

STAFF ANALYSIS:

RZ-2012-005 & SUP-2012-002

**CITY OF SUWANEE
REZONING ANALYSIS**

CASE NUMBER: RZ-2012-005
REQUEST: C-2 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) TO
M-1 (LIGHT INDUSTRY DISTRICT)

CASE NUMBER: SUP-2012-002
REQUEST: SELF-STORAGE FACILITY IN M-1(LIGHT
INDUSTRY DISTRICT)

LOCATION: 345 SAWMILL DRIVE

TAX ID NUMBERS: 7-169-032 and 7-169-001B

ACREAGE: 2.09 ACRES

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: SELF-STORAGE FACILITY

APPLICANT: AMBURGY PROPERTIES
420 OLD HOMESTEAD TRAIL
DULUTH, GA 30097

OWNER: REGENCY CHURCH OF GOD
345 SAWMILL DRIVE
SUWANEE, GA 30024

CONTACT: TONY AMBURGY/WAYLON HOGE
CONTACT PHONE: 678-546-0446

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

PROJECT DATA:

The applicant seeks a rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial District) to M-1 (Light Industry District) and a Special Use Permit to allow for a self-storage facility. The subject 2.09 acre site is located at 345 Sawmill Drive and currently contains two existing, one-story masonry buildings, including a former restaurant (Waffle House) and a building most recently used as a religious institution. The site is located just east of the intersection of Sawmill Drive and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and is adjacent to Interstate 85.

The applicant proposes to construct three self-storage buildings on the property, including a two-story 60,000 square foot building, a one-story 8,000 square foot building and a one-story 3,150 square foot building. The buildings will be climate controlled and gated for added security. There are two proposed access points, one entrance and one exit, onto Sawmill Drive.

The Special Use Permit process was created by the City Council in 2001 to better handle certain land uses. The SUP process allows the City Council to review certain proposals in the context of their use and take into consideration the surrounding area and other relevant factors. A Special Use Permit does not change the underlying zoning of property, but grants the property an additional specified use. In this case the specified use would allow for a self-storage facility, if the property is first rezoned to M-1.

DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS:

There are currently two buildings located on the site. The proposed development would include demolishing the two buildings and the existing parking area. If the zoning change and special use permit are approved then the development will need to be reviewed for compliance with zoning and development requirements through the usual development and building permit review process. The applicant should be aware that the City requires stormwater facilities to address water quality, water quantity and channel protection.

The site is adjacent to an abandoned roadway that lies within the Interstate 85 right-of-way. The location of this road creates security and aesthetic issues that should be addressed during the development of the site. While this area is outside of the applicant's property attempts should be made to mitigate the abandoned road's impacts either on-site or off-site through coordination with the Federal Highway Administration.

ANALYSIS:

The applicant proposes to construct three climate controlled self-storage buildings totaling 71,150 square feet. These buildings include a two-story 60,000 square foot building (Building 2), a one-story 8,000 square foot building (Building 1) and a one-story 3,150 square foot building (Building 3). According to plans submitted by the applicant, there will be approximately 350 individual self-storage units. Approximately 80 percent of these units will include interior access. A portion of the storage units in Building 1 and Building 2 are accessed from the interior, while Building 3 includes exterior access units only. All buildings are oriented so that exterior access overhead doors have limited visibility from outside of the site. Building exteriors facing the public right-of-way or an adjoining property do not include exterior self-storage access points. The site also contains 7 off-street parking spaces and a detention pond. This site can accommodate the proposed use.

The 2.09 acre tract is located near the intersection of Sawmill Drive and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. Commercial uses surround the subject parcel. To the north and west are parcels zoned C-3 (Special Commercial District) and contain a package store and gas station respectively. To the east is a vacant parcel zoned C-2A (Special Commercial District-Alcohol). The Interstate 85 right-of-way abuts the site to the south. This property was annexed into the City in March of 1995.

The subject property is located in the Suwanee Gateway Character Area. The City has taken steps to improve this area. A Development Strategy Report was conducted to offer ideas and

recommendations for improving and revitalizing the area. One strategy mentioned in the Report is to enhance the “4 Corners” of the Interstate ramps. The subject property is specifically mentioned numerous times in the Strategy Report as needing major improvement to enhance the area. In addition, participants overwhelmingly supported improving the Suwanee Gateway during the recent development of the City’s 20/20 Strategic Plan. In fact, 17 of the 23 round table citizen discussion groups held during the 20/20 Vision planning process listed the Gateway as the highest priority for focusing efforts for improvement.

The City’s Future Land Use Plan recommends office uses for this site. The proposed use is not consistent with the Future Land Use Map. Staff met with the applicant several months ago to discuss the project. It was made clear that since the proposed use was not consistent with the City’s Future Land Use Plan that the design of the site and the architecture of the buildings would be an important factor in determining whether the self-storage facility would fit into the future plans for the area. A well designed self-storage facility that also removes a vacant and deteriorating structure could be consistent with the plan for class “A” offices in the area. Subsequently, the applicant submitted proposed elevations of the buildings with the rezoning application. The units that are accessed from outside all face internally and the bay doors are not visible to neighboring properties. The buildings contain an extensive amount of brick on the most visible parts of the buildings in order to improve the aesthetics of the property. The largest of the buildings contains a façade with glass and architectural features. The rear façade facing the I-85 exit ramp contains these features as well.

