

# Planning Commission



## Minutes of the Thursday, June 20, 2019 Regular Meeting

### *Members of the Planning Commission*

Briton Williams

*Chair*

Leonard Carter, Jr.

Timothy V. Key

Larry Watts

Bob Clark

JoAnn McKie

Dr. Christine Crawford

1. **Call to Order** - The regular meeting of June 20, 2019, having been duly publicized, was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** - Members present were Chairman Briton Williams and Commissioners Dr. Christine Crawford, Bob Clark, JoAnn McKie, Timothy Key, and Len Carter. Commissioner Larry Watts was absent. Also in attendance were Councilmember David McGhee, Councilmember Eric Presnell, Libby Hodges, Director of Planning and Development, the press, and members of the public.
3. **Approval of Minutes** - The minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 16, 2019 were approved as written.
4. **Confirmation of Agenda** – There were no changes to the agenda.

Chairman Williams requested to reorder the agenda so that application RWA19-001 would be considered first, application RZT19-002 considered second, and application RZT19-003 be considered third. He stated this request is due to time constraints. Chairman Williams asked for a verbal concurrence. Members of the Planning Commission agreed.

5. **Application RWA19-001** – A request by Paul Brewer and Barbara Coleman to abandon a section of unnamed alley at the rear of 812 Carolina Avenue, ±0.02 acres.
  - a. Public Hearing
  - b. Consideration of the Alley Abandonment application by the Commission
  - c. Recommendation

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application RWA19-001, a request to abandon a section of an unnamed alley at the rear of 812 Carolina Avenue, and asked if Mrs. Hodges had information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges stated this is an alley abandonment behind Mr. Brewer's home located at 812 Carolina Avenue and the request was shared with several other departments within the City for any issues or objections to the request and there were none.

Chairman Williams asked if there were any questions from the Planning Commission for Mrs. Hodges.

Mr. Paul Brewer, 812 Carolina Avenue, North Augusta, SC explained that he and his wife bought their property thirteen years ago and one of the drawbacks of the property is that the depth of the driveway is not sufficient for parking of all their vehicles. He stated he has to park his vehicle on Carolina Avenue and, due to the traffic, four months ago his car was rear-ended. Mr. Brewer explained that the alley in question dead-ends at his property line. He said he approached the property owner on the other side of the alley and requested and obtained a quit-claim deed from that property owner.

Chairman Williams asked Mr. Brewer if he would be extending the driveway or possibly building a garage. Mr. Brewer replied that he could build a garage and the driveway would not be extended from the front.

After further discussion, all comments and questions were addressed.

No further comments or questions were made from the public and Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion. Commissioner Key motioned to approve the application for abandonment of a section of unnamed alley at the rear of 812 Carolina Avenue to be recommended to City Council for approval. Commissioner Clark offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

**6. Application RZT19-002**- A request by Mountaineer Pest Services to amend Article 3, Section 3.8.2, Establishment of the Corridor Overlay Districts, of the North Augusta Development Code to amend the NP, Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District to remove properties from overlay requirements.

- a. Public Hearing
- b. Consideration of the Text Amendment application by the Commission
- c. Recommendation

Chairman Williams recused himself from the project application. He stated Vice-Chair Commissioner Clark will chair this portion of the meeting.

Commissioner Clark read the application summary for Application RZT19-002, a request to amend Article 3, Section 3.8.2, Establishment of the Corridor Overlay Districts, of the North Augusta Development Code to amend the NP, Neighborhood

Preservation Overlay District to remove properties from overlay requirements, and asked if Mrs. Hodges had information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges stated the Development Code did not provide her any criteria to provide to the Commissioners to review the text change. She said she has provided a draft copy of what it would look like if the changes that are requested are made and the applicant, Mr. Pace, is in attendance to answer any questions.

Mr. Michael Pace, 128 Woodlawn Road, Clark Hill, South Carolina 29821 stated in 2008 he purchased the building on Georgia Avenue that was once a real estate office out of the building for many years without ever having to comply with any rules or regulations by the City. He said he was not grandfathered in and he was forced to spend an exorbitant amount of money on a plan which was approved. Mr. Pace stated in 2012 he reapplied to expand his operation because he needed more parking room. He stated he is requesting permission to develop the property to general commercial standards so that he can continue to grow his business and keep it in North Augusta.

Commissioner Clark invited comments or questions from the public.

The following members of the public spoke about the text amendment:

Ken Powell, 320 Clay Street, stated that the Neighborhood Preservation Overlay should be looked at all inclusively and not by separate parcels.

After further discussion, all comments and questions were addressed and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Clark stated this code passed in 2008 and it is in place for neighborhoods that are in transition. He said he sees no problem in addressing neighborhoods one-at-a-time as the situation demands it.

