

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
**September 2, 2014**

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Pete Charpentier called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm

Josh Campbell explained to the Planning Commission that there is a discrepancy in the survey of the property for RZ-2014-007. The applicant is planning to amend the survey. Josh Campbell recommended postponing RZ-2014-008 until the next Planning Commission Meeting.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

*Larry Pettiford moved to approve the amended agenda, second by Anthony Manners. Motion carried 5-0 (RZ-2014-008 will be heard before RZ-2014-007).*

**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: June 3, 2014**

*Elizabeth Sawicki moved to approve the July 1, 2014 minutes, second by Sharu Rajgiri. Motion carried 5-0.*

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RZ-2014-008** – Owner/Applicant: Diversified Holdings, LLLP. The applicant requests a rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial District) and C-2A (Special Commercial District) to RM-8 (Residential Multi-Family District) to allow for a multi-family residential development. The site is located in Land Lots 169 and 170 of the 7<sup>th</sup> District along Sawmill Drive near Lawrenceville Suwanee Road and contains approximately 30.89

Josh Campbell stated that he will defer his presentation until the October 7<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission Meeting.

Pete Charpentier called upon the applicant. Josh Campbell indicated that the applicant had left the room.

Pete Charpentier called for anyone in favor of the request.

Pete Charpentier called for opposition.

David Wayne, 3463 Smithtown Road, Suwanee, Georgia. Mr. Wayne stated that he is opposed to the rezoning request because of the traffic. Sawmill Drive has very heavy traffic in the morning. There are apartments on Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road that are not completely occupied.

Connie Dillon, 3390 Smithtown Road, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Dillon stated that she is opposed to the rezoning request. There are a lot of issues that come along with an apartment complex. Ms. Dillon also stated that the traffic is very heavy along Sawmill Drive.

Marcus Wilkins, 3165 Westbrook Road, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Wilkins stated that he pays higher taxes to live in Suwanee. He would like to maintain the community feel. He does not understand why the City of Suwanee would deviate from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and allow apartments on this particular property.

***Anthony Manners moved to postpone RZ-2014-008 until the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, second by Elizabeth Sawicki. Motion carried 5-0.***

**RZ-2014-007** – Owners: Jeanine Minzey, John Everett and Charles Smillie, III. Applicant: JEH Homes, LLC. The applicant requests a rezoning from R-100 (Residential Single Family District) and R-140 (Residential Single Family District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) to allow for a planned mixed use development with a mix of single family attached and detached units. The site is located in Land Lot 211 of the 7<sup>th</sup> District on the east side of Martin Farm Road and contains approximately 31.39 acres.

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: The applicant requests the rezoning of 7 parcels from R-140 (Single-Family Residential District) and R-100 (Single-Family Residential District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development District) to allow for a 123-lot single-family residential neighborhood. The subject parcels are located along Martin Farm Road and contain approximately 31.14 acres. Three of the seven parcels requesting rezoning contain single family homes. The remaining lots are undeveloped. The applicant proposes to remove the homes if the rezoning is approved. The eastern edge of the proposed subdivision contains Suwanee Creek's 100 year floodplain.

The applicant proposes two types of single family housing: 75 detached units and 48 attached units (townhomes). The house sizes are proposed to range from a minimum of 1,950 square feet to around 4,000 square feet. The site plan indicates three different sized lots for the detached homes. The narrowest lot type would have a minimum width of 39 feet, and they would be accessed via private alleys located to the rear. The applicant also proposes 65 foot wide and 50 foot wide lots for front loaded single family detached units.

All internal streets are proposed within 46-foot wide right-of-ways. The street width is proposed to be 24 feet wide measured from back of curb to back of curb. Six-foot wide planter strips are proposed immediately adjacent to the curbing. 5-foot wide sidewalks are proposed for one side of the street outside the planter strip. Within the planter strips

on both sides of the road the applicant is proposing to provide 3-inch caliper trees every 40 feet. Traffic circles are proposed in three locations along the main street running through the center of the neighborhood. The site plan also provides 8.5 acres of open space. Most of the open space area is located within the 100 year flood plain which will be required to remain undisturbed. The remaining 1.15 acres of open space is improved and contains amenities for the neighborhood.

The proposed neighborhood would include 4 new streets including a central street that runs the length of the project, from an entrance on Martin Farm Road just west of Suwanee Creek to the northern most portion of the property. The streets contain and are lined with small seating areas and focal features (public art).

The plan submitted by the applicant only provides sidewalks on one side of the street. There are 9 neighborhoods in Suwanee that are zoned PMUD. All of these neighborhoods have sidewalks on both sides of the street. Additionally, there hasn't been a neighborhood developed in Suwanee that only has sidewalks on one side of the street since 2000. The applicant should be prepared to provide sidewalks on both sides of the street if the request is approved.

If approved, neighborhood access will be reviewed by the City Engineer. Improvements to Martin Farm Road may be required in order to accommodate access for the neighborhood.

The site plan indicates sidewalks directly adjacent to Martin Farm Road. Sidewalks in Suwanee are usually separated from the roadway by a landscape strip planted with street trees. The applicant should be prepared to provide this treatment.

The applicant indicates that water is proposed to be provided by Gwinnett County. According to the City/County Service Delivery Strategy agreement, the 14 lots along Martin Farm Road would be served by the City water system, while the remainder of the site is located with the County's water service district.

There are currently 2 neighborhoods in historic Old Town comparable in size, land use and design to the proposed neighborhood. The Old Suwanee neighborhood developed in 1999 through 2002 includes 121 residential units including 17 townhomes/live-work units. The design includes narrow streets, street trees, smaller lots, homes with larger front porches, rear-alleys and reduced setbacks. The Stonecypher neighborhood developed in 2003 through 2013 includes 127 residential units including 40 townhomes. This neighborhood also includes predominantly rear loaded units, narrow streets, reduced setbacks and larger front porches. Both neighborhoods are well integrated in the surrounding area.