While the proposed land use is in conflict with the City’s Future Land Use Plan, the redevelopment of this vacant site into a self-storage facility meets the overall expectations of the Suwanee Gateway Character Area. According to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the Suwanee Gateway should present a strong, positive image of the City. A well-designed self-storage facility is consistent with this recommendation. Also, the subject property is relatively small as are the neighboring properties on the south side of Sawmill Drive. It is unlikely that a mid to high rise office building and associated parking area could be accommodated on a two acre parcel. Assemblage of parcels would likely be required, which would be difficult since the property is constrained by existing right-of-way. A high-quality self-storage facility could improve the visual quality of the area making it more attractive for future development opportunities that are more in-line with the City’s Future Land Use Plan.

In conclusion, the request is appropriate given the commercial nature of the area. However, steps should be taken to ensure that the development is constructed with the highest of aesthetic standards. In addition, the subject site is not large enough to support a mid to high-rise office building and other necessary site improvements. Finally, the site is being underutilized despite being located in the Suwanee Gateway with frontage along Interstate 85. Improvement of the site and of the surrounding area is a priority for the City. Therefore, staff recommends **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS** or RZ-2012-005 and SUP-2012-002

Planning Department Recommended Conditions:
RZ-2012-005

Staff recommends approval of request for rezoning the property subject to the following conditions:

1. Architectural plans for all buildings shall be approved by the Planning Director and shall be generally consistent with the architectural elevations identified as Exhibit "A".
2. The property shall be permitted for development in a manner generally consistent with Exhibit "B"
3. Uses shall be limited to a self-storage facility as shown on the plans submitted.
4. A recombination plat shall be submitted and approved prior to the issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit.

SUP-2012-002

Staff recommends approval of the request for a self-storage facility subject to the following conditions:

1. Special use of the property for a climate controlled self-storage facility shall be allowed. No other special uses are permitted except as accessory uses subject to the approval of the Planning Director.
2. The applicant shall ensure that the site is secured to the satisfaction of the Planning Director.

Standards Governing Exercise of Zoning Power

Pursuant to Section 2006 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance, the City finds the following standards are relevant in balancing the interest in promoting the public health, safety, morality, or general welfare against the unrestricted use of property and shall govern the exercise of the zoning power therewith.

- A. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property;

The request to allow for a self-storage facility is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property given that it is surrounded by commercial uses.

- B. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing uses or usability of adjacent or nearby property;

With the appropriate conditions to ensure a quality design, the rezoning and special use permit would not adversely affect the existing uses or usability of adjacent or nearby properties.

- C. Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned;

The property has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

- D. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools;

The proposal would not result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.

- E. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Land Use Plan;

The 2030 Future Land Use Map shows this property as office. The request is not consistent with the Future Land Use Map. However, a well-designed self-storage building with aesthetically pleasing building material would improve the property and the area and support future office uses.

- F. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal;

The subject property is being severely underutilized as it contains a deteriorating religious facility and a vacant restaurant building. The quality of the architecture will help to enhance the Suwanee Gateway area.

REZONING APPLICATION

AN APPLICATION TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA

| APPLICANT INFORMATION* | OWNER INFORMATION* |
|---|--|
| NAME: <u>Amburgy Properties,</u> | NAME: <u>Regency Church of God</u> |
| ADDRESS: <u>420 Old Homestead Trail</u> <u>Duluth, Georgia 30097</u> | ADDRESS: <u>345 Sawmill Drive</u> <u>Suwanee, Georgia 30024</u> |
| PHONE: <u>678-546-0446</u> | PHONE: <u>404-290-2636</u> |
| CONTACT PERSON: <u>Tony Amburgy / Waylon Hoge</u> | PHONE: _____ |
| EMAIL ADDRESS: <u>tony.amburgy@gmail.com</u> <u>waylon@integrityeng.net</u> | FAX NUMBER: <u>678-835-9299</u> |
| PROPERTY INFORMATION | |
| PRESENT ZONING DISTRICT(S): <u>C-2</u> | REQUESTED ZONING DISTRICT <u>M-1</u> |
| PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: <u>Climate Controlled Self Storage</u> | |
| TAX PARCEL NUMBER(S): <u>7-169-032</u> | |
| ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: <u>345 Sawmill Drive, Suwanee, Georgia 30024</u> | |
| TOTAL ACREAGE: <u>2.09</u> | PUBLIC ROADWAY ACCESS: <u>Sawmill Drive</u> |
| FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: | FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: |
| NO. OF LOTS/DWELLING UNITS: <u>N/A</u> | NO. OF BUILDINGS/UNITS: <u>3 Buildings</u> |
| DWELLING UNIT SIZE (SQ. FT.): <u>N/A</u> | TOTAL GROSS SQUARE FEET: <u>71,150 s.f.</u> |
| CERTIFICATIONS | |
| <p>I hereby certify that the above and attached information is true and correct. I am also aware that pursuant to Section 2004 no reapplication on the same land which has been denied by the City Council shall be acted upon within 12 months from the date of last action unless said time period is waived by the Council. In no case shall a reapplication be acted upon in less than 6 months from the date of last action by the Council. I am also aware that pursuant to Section 2003 of the Zoning Ordinance any and all conditions which may be attached to the property shall be binding on the property and all subsequent owners.</p> | |
| <u>[Signature]</u> Signature of Applicant* <u>Tony Amburgy</u> Print Name* <u>[Signature]</u> Signature of Notary <u>7-31-12</u> Date | <u>[Signature]</u> Signature of Owner* <u>Joseph E. Cheeley Jr.</u> Print Name* <u>[Signature]</u> Signature of Notary <u>8/2/12</u> Date <u>8/2/12</u> Date <u>8/2/12</u> Date |
| * If Applicant or Owner Information is Needed Please Complete Additional Application Form(s) | |