Commissioner McKie stated we need to look at the fact that Mr. Pace is willing to spend eight-hundred thousand dollars on that street in order to grow the community. She said we are stifling our community by not allowing it to grow.

Commissioner Key stated he voted "no" last time thinking the Commission would address the problem and then it would be cured. He said Mr. Pace has been placed in a precarious position in that he has already placed investments.

Commissioner Carter stated it is the Commission's job to make decisions based on the rules that are in place. He questioned if the Commission can actually do what is requested based on Article 3.

Mrs. Hodges explained that it is staff's interpretation, with the assistance of the legal department, that the text change would be the proper way to change this because the text of Article 3 creates that overlay district and gives the outlines to the district.

Councilmember Eric Presnell stated he is present for the Commission meeting to understand the process and agreed something needs to be done.

Commissioner Crawford stated her concern is the piecemeal of properties and the need to look at properties in their totality.

Councilmember David McGhee, 522 Railroad Avenue, North Augusta, stated the overlay on Georgia Avenue has a general commercial corridor where growth has been stifled. He said he is of the opinion that the overlay needs to be removed or modified drastically.

After further discussion all comments and questions were addressed.

Commissioner Key motioned to recommend that the City Council approve Application RZT19-002 to amend Section 3.8.2, Establishment of Corridor Overlay Districts, in Article 3, Zoning Districts, of the North Augusta Development Code. The proposed amendment would modify the boundaries of the current Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District to exclude Briggs Avenue to Maddox Street on the West side of Georgia Avenue. Commissioner McKie offered a second. The Planning Commission, on a vote of 4-1, voted in favor of a recommendation to City Council to approve the text amendment.

7. **Application RZT19-003**- A request by the City of North Augusta to amend Article 13, Signs, of the North Augusta Development Code.
- a. Public Hearing
  - b. Consideration of the Text Amendment application by the Commission
  - c. Recommendation

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application RZT19-003, a request by the City of North Augusta to amend Article 13, Signs, of the North Augusta Development Code and asked if Mrs. Hodges had information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges provided slides for the Commission to view and stated these changes are to simplify and clarify the ordinance and allow some new types of signage, and allow for some more diverse signage types downtown. She said when we began to study the text we created a subcommittee with Planning Commissioner McKie and Planning Commissioner Key. Mrs. Hodges explained a draft was created and it was brought to several Planning Commission study meetings and staff held a public review on May 7, 2019. She said it has been available on the City website since April 26, 2019 and she has not received and emails or comments from the public in general. Mrs. Hodges stated some minor reordering has been done to ensure that the text is as clear as it possibly could be and she discussed what additional edits have been done.

Chairman Williams asked for questions from the Planning Commission for Mrs. Hodges.

Commissioner McKie commented, that though she and Commissioner Key worked with Mrs. Hodges, a lot of effort by Mrs. Hodges went into editing and making these regulations correct. She said this has been a strenuous process. Commissioner Key agreed.

Chairman Williams invited comments or questions from the public.

Councilmember David McGee, 522 Railroad Avenue, North Augusta, questioned if banners have been addressed. Mrs. Hodges answered that banners remain prohibited at this time as in the current code. Discussions of changes to those provisions should be held at a later date.

After further discussion, all comments and questions were addressed and the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion. Commissioner Crawford motioned to approve Application RZT19-003, a request by the City of North Augusta to amend Article 13, Signs, of the North Augusta Development Code.

Chairman Williams stated we now have a Planning Director that is planning and this Commission hopefully will begin to see that we will be forward thinking instead of reacting. He said Mrs. Hodges has brought new eyes, a fresh perspective, and a willingness to move us forward. Chairman Williams stated we are making strides.

Commissioner Key offered a second. The Planning Commission unanimously voted in favor of a recommendation to City Council to approve the text amendment.

## **8. Staff Report**

- a. May Performance Report
- b. Transportation projects status
- c. June 21, 2019, SCAPA Conference in Greenwood – Continuing Education  
June 26, 2019, LSCOG training in Aiken – Continuing Education

Mrs. Hodges included the May performance report in the information packet for the Commission. She requested that attention be paid to the Lower Savannah Council of Governments survey and its link and encouraged everyone to take the survey. Mrs. Hodges stated we are still working on altering our performance report by reporting incoming phone calls. She said work is being done on an RFP for a transportation study of Martintown Corridor.

**Adjourn**-- With no objection, Chairman Williams adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Hodges", written in a cursive style.

Libby Hodges, AICP, Director  
Department of Planning and Development  
Secretary to the Planning Commission