

MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
September 3, 2013

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

CALL TO ORDER

Pete Charpentier called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Elizabeth Sawicki moved to approve the agenda, second by Sharu Rajgiri. Motion carried 4-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: July 9, 2013

Larry Pettiford moved to approve the July 9, 2013, second by Sharu Rajgiri. Motion carried 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

SUP-2013-003 - Owner/Applicant: Brian Fitzgerald. The applicant requests a special use permit in order to allow for a veterinary clinic with boarding in the M-1 Zoning District. The site is located in Land Lot 235 of the 7th District on Buford Highway at the driveway for George Pierce Park Drive and contains approximately 2.05 acres.

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: The applicant requests a special use permit to allow for construction of a veterinary clinic in the M-1 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to build a new animal hospital building next to the current Suwanee Animal Hospital located at 85 Buford Highway. The proposed building will be a two-story approximately 20,000 square foot building. The subject property is located at the northeast corner of Buford Highway and George Pierce Park Drive. It is currently an undeveloped wooded lot that is 2.05 acres in size. The applicant proposes access off George Pierce Park Drive with access also provided to Buford Highway through the adjacent animal hospital property.

At the August 2013 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, the applicant was granted a variance to reduce the front and side yard setbacks for the future building. M-1 zoned parcels are required to have a 50 foot front yard setback and a 20 foot side yard setback. The Zoning Board of Appeals approved a reduction of those setbacks to 10 feet for both the front and side yard. The setback reduction was granted in order to allow development of the property and design of the building that is consistent with the Old Town Overlay District guidelines. Even though this property is just outside of the district boundary, the

applicant is proposing to develop the site to the standards of the Old Town Overlay District.

The applicant has submitted a concept plan and rendering of the proposed building that exhibits some of the design elements of the Old Town Overlay District. For example, the parking for the proposed animal hospital is shown to the side and the rear of building, the building is close to the road, and there is pedestrian access from the sidewalk. However, some requirements of the Old Town Overlay District are not shown on the plan, such as a pedestrian supplemental zone which should contain benches, landscaping etc. The applicant should be prepared to provide the supplemental zone, bicycle parking and other requirements of the Old Town Overlay District.

The subject property is located just outside of the Old Town Overlay District. The overlay district was adopted to allow for a comfortable and uniform pedestrian space between roadways and buildings. The overlay district encapsulates the Old Town area of the City, including Town Center and extending up Buford Highway to George Pierce Park. There are several design guidelines for development in the Old Town Overlay District. For example, buildings must be oriented towards the street; parking areas must be behind or to the side of the building with proper screening parking, enhanced pedestrian access, etc. One of the most important aspects of the overlay district is that building setbacks are minimized in order to accommodate buildings immediately adjacent to the sidewalks. An example of a building that was developed under these guidelines is the Shoppes at Olde Towne located across Buford Highway from Town Center. The applicant is proposing a building and site design consistent with these standards that will compliment Town Center and the surrounding area. One of the conditions of approval states that the subject property shall be developed in accordance with the Old Town Overlay District design and development guidelines.

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan identifies character areas of the City. The subject property is in the Town Center Character Area. This area has emerged as the front porch of the City and raised the bar for new high-quality design. The vision for the Town Center character area is a vibrant mixed-use area. Future development in this area should reflect the quality design of Town Center through building materials, landscaping and heightened priority to the pedestrian. The Old Town Overlay design guidelines were designed so that new development in Old Town and Town Center, especially along Buford Highway, are built in a style that makes the pedestrian feel safe and welcome. The City's Future Land Use Plan recommends Mixed Use Center for the property. The proposed use of the property is not entirely consistent with this designation, but if constructed as proposed could be incorporated into a future mixed use development.

Even though the property is currently zoned M-1, Light Industry District, it is surrounded by uses that are not heavily industrialized. The adjacent parcel with the existing animal hospital is zoned commercial. The industrial property across George Pierce Drive is an office building with an interior warehouse. The overall vision for the area is an extension of the types of land uses that are located within and near Town Center. In addition, any new development along Buford Highway between the subject property and Town Center

must be developed to the Old Town Overlay District requirements. Constructing industrial uses to these standards is unlikely.

In conclusion, the requested special use permit for a veterinary clinic would be appropriate at this location. A veterinary clinic with boarding designed in a non-industrial way would better fit the area and the recommendations of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Lastly, the City requires and encourages buildings in the adjacent overlay district to be designed in a pedestrian friendly way and this building, if designed correctly, could greatly add to the design of the area. As such, staff recommends approval with conditions of SUP-2013-003.

Anthony Manners arrived.

Josh Campbell informed the Planning Commission that Larry Genn is one of three Engineers who performs consulting work for the City of Suwanee.

Anthony Manners asked about a turn lane. Josh Campbell explained that GDOT will review the plans and set requirements.

Pete Charpentier called upon the applicant.

Larry Genn, LBG, 1000 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Genn explained to the Planning Commission that he is trying to acquire a secondary access to the property to relieve pressure. Mr. Genn stated that the topography of the property lends itself to the type of design he is proposing. There will be a bottom floor and parking in the rear of the building.

Sharu Rajgiri asked if the business will be open on weekends. Mr. Genn explained that the business will be open on weekends and that there will be boarding. The applicants anticipate boarding approximately 80 animals.

Mr. Genn stated that the applicants have been in the current location for two decades and would like to remain there.

Pete Charpentier called for opposition. There was none.

Larry Pettiford moved to approve SUP-2013-003 with amended conditions (additions = bold italics), second by Elizabeth Sawicki. Motion carried 5-0.

1. The subject site shall be developed in accordance with the Old Town Overlay District design and development guidelines.
2. The building shall be substantially consistent with the rendering shown in exhibit "C" and subject to the approval of the Planning Director.

3. Special uses shall be limited to a veterinary clinic with boarding *and customary accessory uses*.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Josh Campbell informed the Planning Commission that the new City of Suwanee logo will be unveiled on Suwanee Day.

Remembrance is now located in Town Center Park. It will be unveiled on September 11th.

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Manners moved to adjourn at 7:05 pm.