CITY OF SUWANEE USE ONLY

Date Received: 8-2-12 Case No.: R2-2012-005 Accepted By: DR

REZONING APPLICANT'S RESPONSE
STANDARDS GOVERNING EXERCISE OF THE ZONING POWER

Pursuant to section 2006 of the 1998 Zoning Ordinance, the city council finds that the following standards are relevant in balancing the interest in promoting the public health, safety, morality, or general welfare against the right to the unrestricted use of property and shall govern the exercise of the zoning power.

Please respond to the following standards in the space provided or use an attachment as necessary:

(A) Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property:
Yes. The surrounding property is all commercial in nature.

(B) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property:
No. Self storage is low volume retail that will have a low impact on traffic and provides a service that is an asset to the community.

(C) Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned:
This property is developed and vacant as it is currently zoned. The rezoning of this property would have a positive impact as it would allow for the property to be re-developed and used for the operation of a business that will be an asset to the community.

(D) Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools:
This development would have the least amount of impact out of a majority commercially developed area. Self storage generates a low volume of traffic for minimal impact.

(E) Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the land use plan:
The intent of the land use plan is to enhance the I-85 business district through cosmetic changes to the I-85 interchange and the creation of the "Suwanee Gateway" as well as the re-development of existing vacant properties. This development will help to achieve that goal and serve as a catalyst for additional re-development.

(F) Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal:
None.

CITY OF SUWANEE USE ONLY

Date Received: 8-2-12 Case No.: RZ-2012-005 Accepted By: DR

August 1st 2012

City of Suwanee Zoning Board of Appeals
330 Town Center Avenue
Suwanee, Georgia 30024

RE: Letter of Intent
Rezoning Application
345 Sawmill Drive

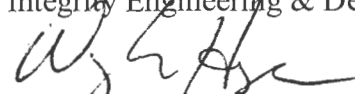
To whom it may concern,

The applicant, Amburgy Properties, LLC on behalf of the owner, Regency Church of God, hereby submits this rezoning application for the rezoning of the subject property from C-2 to M-1. The applicant is requesting the rezoning to allow for the construction of a climate controlled self-storage facility.

The subject property contains 2.09 acres and lies on the north side of I-85 on Sawmill Drive. The property is currently developed with two (2) one-story masonry buildings that are vacant. The owner's intent is to re-develop the property and construct two (2) one-story buildings totaling 11,150 s.f. and one (1) two-story building totaling 60,000 s.f. for a grand total of 71,150 s.f. with a gross density of 34,043 s.f./ acre to be used as a climate controlled self-storage facility. The property is planned to be accessed by two driveways located on Sawmill Drive. A total of 7 parking spaces are proposed for the sales office. The buildings have been arranged so restrict the view of overhead doors from off-site. This development will meet the intent of the comprehensive plan through the re-development a vacant property that lies within the Principal Economic Development Node. This node aims to capture the maximum new economic development to increase and diversify employment opportunities over time. The proposed re-development will help to achieve that goal.

Attached to the rezoning application is the existing boundary survey & legal description, proposed site plan, color rendering of the site plan and building elevations for the proposed development. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require any further information or documentation. The Applicant respectfully requests your approval of this application.

Sincerely,
Integrity Engineering & Development Services, Inc.


Waylen Hoge, P.E.
Principal

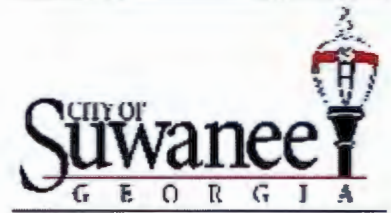


EXHIBIT C RZ-2012-005 & SUP-2012-002

Location Map

Legend

-  Subject Site
-  Roads





EXHIBIT D
RZ-2012-005 &
SUP-2012-002
Aerial Map

Legend

-  Subject Site
-  Roads

