

MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
February 2, 2016

PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBERS: Present: Pete Charpentier, Anthony Manners, Lila Adams, Michelle Budd and Glenn Weyant. Staff members present: Josh Campbell, Alyssa Durden, and MaryAnn Jackson.

CALL TO ORDER

Anthony Manners called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Glenn Weyant moved to approve the agenda as presented, second by Michelle Budd. Motion carried 5-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: January 5, 2016

Michelle Budd moved to approve the January 5, 2016 meeting minutes with correction of the meeting date, second by Pete Charpentier. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

RZ-2015-005 - Owners: Mark S. Brock, Mary Ann Folger, Donald Johnson, Beverly Burnette Long, Linda J. Cochran, A.M. Laski, Inc., Teresa D. Kimble, Mike and Robin McGuire and Shawn Adams Nollen. Applicant: Vanquish Property Partners, LLC. The applicant requests a rezoning from R-100 (Single Family Residential) and C-2 (General Commercial) 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 Lots 209 and 210 of the 7th District along White Street and White Lane at the northwest corner of the intersection of Buford Highway and McGinnis Ferry Road and contains approximately 32.2 acres.

Lila Adams recused herself from RZ-2015-005 and RZ-2016-001

Josh Campbell explained to the Planning Commission that the applicant would like to postpone the rezoning request in order to address staff's recommended conditions. The City Council will hear the rezoning case at the February City Council meeting. Those in support and opposition should be allowed to speak this evening.

Anthony Manners called for those in support.

Mike Embry, Vanquis Property Partners. Mr. Embry stated that he is working with staff and should be ready to make a presentation to the Planning Commission at the next meeting.

Anthony Manners called for opposition. There was none.

Pete Charpentier moved to postpone RZ-2015-005 until March 1, 2016 Planning Commission meeting, second by Glenn Weyant. Motion carried 4-0-1(Lila Adams did not vote).

NEW BUSINESS

RZ-2016-001 – Owner: Karen Williams, Miles J. Williams, Clistine Mae Redd Family Trust, Nancy Redd Hobson and Joanne Armstrong. Applicant: Vanquish Property Partners, LLC. The applicant requests a rezoning from R-100 (Single Family Residential) and C-2 (General Commercial District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) to allow for development of single family attached townhomes. The site is located in Land Lot 210 of the 7th District at 706 Buford Highway and 740 Buford Highway and contains 26.2 acres.

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: The applicant requests a rezoning of an assemblage of parcels from R-100 (Single Family Residential District) and C-2 (General Commercial District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use Development District) to allow for the development of a new neighborhood of single family townhomes and condominiums. The proposed neighborhood is located along Buford Highway across the street from Harvest Farm and White Street Park.

The subject property is approximately 26 acres of former farmland containing two single family homes. More than half of the subject property is unbuildable because it is within the 100 year floodplain. Due to very steep topography, the floodplain, and existing development, the proposed development cannot connect to adjacent parcels around it. The new neighborhood would have one access point off of Buford Highway approximately 2000 feet north of McGinnis Ferry Road.

The proposed development would total 163 units, at approximately 6.2 units per acre. Development would be focused on the front half of the property closest to Buford Highway due to the environmental challenges at the rear of the property. The applicant proposes to build a mix of traditional front loaded townhomes and stacked condominiums built to look like traditional townhomes. The proposed project includes 29 front loaded single family attached townhomes. These units would be a minimum of 20 feet wide and two stories over ground level 2 car garages. The remaining 134 units would be built as 67 attached, stacked condominiums with two story units stacked on top of single story units over basement level parking. Parking would be provided through 1 car garages with the possibility of some tandem or 2 car garages accessed by alleys behind the units. These units would be accessed from shared front stoops and steps and look like 3 story townhomes. The proposed architecture for all buildings would have front facades of brick and/or stacked stone with cement siding accents. The minimum unit size would be 950 square feet and the average unit size would be 1,200 square feet.

