

# Planning Commission



## Minutes of the Thursday, August 15, 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 August 15, 2019, having been duly publicized, was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** - Members present were Chairman Briton Williams, Commissioners Timothy Key, JoAnn McKie, Dr. Christine Crawford, and Bob Clark. Commissioners Larry Watts and Leonard Carter, Jr. were absent. Also in attendance were Libby Hodges, Director of Planning and Development, and members of the public.
3. **Approval of Minutes** - The minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 18, 2019 were approved as written.
4. **Confirmation of Agenda** – There were no changes to the agenda.

Mrs. Hodges clarified to the Commissioners that when looking at the Concept Plans it is non-binding, it is just a review from the Planning Commission. She said though it states "recommendation" if the Commissioners have any recommendations for the applicants it would be appropriate to be made at that time.

5. **Application CONPL19-001** - A request by Peter Patel for an initial review of plans for a Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins drive-thru restaurant and professional office building on ±0.92 acres located at 216 and 300 E. Martintown Rd., TPNs 007-07-17-003 and 007-07-17-004, zoned OC, Office Commercial and within the NP, Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District.
  - a. Consideration of the sketch plan by the Commission

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application CONPL19-001, a request for an initial review of plans for a Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins drive-thru restaurant and professional office building on ±0.92 acres located at 216 and 300 E. Martintown Rd., TPNs 007-07-17-003 and 007-07-17-004, zoned OC, Office

Commercial and within the NP, Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District and asked Mrs. Hodges if she had any information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges stated the points of the OC zoning, in order to have a restaurant, the applicant would need to rezone to a different zoning and, with the Neighborhood Preservation Overlay, it causes some additional design restrictions on the site which are outlined in the staff report.

Chairman Williams asked for questions from the Planning Commission for Mrs. Hodges and there were none.

Chairman Williams asked if the applicant had any comments.

Mr. Peter Patel spoke on behalf of the project and stated they would like to do a two or three tenant building along with Dunkin' Donuts with possibly a retail office or medical use office. He stated they have developed projects in Richmond and Columbia County and understand that there are concerns with the specific zoning and restrictions on the proposed developments property.

Commissioner Key questioned if the size of the lot fit the footprint of a Dunkin' Donuts. Mr. Patel answered yes and explained a free-standing Dunkin' Donuts, financially, does not work and they try to have one or two businesses go in with them on a project to make it work. Mr. Key asked Mr. Patel if he were aware that the zoning, at this time, does not permit a drive thru. Mr. Patel replied yes and explained a drive-thru is very critical for the business and without it they would not be able to get the corporate Dunkin' Donuts approval. He explained that a drive-thru is a necessity for most guests and seventy percent of their business is performed through the drive-thru.

Chairman Williams questioned the entrance off of Jersey Avenue. Mrs. Hodges stated there is an additional entrance on East Martintown Road. Commissioner Key asked if a deceleration lane would be required. Mrs. Hodges replied they would have to do clarify it with SCDOT.

Commissioner Crawford questioned if another restaurant is foreseen being developed on this pad. Mr. Patel answered no.

Commissioner Mckie expressed that, due to the neighborhood overlay district, there will be opposition to the drive-thru even if the request is approved.

Chairman Williams stated the Commissions main focus is to revise policies and zoning to support mixed use development. He said this piece of property has sat idle, bringing no value to anyone, and is appreciative that Mr. Patel is investing in it. Commissioner Clark agreed with Commissioner McKie's comment.

Commissioner Key stated the more items that can be tacked down and covered the better it would be to assist in making the project happen.

After further discussion all comments and questions were addressed.

The Planning Commission was generally supportive and cautioned the applicant to be aware of the overlay district and its potential effects on the project.

