

MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
June 7, 2016

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Michelle Budd moved to approve the agenda as presented, second by Glenn Weyant. Motion carried 3-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: April 12, 2016

Glenn Weyant moved to approve the April 12, 2016 meeting minutes, second by Michelle Budd. Motion carried 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

RZ-2016-002 – Owner: Gwinnett Prado, LP. Applicant: Lennar Georgia, Inc. The applicant requests a rezoning from C-3 (Special Commercial District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) to allow for development of townhomes. The site is located in Land Lot 238 of the 7th District on McGinnis Ferry Road east of the intersection with Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and contains approximately 12.52 acres.

The applicant requested postponement of RZ-2016-002 until the July Planning Commission meeting.

Pete Charpentier called for any opposition. No one spoke in opposition.

Glenn Weyant moved to postpone RZ-2016-002 until the July Planning Commission meeting, Michelle Budd second. Motion carried 3-0.

RZ-2016-003 – Owner: Drivers Insurance Company. Applicant: KM Homes, LLC. The applicant requests a rezoning from PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) to PMUD (Change of Conditions) to allow for development of townhomes. The site is located in Land Lot 208 of the 7th District at the intersection of Station Center Boulevard and Station Way at 1375 Station Center Boulevard and contains approximately 3.11 acres.

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: The applicant requests a change of conditions to allow for construction of 43 townhomes within Suwanee Station. The

subject property consists of approximately 3.1 acres of undeveloped land currently zoned for up to 51,500 square feet of office development per the original Suwanee Station rezoning to PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) in 2000. The Suwanee Station PMUD rezoning conditions assigned specific uses and densities to each building site within the concept plan. The subject property includes building sites 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 within Phase 8 of the original concept plan. The applicant requests a change of conditions to allow for development of residential townhomes instead of office on this property.

The subject property is located along the northwestern side of Station Center Boulevard at its intersection with Station Way. Proposed development includes 43 townhomes per the concept plan, Exhibit 'A'. These units would be a minimum of 1,800 square feet with a minimum lot width of 24 feet. The site density would be approximately 13.8 units per acre. A new alley off of Station Way will provide access to a 2 car garage for each unit. A second entrance to the development is proposed from Station Center Boulevard. There are 26 existing on-street parking spaces in front of the property. Driveways are proposed to be 22 feet long. Additionally, 4 guest parking spaces would be provided in the interior of the development. A total of 116 spaces would be provided, not including available parking on the driveways. Two sidewalks will directly connect townhomes to the existing multi-use trail adjacent to the property. The development would also include a mail kiosk within the interior of the project.

Roughly half the proposed townhomes would sit near the sidewalk fronting Station Center Boulevard. These units would be 3 stories tall with rear loaded garages. The remaining units within the interior of the development would be 2 story, front loaded units with the rear of the units facing small parks with sidewalk connections to the existing multi-use trail. Four of these front loaded units, have the backs of the units facing Station Way.

Suwanee Station was originally rezoned to PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development) in May of 2000 in anticipation of a future commuter rail stop. In 1995, the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority identified six commuter rail lines that would radiate outward from Atlanta. Suwanee was identified as a potential stop along the Atlanta to Gainesville commuter rail line. More recently, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) identified a route from Atlanta to Charlotte as an intercity passenger rail corridor in the proposed Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) network. A current study is being done by the Georgia Department of Transportation to determine the final route of this potential passenger rail line. Suwanee is a planned stop in 3 of the 6 routes under consideration.

The original Suwanee Station zoning conditions assigned specific uses and densities to each building site within the concept plan, requiring mixed-use or office uses for the tracts that are closest to the planned rail station including the subject property.

In 2003, the project went through the zoning process again. This rezoning, RZ-2003-003, was to amend a condition related to the location of a trail. Other portions of the Suwanee Station project have been the subject of rezoning. In 2010, RZ-2010-001 rezoned the

property along Park Pass Way to allow for the construction of 43 townhomes without simultaneously building commercial and office space required by the original conditions of zoning. RZ-2014-004 was a change of conditions to existing PMUD zoning to allow a change in the locations of access to a multifamily project from the original concept plan for Suwanee Station. The most recent rezonings, RZ-2015-002, RZ-2015-003, and RZ-2015-004, were for three tracts along Station Center Boulevard originally zoned for mixed-use. Each of these three cases was for a change of conditions to allow for development of residential townhomes without providing commercial or office space originally required by conditions of zoning of the original Suwanee Station rezoning to PMUD.

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

If approved, the City will formally review the project during the normal development process.

When the subject property is developed it may use the existing detention facilities, but the project will need to demonstrate compliance with all of the current storm water requirements for the City.