The proposed project includes approximately 16 acres of natural open space, two formal open spaces, and 3 smaller mews or commons. The first formal open space of approximately .5 acres is located on axis with the entrance to the neighborhood from

Buford Highway and fronted by rear loaded, condominiums. The second formal open space of approximately .3 acres is an open lawn lined by rear loaded condominiums on two sides. A mail kiosk sits at one end of the lawn. Additionally, approximately 16 acres will be preserved as natural, wooded wetlands/floodplain at the rear and northeast side of the site where it abuts the school site, Suwanee Creek, and a few residences off Davis Street.

The following comments are provided to inform the owner/developer of certain issues that may need to be addressed:

The property is encumbered by floodplain, wetlands, and creeks. The applicant proposes to treat stormwater within the property and then channel the water into Suwanee Creek. The concept plan indicates development within the 100 year floodplain including some residential units and a water quality treatment facility for the property. The developer should be prepared to comply with all stormwater requirements as enforced by the City engineer. All water quality and stormwater management for the project must comply with applicable regulations including the Floodplain Management Ordinance. Prior to issuance of a development permit, the applicant must provide the City with a no rise certification for Suwanee Creek floodplain and a conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR) for any changes to the floodplain. Development within any wetlands will require the approval of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Impacts to any creeks will need to comply with the Georgia Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance.

If developed with private streets, the Gwinnett County Fire Marshall will need to approve the circulation of the project.

The PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use Development District) zoning category allows for larger master-planned projects that connect residential uses to non-residential uses, encourage pedestrian mobility, promote more efficient use of land, and allow for the creation of neighborhoods with their own distinct character.

The applicant requests a rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial) and R-100 (Single Family Residential) to PMUD to allow for a mixture of residential housing types. The proposed density of 6.2 units per acre would be in the form of townhomes and stacked 2 story condominiums and flats that resemble townhomes. This density is appropriate for this location, which is within a mile walking distance to Town Center and adjacent to non-residential uses. The proposed housing typology is consistent with other medium density townhome developments within Suwanee's downtown. A second access point from Buford Highway is not feasible nor required because the property does not have enough frontage on Buford Highway.

The property is bound by Buford Highway to the northwest, backs up to Suwanee Creek to the southeast, and is surrounded by developed property on both sides along Buford Highway. The adjacent property to the southwest is an office development with 2 two story office buildings. The Gwinnett County Board of Education Training Facility occupies a former elementary school on the adjacent property to the northeast. Both of

these properties are zoned O-I (Office Institutional District). White Street Park is directly across Buford Highway from the property with lightly developed, wooded land zoned R-100 (Residential Single Family District) on both sides of the park.

The proposed development is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, which calls for low density office on the subject property. However the proposed townhomes are consistent with the more recent 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan. The 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan recommends townhomes, small lot single-family homes or cottages. The recommendation of the Future Land Use Map will be updated during the annual update of the Comprehensive Plan.

The concept plan for the proposed development indicates 2-3 ½ story brick and/or stone fronted residential buildings facing Buford Highway with stoops and entrances also facing Buford Highway. Some of these units may be live work. These buildings and a new street with a landscaped median terminating at a roundabout and pocket park fronted by similar buildings will be the only portion of the neighborhood visible from the public street, Buford Highway. As submitted, this site design and proposed architecture will add visual interest for pedestrians and help create a street wall along Buford Highway.

The aesthetic of the front portion of the subject property is especially important because it will be the view from White Street Park and Harvest Farm across the street. The City has and is currently investing in the development of Harvest Farm and a future orchard at White Street Park, as well as the transformation of Buford Highway into a pedestrian-oriented street. The proposed architecture would be suitable in view of the surrounding park, single family, office, and institutional uses, but staff recommends adding conditions of zoning if approved to insure high quality design.

The applicant is proposing a new type of unit that has been built elsewhere, however it has not been built in Suwanee. These new units are two story townhomes stacked on top of a one story flat over rear loaded, basement level, 1 car garages. A second parking spot for each unit is provided in the driveway behind each garage, thus the 2 cars must park in tandem. Although aesthetically, the design of these units is compatible with townhomes in other parts of Suwanee, the functionality of the unit may be problematic. Since tandem parking requires one car to park behind the other blocking one car in, the result is more demand for on-street parking. The addition of a new housing type is consistent with the City's goal of providing a diversity of housing types; however, if approved, the provision of adequate parking will need to be addressed.

