

**MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MARCH 5, 2013**

PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBERS: Present: Anthony Manners, Elizabeth Sawicki, Pete Charpentier, Sharu Rajgiri and Larry Pettiford. Staff members present: Josh Campbell, Matt Dickison and MaryAnn Jackson.

CALL TO ORDER

Pete Charpentier called the meeting to order.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Larry Pettiford moved to approve the agenda, second by Elizabeth Sawicki. Motion carried 5-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: December 4, 2012

Larry Pettiford moved to approve the December 4, 2012 minutes, second by Anthony Manners. Motion carried 4-0-1. Sharu Rajgiri abstained.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

RZ-2013-001 – Applicant: Patrick Higgins. Owner: Public Storage. Requests a rezoning from PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) to PMUD with a change of conditions to allow for additional self storage. The site is located at 3900 McGinnis Ferry Road and contains approximately 5.03 acres.

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: The applicant seeks a change in zoning conditions to allow for an existing building on the site to be used as a self-storage facility on an approximately 4 acre site. The site contains an existing retail/self-storage facility which is part of a larger PMUD development. The site currently contains roughly 105,000 square feet of mixed-use (office/retail/self-storage) space and is located on McGinnis Ferry Road just east of Scales Road adjacent to the Norfolk-Southern railroad. The subject property was part of a rezoning in 2005 that proposed development of an approximately 94,000 square foot multi-story mixed-use office/retail/self-storage project. Later in 2005, a change in conditions was approved to increase the size of one of the buildings. The site includes 4 buildings that permit a mixture of non-residential uses.

The subject property was rezoned from M-1 (Light Industry District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed Used District) to allow for development of an approximately 94,000 square foot multi-story mixed-use office/retail/self-storage project in June 2005. The property was rezoned again in December of 2005 with a change in conditions from the original rezoning to allow an additional 11,000 square feet of space. In 2011, another change in

conditions was approved to allow for a truck rental business as an accessory use to the existing self-storage facility.

A number of conditions of zoning apply to this property. Specifically, condition #2 or RZ-2005-021 states that, “the site shall be limited to a maximum of 105,000 square feet of development. In addition to self-storage/mini warehouse uses which are to be allowed only on the interior of the site, the site shall be limited to those uses and the district regulations found in the C-2A zoning district with the exception of vehicular related uses (including sales, service and repair) which are expressly prohibited.” This condition was amended in 2011 to say that the site shall be limited to those uses and district regulations found in the C-2A zoning district with the exception of vehicular related uses (including sales, service and repair) unless approved as a Special Use Permit.

The applicant is proposing to expand the self-storage business into the portion of the multi-tenant commercial building. Since being constructed in 2006, the multi-tenant portion of the building has never been occupied or finished other than a space that is used as the office for the self-storage facility. The applicant is requesting to convert the remaining multi-tenant retail portion of the development into 139 self-storage units totaling 11,175 square feet with interior access.

Condition #2 currently permits self-storage/mini warehouse uses only on the interior of the site. The original intent of adding this condition was to protect the surrounding neighborhoods from having a self-storage facility visible from McGinnis Ferry Road. Currently, the self-storage units are not visible from the public right-of-way. The building that currently faces McGinnis Ferry Road was designed as a multi-tenant commercial building and the front of the existing building is mostly windows and brick. The applicant states that “the appearance of the building would remain as is and no change to existing signage will be made. Where storage units abut storefronts a dark bronze pre-finished metal will be fitted to interior glass to obscure the interior of the building.” If the interior of the units are blocked from view in an aesthetically pleasing way and the front façade of the building does not change then allowing self-storage in the building should not negatively impact the surrounding properties.

While the site is directly adjacent to non-residential uses, it is near the entrance to two large residential neighborhoods; Old Suwanee and Suwanee Station. It is important to maintain a clean, well maintained commercial center near the entrances to these neighborhoods. Prohibiting the outdoor storage of motor vehicles, boats, etc. in the front of the building and requiring that all customer loading and unloading take place at the existing dock and loading doors in the rear of the building should eliminate these concerns.

An excessive amount of vacant multi-tenant retail space within the City diminishes the likelihood of filling the multi-tenant suites with businesses in the foreseeable future. In addition, maintaining the existing façade of the building and eliminating any potential negative visual impacts of the conversion will preserve the aesthetic quality of the site. The request is in compliance with the Future Land Use Plan as it calls for this property to

be commercial in nature. If certain conditions are put in place to maintain the commercial appearance of the building then allowing self-storage in the interior should not negatively impact the surrounding properties. Therefore, staff recommends approval with conditions of RZ-2013-001.

Pete Charpentier called upon the applicant.

Mr. Pat Higgins, 605 Wayt Road, Roswell, Georgia.

Mr. Higgins stated the multi tenant portion of property has been vacant for almost 6 years. It will not negatively impact the area. The exterior will not change significantly.

Pete Charpentier asked Mr. Higgins how he will change the exterior of the building. Mr. Higgins explained that he had planned to add dark bronze anodized metal panels behind the store front so that the store front appearance would not change but it would obscure the interior of the building from the outside.

Discussion ensued amongst the Planning Commission members and staff regarding the exterior of the self storage facility.

Pete Charpentier called for opposition. There was none.

Anthony Manners moved to approve RZ-2013-001 with staff recommended conditions, second by Larry Pettiford. Motion carried 5-0.

1. No storage units shall be visible from the exterior of the building. Any material used to obscure the visual impact shall be approved by the Planning Director.
2. Parking spaces in front of the building shall be for customer/employee use only.
3. All customer loading and unloading operations shall take place at the existing dock in the west end of the building and loading doors in the rear of the building.
4. All conditions for RZ-2011-005 shall remain in effect except for condition 2 which shall be amended as follows:

The site shall be limited to a maximum of 105,000 square feet of development. In addition to self-storage/mini warehouse ~~uses which are to be allowed only on the interior of the site~~, the site shall be limited to those uses and district regulations found in the C-2A zoning district with the exception of vehicular related uses (including sales, service and repair) unless approved as a Special Use Permit.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Josh Campbell welcomed Sharu Rajgiri to the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Manners moved adjourn at 6:57pm.