Suwanee Station was approved with a condition that requires the approval of plan books by the Planning Department for all phases of development. A development permit will not be issued by the City until a plan book including proposed site plans, building elevations, building materials and colors, illustrations of public spaces, and other relevant information is approved.

The original concept plan for the subject property shows 5 two story office buildings along Station Center Boulevard with a parking lot behind the buildings between the building and the multi-use trail. The current zoning allows up to 51,500 square feet of office, but does not allow residential; therefore, a change of conditions for the Suwanee Station PMUD is required to allow for the 43 townhomes the applicant has proposed.

The land was cleared and graded years ago as part of the first phase of development. Some vegetation has grown back in recent years. There are no environmental issues, creeks, floodplain or wetlands that should inhibit development of property; therefore, the property can support the proposed development.

The subject property is bound by Station Center Boulevard to the south and east, the Suwanee Station multi-use trail to the east, and Station Way to the north. The property sits directly across from City owned property that is reserved for future mixed-use development around a future transit station.

The subject property is part of the Station Center District, which is yet to be developed with the exception of the Suwanee Station community center. This district is zoned for mid-rise, mixed-use commercial and office and a future rail station. Similar to this

request, the property to the northeast of the subject property across Station Way was recently rezoned by a change of conditions to the original PMUD to allow for townhomes instead of commercial and office uses. That project, which includes 17 townhomes, is currently under development review by the City and expected to be under construction later this year. There are both existing and planned townhomes on the other side of the multi-use trail from the subject property as well; therefore, the proposed use is consistent with existing nearby uses. Furthermore, since the remainder of the land on the north side of Station Center Boulevard is now solely composed of residential uses, office uses on the subject property may no longer be appropriate.

In 2000, in an effort to plan for a potential commuter rail line, the city identified the Suwanee Station character area as an appropriate location for a rail stop within the City. Suwanee Station was rezoned to PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use District) to allow for a denser, mixed-use development that could support a future rail stop. The Comprehensive Plan identifies a need to provide housing to meet Suwanee's growing population and recommends focusing development in mixed-use centers that can accommodate greater densities. Suwanee Station is one of these targeted mixed-use centers. The Comprehensive Plan states that increasing densities should correspond with transportation strategies. Since Suwanee Station is a potential commuter rail stop, it is appropriate to add medium density housing units on the subject property, which is within a quarter-mile walking distance of the future station.

The proposed concept plan does not follow the Land Use Plan because it proposes residential instead of office. The Land Use Plan calls for "Mixed-Use Center" land uses on the subject property, which include a mixture of medium density residential, office and commercial. However, the potential for Suwanee Station to become a mixed-use, urban center as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan will not be compromised by eliminating the requirement for office on this tract because enough land area still remains to build out future demand for such uses. Suwanee Station was envisioned over 15 years ago in anticipation of a future rail station. While the vision of Suwanee Station as a future mixed-use, TOD (transit oriented development) has not changed, there will not likely be a market for mixed-use development in this location until a rail station is actually operating. The City owns the remaining undeveloped land within Suwanee Station adjacent to the location of the planned rail stop within Suwanee Station, so the City will be able to insure that the core of the neighborhood is developed with appropriate density and mix of uses for a successful TOD (transit oriented development) when a transportation component is implemented.

While the proposed project deviates from the expected building type in current zoning conditions, the applicant's project could still help achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The intent of the residential component of the Suwanee Station mixed-use center is to focus residential density near the proposed rail station to encourage ridership and attract commercial to the core planned for the neighborhood for the purpose of creating an active, mixed-use center typical of TOD (transit oriented development). Suwanee Station was originally zoned to include a mixture of housing types, 327,000 square feet of office, and 113,000 square feet of commercial uses. The project is allowed a total of

approximately 1,100 residential units including single family detached, single family attached, and apartments. Since 2000, 112 single family detached homes, 277 townhomes, and 560 multi-family units have been constructed, but only one 2 story mixed-use office/commercial building has been built. At this point, there are no single family attached and detached residential tracts of the project left to build on. The subject property is the last remaining undeveloped parcel other than the City owned property reserved for the mixed-use station area. The City included certain conditions in the original zoning to ensure non-residential uses would be a component of the project and constructed concurrently. The current request would allow the overall Suwanee Station project to further defer including a non-residential component until there is a station.

In addition to adding needed housing units, the proposed development will also help implement the vision of the Suwanee Station neighborhood plan. The proposed townhomes will sit close to the sidewalk and continue the pedestrian friendly, stoop lined streetscape of Station Center Boulevard. The four front loaded units that face Station Way in the concept plan should be replaced by 3 story, rear loaded units to create the same pedestrian friendly environment along Station Way. The proposed project will also improve the aesthetics along the multi-use trail by creating townhomes and small pocket parks along the trail in place of the surface parking lot proposed by the original Suwanee Station concept plan.