The City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance requires 2 parking spaces per residential unit. The proposed plan does not provide any on-street or surface parking for resident or guest use, and the manner of parking provided to meet the 2 spaces per unit is not ideal. Additional parking should be provided through the extension of driveways to a minimum of 22 feet in length, on-street parking, and off-street parking.

Previous development in Suwanee has demonstrated two issues that can reduce the functionality of streets. One issue is the presence of front loaded units on lots less than

65 feet wide. In this case, there is not enough room for sidewalks or on-street parking between driveways. The second issue is the demand for on-street parking on streets that are not designed for it. If approved, staff recommends that the streets remain private since they cannot connect to any other property in the future. Keeping the streets private will allow the neighborhood to manage parking more aggressively through covenants.

Another unresolved issue with the concept plan is that the 3 tracts of land cannot support the proposed development without some modification to the floodplain. The concept plan shows 21 of the 163 units within the existing 100 year floodplain. Any alteration to the floodplain should be done in compliance with all applicable regulations. If the developer is unable to build the project as shown in the concept plan, as a result of the floodplain requirements, then they will need to be prepared to come back to the City Council in order to modify the concept plan.

In conclusion, the requested rezoning to PMUD is appropriate for the subject property provided the appropriate conditions are in place. The proposed uses are consistent with the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan. Roads within the development should be private, driveways should be a minimum of 22 feet in length, and guest parking spaces should be scattered throughout the development in order to ensure parking is adequately provided and managed. Development should comply with the floodplain management ordinance. If development cannot comply with floodplain requirements and the concept plan, then the developer should be prepared to come back before City Council to modify the concept plan. As such, the Planning Department recommends approval of the request to rezone the subject property to PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use Development District) with the following conditions.

Pete Charpentier asked about visitor parking. Josh Campbell stated the developer has been asked to provide visitor parking throughout the project.

Anthony Manners asked about the proposed width of the street. Josh Campbell stated that the road will be between 22 to 24 feet wide.

Josh Campbell stated that some of the residences are shown in the flood plain. In order to develop in the floodplain there are a number of issues to be addressed. A No Rise Certification must be obtained. This certification states that no one else will be adversely impacted. The developer must also obtain a conditional letter of map revision from FEMA.

Mike Embry, Vanquish Properties. Mr. Embry stated he is working on the guest parking issue. The streets will be private. There will be some two car garages. Mr. Embry asked to postpone this rezoning case until March 1st meeting.

Michelle Budd asked if there will be a mandatory homeowners association. Mr. Embry stated that there will be a homeowners association.

Glenn Weyant asked about parking issues. Mr. Embry stated that parking will be controlled by the covenants.

Discussion ensued amongst the Planning Commission members and Mr. Embry regarding parking issues.

Warren Jolly, The Providence Group. Mr. Jolly stated that it would have been very difficult to construct single family homes on this property. The townhomes will have different price points.

Pete Charpentier asked about amenities. Mr. Jolly stated that there could be walking trails, and that he is hoping to share the amenity area with the subdivision across there street.

Anthony Manners called for opposition.

David Pierce, 3663 Davis Street, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Pierce stated that he is concerned with the floodplain.

Jill Mashburn, White Street, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Ashburn asked where the amenities are. Mr. Embry stated that the original site plan for proposed development near White Street did not have amenities but the latest version does. Mr. Embry indicated that the amenity area would be shared by the two new developments. Ms. Mashburn suggested that the new neighborhood could open amenities to existing residents of White Street that will be impacted.

Anthony Manners asked if the two neighborhoods will have separate Home Owners Associations. Mr. Embry stated that he is unsure if there will be separate Home Owners Associations.

Pete Charpentier asked Mr. Embry if he is in agreement with the staff proposed conditions. Mr. Embry indicated that he is in agreement.

Michelle Budd moved to approve RZ-2016-001 with staff conditions, second by Glenn Weyant. Motion carried 4-0-1.

