposed, the applicant must secure a number of variances. The variances are listed individually in section 5 of the conditional notes. Should any of the variances not be granted, the applicant would need to revise the zoning request. Many of the variances are logical and stem from the natural differences between the RU and R/I categories in terms of greater side and rear yard dimensions. A variance is requested to allow the continued usage of gravel parking at the site for existing lot maintenance and future expansions. This request allows continuity in that all surfaces at the site would match.

### **Consistency with Adopted Plans and Policies and Town Vision Statements**

The athletic fields have been located on this property for over 50 years. With proper setbacks, screening and lighting design, sports fields are appropriate land uses in residential areas as they provide recreational opportunities for area children.

### **Reports from Town Departments and County Agencies**

#### **Matthews Police**

No Comment

#### **Matthews Fire**

No Comment

#### **Public Works**

No Comment

#### **Matthews Parks and Recreation**

No Comment

#### **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools**

Not Applicable

#### **PCO Concept Plan Approval Required?**

No

### **Impact Analysis**

There is no financial impact to the Town as a result of a rezoning.

### **Projected Financial Impact of the Request**

The property is owned by a non profit, tax exempt organization.