In conclusion, the requested change in conditions is appropriate. The addition of 43 townhome units is consistent with surrounding development and will positively contribute to the pedestrian environment. Furthermore, the construction of housing units will support the attraction of future rail and commercial development to Suwanee Station, which is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, the potential for Suwanee Station to become a mixed-use, urban center as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan will not be compromised by eliminating the requirement for office on the subject property since enough land area still remains to build out future demand for such uses. As such, the Planning Department recommends approval with conditions.

Josh Campbell explained staff's recommended conditions.

Alyssa Durden explained transitional height plane to the Planning Commission members.

Glenn Weyant asked for the height of a 3 story townhome. Josh Campbell stated that a 3 story townhome would be about 35 to 40 feet tall.

Pete Charpentier called upon the applicant.

Ethan Underwood. 202 Triple Gap Road, Cumming, GA. Mr. Underwood stated the original zoning of the property did not work. After meeting with Suwanee Station residents KM Homes has agreed to make revisions to the original plan. KM Homes has agreed to reduce the number of units from 43 to 38. Mr. Underwood stated that staff wanted a mixture of 2 and 3 story townhomes but the residents of Suwanee Station requested 2 story townhomes. KM Homes is willing to limit the height of the townhomes

to 2 stories. KM Homes is also going to work with Suwanee Station on the amenity package. The residents also expressed concern regarding access points. Mr. Underwood explained that there is an existing constructed access point located on Station Center Boulevard. Staff informed KM Homes that they would like to have only one exit point. The design has been modified so that all the traffic is leaving on Station Way. KM Homes is proposing to put a greenspace park in the middle of the new project for everyone to use. Also, units will be modified to 24 foot wide rear loaded units which will face Station Center Boulevard, on the back the homes will be a minimum of 30 feet wide front loaded units with the master on the first floor.

Mr. Underwood stated that staff asked if some of the units could be turned so that they are facing Station Way on the north side. KM Homes would prefer to not turn the units. Also, there was some discussion of moving the park to the south side of the project. Mr. Underwood explained that the applicant would like to keep the park in the middle of the project.

Pete Charpentier asked if 23 units will be 2 story facing the road. Mr. Underwood agreed. Pete Charpentier asked if the garage is the bottom story. Mr. Underwood explained that the units will be 2 stories including the garage. Pete Charpentier also asked if the units on the rear are also 2 story. Mr. Underwood stated that the units on the rear will be 2 story with front load garages.

Josh Campbell stated that staff has drafted a set of conditions for the modified plan presented by KM Homes. The revised site plan is dated May 31, 2016.

Discussion ensued amongst Josh Campbell and Planning Commission members regarding the location of the park.

Pete Charpentier called for opposition.

Barb Allen, 3981 Lake Pass Lane, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Allen is president of the Suwanee Station Home Owners Association. The Suwanee Station Homeowners Association is requesting that all units be 2 stories. This particular parcel is relatively flat and there are no other on grade units facing Station Center Boulevard, including the new units by Providence. There is also concern for the number of units. The original proposal was for 43 but has been reduced to 38. The HOA is aware of someone interested in the property who only wanted to build 25 units on this particular parcel. Suwanee Station has smaller lots but large greenspace areas throughout the subdivision. Ms. Allen would like to ensure that the greenspace will be large enough to be used. There is concern about egress. There is only one for these units onto Station Way. Ms. Allen is concerned about the increasing traffic issues along Station Center Boulevard and asks that a traffic study be considered.

Janice Folkers, 1206 Lake Point Way, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Folkers is concerned about the egress. The apartment complex and the new townhomes will bring 600 additional

cars to the subdivision. There have been issues with bus stops and emergency vehicles. A traffic study should be conducted before moving forward with the townhomes.

Mary Silady, 3831 Lake Pass Lane, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Silady stated that the density is too high. Ms. Silady is concerned with the egress. Moving the pocket park closes off the extra entrance. There should be two openings throughout.

Jamie Rasnic, 1314 Park Pass Way, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Rasnic was rear ended in Suwanee Station. There are no pedestrian crossings or four way stops. The traffic issues needs to be addressed.

MaryAnn Mote 1255 Park Pass Way, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Mote is concerned about the safety of the children waiting at the bus stop on Station Way.

Cindy Yuli, 1260 Park Pass Way, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Yuli is concerned about the egress on Station Way. Emergency vehicles will not be able to get through because the road is very narrow.

Pete Charpentier asked Josh Campbell about a traffic study. Josh Campbell explained that traffic studies are typically required on large projects, usually 300 or 400 units. This is a small development of about 40 units. The traffic impact should not be significant. Compared to the way the property is currently zoned, the townhomes should be less impactful than the 50,000 square foot office use.