In conclusion, the proposed plan is consistent with the surrounding Martin Farm Road area. The design is consistent with the mixed-use village and Old Town design guidelines and City plans have anticipated a similar type of development in its planning documents since 2002. The proposed uses on the property are consistent with the

Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan, while the design is comparable to existing neighborhoods within historic Old Town. With conditions to assure consistency with the proposed concept plan and the City design guidelines, the proposed neighborhood would be appropriate at this location. Therefore staff recommends approval with conditions.

Pete Charpentier asked about the changes to Martin Farm Road. Josh Campbell stated that there will be sidewalks, on street parking and street trees.

Elizabeth Sawicki asked about construction barriers for the existing houses. Josh Campbell explained that there is a noise ordinance. The City of Suwanee does not regulate hours of construction.

Anthony Manners asked about the width of Martin Farm Road. Josh Campbell indicated that there is no plan to widen Martin Farm Road.

Sharu Rajgiri asked about additional points of access to Martin Farm Road. Josh Campbell stated that the northern portion of site plan "F" indicates future access.

Pete Charpentier asked if there was any consideration in making the lot size larger along Martin Farm Road since they are bordering the existing community. Josh Campbell indicated that he had shared these concerns with the developer. The developer will be exploring some options to widen the lots.

Pete Charpentier called upon the applicant.

Jim Jacobi, JEH Homes. Mr. Jacobi stated that he is completing his second successful project in the City of Suwanee. He looks forward to continuing his relationship with the City.

Mr. Jacobi indicated that he plans to provide a good product that is similar and indicative of what is in the area. He has provided multiple points of access to help diminish any congestion. He does recognize that Martin Farm Road has some challenges. The plan is for Martin Farm Road to eventually extend to Buford Highway. There will be traffic calming devices along the road, sidewalks on both sides of the road and a connection to the Suwanee Greenway Trail. Mr. Jacobi stated that he will be working closely with the City of Suwanee to make everyone happy.

Pete Charpentier stated that the intensity on the perimeter, especially on Martin Farm Road, is high compared to other lots that are around the area. Typically with mixed use we try to be cognizant of surrounding area and match what is there where it impacts the existing development.

Mr. Jacobi stated that he will be working with the City of Suwanee and the adjoining residents. Currently the lots are 39 feet wide. The proposed homes are 28 feet wide. He

will be more than happy to make them wider. Mr. Jacobi plans to work around the existing trees.

Pete Charpentier suggested that a park at the second entrance of the subdivision would be good for the existing and the new residents.

Pete Charpentier also stated that some of the elevations are unattractive. Jim Jacobi stated that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Mr. Jacobi indicated that he is willing to work with the architect to make the product more appealing.

Larry Pettiford asked if there is adequate width for rear loaded townhomes. Jim Jacobi explained that there is adequate width.

Anthony Manners asked about parking issues. Jim Jacobi stated there are numerous areas for overflow parking.

Sharu Rajgiri asked about the additional traffic. Jim Jacobi indicated that he has not engaged an engineer to conduct a traffic study.

Pete Charpentier called for opposition.

Paul Cherry, 3715 Rosehaven Way, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Cherry asked why there will not be access from Buford Highway now instead of the future. Mr. Cherry stated that he tries to avoid Martin Farm Road because it is narrow. His concern is the width of the road and the addition of 120 homes.

Pete Charpentier asked Josh Campbell about the access to Buford Highway. Josh Campbell explained that the developer does not own the land so he cannot create access at this time.

Wesley Dunlap, 480 Golden Meadows Lane, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Dunlap stated that his main concern is the road width.

Elizabeth Sawicki asked for the standard for parallel parking. Josh Campbell stated that the standard is eight feet.

Avery Dunkin, 3710 Davis Street, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Dunkin stated that White Street can not handle any additional traffic. The Master Plan and 2020 Vision discussed Martin Farm Road. The area was declared a blighted area. The infrastructure issues have not been addressed. The 100 year floodplain has been crossed several times in the last six years. Mr. Dunkin has flooding in his yard when it rains. A lot of soft terrain is being turned into hardscape. This will affect the flood plain.

Josh Campbell indicated that there will be a storm water study during the development phase.

Carolyn Narreau, 482 Golden Meadows Circle, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Narreau stated that she is concerned with the road width. Martin Farm Road has lots of bikers on the road. Ms. Narreau is very concerned about the wildlife.

Joseph Lembo, 560 Golden Meadows Lane, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Lembo is concerned about the number of cars that will be on Martin Farm Road.

Ted Krost, 3740 Davis Street, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Krost stated that Martin Farm Road needs to be improved.

Terri Dunlap, 480 Golden Meadows Lane, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Dunlap stated that her concern is for the children waiting for the school bus.

Brian Nasdeo, 3676 Martin Farm Road, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Nasdeo asked if there has been an environmental impact study conducted on the creek. Pete Charpentier explained that a study will be conducted later.

Jim Jacobi explained that approximately 25 percent of the project is in the floodplain. It will be untouched. About 45 percent of the site is open space and will be owned by the Home Owners Association.

Pete Charpentier asked about the 45 percent open space. Jim Jacobi explained that it will be lawn, grass, etc. The Homeowners Association will maintain the open space. A community bus stop for the children is being considered.

*Sharu Rajgiri moved to postpone RZ-2014-007 until the next scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, second by Larry Pettiford. Motion carried 5-0.*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Elizabeth Sawicki moved to adjourn at 7:41 pm.*