

Published Tuesday, July 26, 2011

New retail stores planned in Madras

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The Times-Herald

Grading work is in full swing for a new gas station and convenience store in Madras.

The approved plans for the site, at the corner of U.S. 29 and Edgeworth Road, show a 5,400-square-foot convenience store with an attached 1,500-foot Subway restaurant.

Plans also show four gas islands, with two gas pumps each, plus an off-road diesel pump. However, the architectural plans for the gas island canopies are still going through the approval process, said Teresa Crow of the Coweta County Planning Department.

The convenience store itself will have a small kitchen area with some indoor seating, according to the plans.

There will be entrances on both U.S. 29 and Edgeworth Road.

The property has the county's old "C" commercial zoning, and was formerly the site of another store, many years ago.

The developers are Camp and Frazier.

This is the first gas station/convenience store that has been built in unincorporated Coweta County since the county's impact fees for transportation projects were put into place in March 2007. The county voted to change the way that impact fees were calculated in early 2010, which lowered the cost of building many types of commercial businesses -- especially convenience stores.

Under the impact fee program in effect from March 2007 to May 2010, convenience stores with gas pumps were charged a whopping \$45,168 per 1,000 square feet.

Under the new methodology submitted by the county's impact fee consultants, Ross+Associates, the new fee would have been \$25,550 per 1,000 square feet.

However, when the county commissioners approved the new methodology in May 2010, they voted to cap the maximum impact fee per square foot. The recommendation was to cap the fee at \$10 per square foot, but a motion to set the cap at \$7 per square foot was made by Commissioner Tim Lassetter. The cap only affected the four uses with the highest proposed impact fees: gas stations, fast

food restaurants, and drive-in banks. Fast food restaurants would have been charged \$25.28 per square foot, without the cap.

Several large trees on the property are being preserved under Coweta County's tree preservation ordinance.

There have been some issues with compliance with the county's rules, which require tree protection fences.

County Arborist Roy Matthews said that some of the protection fencing wasn't properly installed to begin with, and some had gotten knocked down.

Matthews discovered the problem during a routine site visit, and stopped work on the project until the problem was corrected.

Matthews said he doesn't think that there will be any permanent damage that will affect the viability of the four trees: a white oak 40 inches in diameter, a 38-inch magnolia, and two 28-inch tulip poplars. "I think they should be OK," Matthews said Monday.

When large trees are killed or removed, developers have to pay into a recompense fund. Matthews said that the county's ordinance remains in effect for five years after the completion of construction and, if the trees die within that five-year window because of damage sustained during the construction, the developers will still have to pay into the recompense fund.

The Madras store property is surrounded by a nearly seven-acre tract that was rezoned C6, Commercial Minor Shopping District, in February 2007. The county's quality development corridor restrictions were applied to that property, owned mostly by Joe and Elizabeth Crain and partly by Camp and Frazier, as a condition of zoning.

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