1. Develop in accordance with the concept plan (dated January 5, 2016) and associated attachments and exhibits approved by City of Suwanee, and incorporated herein by reference, with changes as necessary to meet conditions of zoning or other development requirements. This shall include all proposed densities, roadways, land uses, planting, sidewalks, water quality facilities, detention areas, or other proposed features shown on the submitted plan. If substantial changes to the concept plan are needed to comply with the following conditions of zoning, the applicant shall submit revised plans to the City within 90 days of approval that reflect said changes. The revised plan shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Council.

2. Overall development shall not exceed 163 residential units. A maximum of 134 of the units may be condominium units. Condominium units shall be arranged as two story units stacked on top of single story units over basement level parking.
3. Development shall occur consistent with the phases, uses, and development standards outlined as follows and as shown in the “Phasing” exhibit:
 - A. Phase I shall allow all uses permitted in O-I (Office Institutional District) with the additional uses of live work units or condominiums not to exceed 34 units. Development within this phase shall be limited to the following standards.
 - i. Development Standards:
 - a. Minimum front yard: 0 feet
 - b. Minimum side yard setback: 0 feet
 - c. Minimum building separation: 20 feet
 - d. Minimum rear yard setback: 0 feet
 - e. Residential unit size: 950 square feet minimum unit size with an average unit size of 1,200 square feet
 - f. Maximum building height: 3.5 stories or 3 / 4 story split
 - g. Minimum building width: 20 feet
 - ii. Parking:
 - a. Minimum parking: 2 spaces per residential unit, 1 space per 300 square feet of non-residential use.
 - b. All parking shall be located behind or within buildings.
 - c. Any tandem garage parking may only count as 1 parking space regardless of depth.
 - d. Driveways may be counted as required parking for residential units provided the driveway is a minimum of 22 feet long.
 - e. Surface parking lots shall be landscaped per Section 1703.3 of the City Zoning Ordinance.
 - f. Provide bicycle racks with a minimum of 5 spaces near the entrance of any non-residential building.
 - g. Landscaping shall be provided at the ends of alleys at a sufficient height to screen cars parked in the driveways of rear loaded units from the main road. Landscape materials and location are subject to the approval of the Planning Director.
 - iii. Architecture:
 - a. Buildings facing Buford Highway shall have entrances facing Buford Highway that are connected to the public sidewalk either directly or by private sidewalks.
 - b. Garage doors may not face Buford Highway.
 - c. Buildings facing Buford Highway shall be a maximum of 3 1/2 stories from the grade of the front façade.

- d. Building materials shall be restricted to brick and/or stone on all four sides. This does not prevent the use of other materials for accents.
 - e. Residential buildings shall have simulated divided lite wood windows.
 - f. For non-residential buildings the architecture shall be approved on an individual basis.
- B. Phase II shall be limited to single family attached residential townhomes and condominiums and those uses found in the R-100 zoning district. Development within this phase shall be limited to the following standards.

i. Development Standards:

- a. Minimum front yard: 0 feet
- b. Minimum side yard setback: 0 feet
- c. Minimum building separation: 20 feet
- d. Minimum rear yard setback: 0 feet
- e. Condominium size: 950 square feet minimum unit size with an average unit size of 1,200 square feet
- f. Townhome size: minimum unit size of 1,900 square feet
- g. Maximum building height: 3.5 stories or 3 / 4 story split
- h. Minimum building width: 20 feet

ii. Parking:

- a. Minimum parking: 2 spaces per unit
- b. On-street parking spaces may count toward parking requirements.
- c. Any tandem parking may only count as 1 parking space regardless of depth.
- d. Surface parking lots shall be landscaped per Section 1703.3 of the City Zoning Ordinance.
- e. Driveways must be a minimum of 22 feet in length and 10 feet in width to count as a parking space. Each residential unit may have a maximum of 1 driveway space counted toward the parking requirement.
- f. Driveways of front loaded units shall be a minimum of 22 feet deep measured from the back of the sidewalk or curb, whichever is closer to the unit.
- g. Landscaping shall be provided at the ends of alleys at a sufficient height to screen cars parked in the driveways of rear loaded units from the main road. Landscape materials and location are subject to the approval of the Planning Director.

iii. Architecture:

- g. Front and side facades shall be brick and/or stone.
- h. Windows shall be wood windows with simulated divided lites.

