

**MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
JANUARY 4, 2011**

PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBERS: Present: Anthony Manners, Pete Charpentier and Larry Pettiford. Staff members present: Josh Campbell, Matt Dickison and MaryAnn Jackson. Absent: Joy Mitchell and Jodi Nevels

CALL TO ORDER

Planning Director Josh Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

Larry Pettiford nominated Anthony Manners as chairperson for this meeting only, second by Pete Charpentier. Motion carried 3-0.

Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will go on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Pete Charpentier moved to adopt the January 4, 2011 agenda as presented, second by Larry Pettiford. Motion carried 3-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: November 2, 2010

Larry Pettiford moved to approve the November 2, 2010 minutes, second by Pete Charpentier. Motion carried 3-0.

PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC MEETING

Anthony Manners read the procedures for the Public Meeting for the record.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

RZ-2011-001- Applicant/Owner: Suwanee Junction LLC. Request a rezoning from PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) to PMUD with a change of conditions to allow for the construction of single family homes in an area previously zoned for townhomes. The site is located at the intersection of Village Field Court and Lassen Court and contains approximately 1.1 acres.

Josh Campbell presented the staff analysis as follows: This is a request for change in condition to a Planned Mixed Use Development. The project is the Village Grove Subdivision. It was originally zoned in 2002 as a 112 acre planned mixed use development that would allow for 517 residential units and about 40,000 square feet of commercial uses. The subject property is a 1.1 acre tract located at Lassen Court and Village Field Court. There are a number of single family homes already developed on this block. The proposed rezoning would reduce the total number of units in the project

to 509 units with 169 being townhomes, 278 single family detached homes and 62 loft condominiums.

The applicant wishes to increase the number of single-family detached units and decrease the number of single-family attached, which will result in an overall decrease in the total number of residences. The subject property is suitable for the proposed development.

The Planning Department prepares an Economic Indicators Report for City Council on a quarterly basis. Staff presented the 2nd Quarter 2010 report in August which included a detailed housing study. According to this study, as of July 2010 there had only been 6 townhome sales for this year. In comparison, there were 50 townhome sales in 2007. Additionally, while single family detached sales prices declined 18 percent during the time period of the study, townhome prices declined 24 percent. Informal discussions with builders indicate that banks are reluctant to approve construction loans for new townhome buildings since builders need to construct several units at a time, while detached units can be constructed individually. This makes townhomes more risky for the banks and is stalling some developments.

This anecdotal evidence is supported by recent building permit activity in the City. In the 21 months prior to August 2010 only 13 townhome units had been constructed. During the same time period 57 detached units were constructed. Since 2003 townhomes have accounted for 37 percent of the new single family housing units constructed. In the 21 month period prior to August 2010 they only accounted for 18.5 percent. Due to these numbers, the housing report recommended that staff contact builders in neighborhoods with townhomes (Village Grove, Suwanee Station, Three Bridges, and Stonecypher) to discuss developing workable development or land use options for the remainder of their townhome lots. In addition, the study recommended that, if warranted, each of the affected neighborhoods be rezoned to allow for implementation of acceptable alternatives. The study further directed that alternatives should be practical and implementable while respecting neighborhood expectations for quality and consistency and the intent of the Future Land Use Plan.

In conclusion, the site is located between existing single-family detached and single-family attached residential units and is an appropriate location for the proposed units. The change in total units and the change in unit type does not significantly impact the overall level of intensity expected for the area. The current proposal addresses the City's concern, that areas currently planned for single-family attached units will remain undeveloped for some time, by providing a product that is more attractive to lenders and buyers. In addition, the proposed change is practical and implementable and respects the neighborhood expectations for quality by providing a unit that is consistent with other Village Grove residences. Therefore, the Planning Department recommends approval with conditions of RZ-2011-001.

Pete Charpentier asked about the square footage of the proposed homes. Josh Campbell stated that the homes will have less square footage.

Larry Pettiford asked about the rear setback. Josh Campbell indicated that the rear setback will decrease by two feet.

Anthony Manners called upon the applicant.

Ron Sprinkle, Sprinkle Design Conservancy, 1664 Floresta Court, Atlanta, GA 30341

Mr. Sprinkle stated that townhome sales have declined drastically. Touchstone Homes is looking for a way to keep development moving. The alley, roads and utilities are already in place so the proposed product had to fit within the current constraints.

The common area that was originally shown as .58 acres is now .31 acres because under the townhome proposal everything outside the wall of the building considered common area. In this scenario, the homeowners get everything in between the right of way and the curb of the alley.

Pete Charpentier asked if Touchstone Homes will still be the builder. Mr. Sprinkle stated that Touchstone will be the builder of these homes.

Mr. Sprinkle explained to the Planning Commission that the proposed homes will have a similar feel to the homes that already exist in Village Grove. The price point of these homes will be just under \$200,000.

Anthony Manners called for opposition. There was none.

Pete Charpentier moved to approve RZ-2011-001 with proposed conditions, second by Larry Pettiford. Motion carried 3-0.

1. All conditions of zoning from RZ-2002-021 shall remain in full effect, except general condition 2 and 13, which shall be revised to read as follows:
2. Overall development shall not exceed 169 single family attached units, 278 single-family detached units, and 62 loft/condominium units for a total of 509 residential units. All units shall be fee-simple structures. No garden-style apartments shall be allowed.
13. The development standards proposed in the concept plan submitted 11/25/02 are incorporated as the development standards for the site, with the exception of the 10 single-family detached residential units to be constructed on the 1.07 acre site as shown on the plan submitted 12/02/10. These units shall meet the standards listed on the plan submitted 12/02/10

PROPOSED 2011 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

Pete Charpentier moved to approve the 2011 Planning Commission Schedule as presented, second by Larry Pettiford. Motion carried 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Historic Preservation Meeting is scheduled for January 15th at 9 am.

ADJOURNMENT

Larry Pettiford moved to adjourn at 7:05 pm.