Pete Charpentier asked Josh Campbell about the egress Discussion ensued amongst Planning Commission, Josh Campbell and Ethan Underwood regarding egress and curb cuts.

Pete Charpentier asked about density. Josh Campbell presented an exhibit that showed the three most recent rezonings done by the Providence Group. The proposed density is in line with existing townhomes in Suwanee Station and with recent rezonings.

Josh Campbell stated that there are a number of units behind the current project that are 3 stories. The property across the street that is being developed by Jolly Development will have 3 story units facing Station Way.

Pete Charpentier asked Ethan Underwood about the moving the entrance off of Station Center Boulevard. Mr. Underwood stated that the entrance could be moved.

Glenn Weyant asked about the improvements to the amenity area. Mr. Underwood stated that the contribution to the amenity area will be handled in a private agreement.

Michelle Budd asked about pedestrian crossings. Josh Campbell stated that pedestrian improvements can be added during the development process on the KM Homes site, but requesting the developer to add crosswalks elsewhere would be a system improvement; therefore, the City cannot ask the developer to do that.

Michelle Budd moved to approve RZ-2016-003 with amended conditions, second by Glenn Weyant. Motion carried 3-0 (additions = bold underline, deletions = ~~strikethrough~~):

1. All conditions from prior rezonings shall remain in effect except as otherwise noted below.
2. A maximum ~~43~~ **38** townhomes shall be allowed and no commercial, office or mixed-use development shall be required. The portion of Phase VIII noted as buildings 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 shall allow a maximum of ~~43~~ **38** townhomes and shall not require any commercial or office development.

Site design shall be substantially similar to Exhibit 'A' **dated May 31, 2016** ~~including two interior pocket parks~~ with the following alterations:

- a) ~~Eliminate or relocate the curb cut onto Station Center Boulevard to allow for the creation of~~ **Create** a pocket park at the southern end of the property between the existing multi-use trail adjacent to the property and Station Center Boulevard.
 - b) Frame the interior edge of the public pocket park with a hedge row to make a clear distinction between private property and the public pocket park. The design of any pocket park on the property shall be reviewed by the Planning and Inspections Director. No development permit shall be issued until the design of the parks is approved.
 - c) Turn buildings ~~1, 2, 3 and 4~~ **26, 27 and 28** to face the pocket park at the southern end of the property.
 - d) Provide access to Station Center Boulevard between units 38 & 1.**
 - e) Provide a crosswalk access on Station Way to be approved by the City Engineer.**
3. Provide ~~two interior~~ sidewalks connections ~~as shown in Exhibit 'A'~~ connecting interior green space parks to the existing multi-use trail adjacent to the property.
 4. Provide a 5 foot wide sidewalk and 5 foot wide planting zone along Station Way. Plant street trees at 40 feet on center. Trees planted to satisfy this requirement shall be consistent with existing street trees on Station Way. Trees shall have a minimum caliper of 3 inches. A root barrier shall be planted with all trees adjacent to sidewalk.
 5. Development Standards:
 - a) Minimum unit size shall be 1,800 square feet.
 - b) Townhomes shall be located on fee simple lots with a minimum width of 24 feet.

- c) Townhomes will have a front yard setback of 5 feet from the right-of-way. Stoops, steps and landscaping may be located within this setback.
 - d) Minimum distance between buildings shall be 20 feet.
 - e) Driveways shall be a minimum of 22 feet long.
 - f) Maximum building height shall be ~~3~~ 2 stories for buildings facing a public street and 2 stories for units that do not face a public street.
 - g) All units along a public street shall be rear loaded and face the public street.
6. Buildings shall use high quality materials, including brick and/or stone on at least the front and sides of buildings and windows with simulated divided lites. Siding shall be limited to rear elevations and must be fiber cement siding. Each townhome shall have a covered front stoop at the entrance elevated a minimum of 18” and a maximum of 6 feet above the grade of the sidewalk in front of the townhome. Wood or fiber cement materials may be used as trim or on porches/stoops. Railing materials may be wrought iron, wood or steel. The City of Suwanee Planning and Inspections Director shall have final approval for all architecture prior to the issuance of a development permit. The architecture and location of the mail kiosk will be a part of this review.
7. Landscaping shall be approved by the City of Suwanee Planning and Inspections Director.
8. Provide active tree protection fencing around all street trees. No equipment may be stored on or cross landscape strips except as expressly approved by the Planning Department.
9. No portion of a building on the subject property shall be constructed within a transitional height plane starting at the property line of the townhomes on the other side of the multi-use trail to a height of 35 feet and then extending 30 feet horizontally and then upward at a 45-degree angle.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Pete Charpentier moved to adjourn at 7:37 pm.