4. A plan book that conveys the character and vision for the new neighborhood including proposed site plan, all building elevations, building materials and colors, illustrations of park spaces, location of mail kiosk, and other relevant information shall be submitted prior to issuance of a development permit. The plan book shall address in detail the area of the property directly adjacent to Buford Highway. Architecture for the entire project shall be substantially similar to “Exhibit ‘D’ and shall use high quality building materials, such as brick and/or stone, cement siding and wood windows with simulated divided lites. The Planning and Inspections Director shall review and approve all architecture and have final approval of the plan book prior to the issuance of a development permit. Said plan book shall become a binding restriction on the structures within the development and may be amended or supplemented subject to the approval of the City.
5. Include a pocket park on axis with the entrance to the neighborhood as shown in Exhibit ‘A’. The design of this pocket park shall be reviewed by the Planning and Inspections Director. No development permit shall be issued until the design of the park is approved.
6. Provide a minimum of 30 guest parking spaces within the development. Parking spaces may be provided on-street or off-street and must be clearly marked as parking spaces.
7. Provide a minimum 5 foot wide sidewalk and a minimum 5 foot wide planting zone along both sides of the street from Buford Highway to the pocket park at the neighborhood entrance. Plant street trees from the City approved list of street trees at 40 feet on center within the planting zone. Trees shall have a minimum caliper of 3 inches. A root barrier shall be planted with all trees adjacent to sidewalk or hardscape.
8. Provide a minimum 5 foot wide sidewalk and a minimum 5 foot wide planting zone along both sides of the interior side of the loop road adjacent to the park spaces. Plant street trees from the City approved list of street trees at 40 feet on center within the planting zone. Trees shall have a minimum caliper of 3 inches. A root barrier shall be planted with all trees adjacent to sidewalk. Provide a plan for street trees on the outside of the loop road.
9. All streets and alleys within the development shall be constructed as approved by the City Engineer and shall be private and not maintained by the City. Provide the following note on the front page of all final plats for the neighborhood: “NOTE: ALL ROADS, STREETS, AND ALLEYS ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROPERTY OWNERS TO MAINTAIN THE ROADS, STREETS, AND ALLEYS WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.”

10. Prior to approval of a final plat, provide a street tree plan addressing the provision of street trees, street lights, driveways, and other intrusions into planting zones.
11. Construct a 10 foot wide multiuse path as currently designed or amended by the City along the eastern side of Buford Highway from the southern property line to the northern property line of subject property, or the developer may pay a fee in lieu of constructing said improvement. The amount of this fee shall be calculated by the design engineer working for the City of Suwanee using standard construction cost estimating methodology.
12. Southern Red Oak trees, or a comparable substitute, shall be planted within the landscape zone along Buford Highway on 40 foot centers. Said trees shall be a minimum of 3" caliper trees at the time of planting. If needed, a root barrier shall be planted for all trees adjacent to any sidewalk or hardscape. An arborist shall be consulted in order to maximize the health and growth of these trees. The Planning and Inspections Director shall review and approve the location and species of trees.
13. Overall landscaping shall be approved by the City of Suwanee Planning and Inspections Director.
14. Should traffic signalization be determined to be needed, signals shall be mast-arm style signals subject to the review and approval of Georgia Department of Transportation. Any signals installed to serve development of property shall be installed at the expense of the developer.
15. All utilities shall be located underground.
16. The developer shall provide a comprehensive signage plan prior to issuance of a Development Permit. Said signage plan shall minimally address sign standards for any ground signs, wall signs, directional signs, street signs, entrance monuments, and any on-site marketing signs for the project.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Josh Campbell thanked everyone for attending the board training.

ADJOURNMENT

Glenn Weyant moved to adjourn at moved to adjourn at 7:14 pm.