6. **Application CONPL19-002** - A request by Mary Ann Jones Turner, Doris Jones Rodriguez, and the Joseph Edward Jones Life Estate represented by David Banks, PE, Southern Partners, Inc. for an initial review of plans for a multi-family senior housing project to be located on TPNs 006-20-09-010, 006-20-09-011, and 006-20-09-014, zoned GC, General Commercial and within the HC, Highway Corridor Overlay District.
  - a. Consideration of the sketch plan by the Commission

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application CONPL19-002, a request by Mary Ann Jones Turner, Doris Jones Rodriguez, and the Joseph Edward Jones Life Estate represented by David Banks, PE, Southern Partners, Inc. for an initial review of plans for a multi-family senior housing project to be located on TPNs 006-20-09-010, 006-20-09-011, and 006-20-09-014, zoned GC, General Commercial and within the HC, Highway Corridor Overlay District and asked Mrs. Hodges if she had any information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges explained this is the second Concept Plan of the evening and reiterated that this property is in the Highway Corridor Overlay District and the applicant has done some modification to their original site plan to be more in line with the Highway Corridor overlay. She said one of their main concerns is with regard to parking and parking reductions on the site.

Chairman Williams questioned the access range and asked if it were approved. Mrs. Hodges answered yes.

Chairman Williams asked for questions from the Planning Commission for Mrs. Hodges and there were none.

Chairman Williams asked if the applicant had any comments.

Mr. David Banks, with Southern Partners, Inc., spoke on behalf of his client explaining the plan is for a four story, forty-unit senior living apartment complex. There is concern over the required 1.1 parking spaces per unit which would require fifty parking spaces. The applicant stated the number of spaces would not fit on this piece of property and not all of the residents will have vehicles. He said a parking study was done on the property and felt this requirement was a little high for the site and he would have to

deal with empty parking spaces as unsightly. Mr. Banks stated they are asking for one space per unit, they will not be assigned spaces, and guests will be able to park in other locations. He said the parking study showed twenty-seven spaces for the forty units and they also showed, due to ten of the units being two-bedroom, the maximum number came to thirty-four parking spaces. Mr. Banks said his main concern is obtaining a waiver through a site plan submittal.

Commissioner McKie asked for clarification that a one bedroom unit needs one parking space and a two bedroom unit needs two. Mrs. Hodges explained that the development code for housing services for the elderly is per bed.

Commissioner Key questioned if it was subsidized housing or market rate. Mrs. Hodges answered subsidized.

Commissioner McKie questioned if the parking was for visitors as well. Mrs. Hodges answered the total amount of spaces is the just the total amount of spaces and they are not broken up by visitors verses residents. Commissioner McKie asked if five additional parking spaces could be added. Mrs. Hodges replied it would be extremely tight to add five additional parking spaces because it is not just the spaces we are dealing with. She explained the parking affects stormwater and landscaping design.

Chairman Williams stated he like the project and he would be very supportive of it.

Commissioner Crawford stated she likes the project, but is concerned about the tight parking spaces. Commissioner Clark questioned if there were a way to add parallel parking for staff.

Commissioner McKie questioned how much buffer variance is needed to make the parking work. Mrs. Hodges stated there cannot be more than ten parking spaces in a row and currently there are eight in one location and eight in the other. She explained that the stormwater and landscaping requirements would make it difficult to change the parking.

After further discussion all comments and questions were addressed.

The Planning Commission asked for additional information on other facilities of this type to assist in reviewing the parking reduction request.

7. **Application ANX17-002** - A request by the Aiken County Board of Education for the annexation of a ±0.16 portion of TPN 006-06-01-011 to be zoned P, Public Use.
  - a. Consideration of the annexation request by the Commission
  - b. Recommendation

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application ANX17-002, a request by the Aiken County Board of Education for the annexation of a ±0.16 portion of TPN 006-06-01-011 to be zoned P, Public Use and asked Mrs. Hodges if she had any information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges stated it is a continuation of an application that was started in 2017 and the request is in order to finish the process which would help with some of the requirements for Next Generation 911. She said there are properties that are split jurisdiction between the County and the City that makes it harder to find on the Next Generation 911 system.

Chairman Williams questioned why the request has been sitting idle. Mrs. Hodges replied that she did not know.

Chairman Williams asked for questions from the Planning Commission for Mrs. Hodges and there were none.

Chairman Williams asked if the applicant had any comments.

Mr. Bill Burkhalter, representing the school board, explained that 1.6-acres was purchased to expand the school districts property in order for it to be large enough to have a softball field. He explained that the property is not in the City, as is the property the school is located on, and it just made sense for the additional property to be annexed. Mr. Burkhalter stated the paperwork was submitted but somewhere along the way it became stalled.

There were no further questions or comments.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion. Commissioner Clark motioned to recommend that the City Council approve Application ANX17-002 a request by the Aiken County Board of Education for the annexation of a ±0.16 portion of TPN 006-06-01-011 to be zoned P, Public Use. Commissioner Crawford offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

8. **Application MW19-002, Stowaway Development** - A request by AIK Partners to waive the requirements of PD Ord 2007-16, I.N.12 foundation/perimeter landscaping and NADC 3.8.5.8.5, Table 3-9 Landscape buffer
  - a. Receipt of Testimony
  - b. Consideration of the Waiver applications by the Commission
  - c. Recommendation

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application MW19-002, Stowaway Development a request by AIK Partners to waive the requirements of PD Ord 2007-16, I.N.12 foundation/perimeter landscaping and NADC 3.8.5.8.5, Table 3-9 Landscape buffer and asked Mrs. Hodges if the applicant has provided any significant

landscape plans as requested by the Planning Commission on July 18, 2019 and has information been received on the two tabled waivers in order to vote to un-table them and proceed.

Mrs. Hodges stated on August 24, 2019 the applicant provided an updated landscape plan and she referred to the first 11"x17" page of the agenda package and explained with that submittal they are bringing the application back before the Planning Commission to review the remaining two variances that are required under the PD Ordinance. She said the parking variance was granted on July 18, 2019.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion to un-table Waiver A. Commissioner Key motioned to un-table Waiver A; the requirements of PD Ord 2007-16, I.N.12 foundation/perimeter landscaping. Commissioner Clark offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion to un-table Waiver C. Commissioner Key motioned to un-table Waiver C; the requirements of PD Ord 2007-16, Table 3-9 Landscape buffer. Commissioner Clark offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

The Commissioners were sworn in by Chairman Williams and were asked to address Waiver A and Waiver C.

Chairman Williams asked if the applicant had any comments.

The applicant, Mr. George Snelling, introduced himself and was sworn in by Chairman Williams.

Mrs. Hodges explained that Waiver A is for the foundation perimeter planting around the footprint of each building and the PD requires foundation perimeter landscaping at a minimum of 5-foot in width. She said Waiver C is for a landscape buffer along Stephens Farm Lane that is a 25-foot deep buffer that is required.

Waiver A. PD Ord 2007-16, I.N.12 foundation/perimeter landscaping:

Mr. Snelling stated that the North Augusta Ordinance requires a 5-foot separate strip around the perimeter of most commercial buildings. He explained that self-storage is more of an industrial use which has doors which have to face the lanes so that you may back your vehicle up to it to place items in the unit. Mr. Snelling said if there were a 5-foot landscape strip it would defeat the purpose of having a self-storage unit. He stated the resubmitted plans show the 5-foot landscape strip in front of the office area which would not affect access to the self-storage units.

Commissioner Clark asked if there were any doors on the outside of building A. Mr. Snelling answered no and explained the side of building A is where the 10-foot landscaping strip is being added because possibly later something is going to be done

with the property next door and he is putting it in in advance and it will have a nice greenspace effect. Mr. Snelling stated he is having more landscaping put in now than what would be required.

Mrs. Hodges explained there are three separate landscaping requirements, the first being a 5-foot landscape strip required by the PD Ordinance and it does not give a particular quantity or type of plants that have to be included. She stated the second is that all projects are required to have buffers between uses and the applicant does have the option of putting buffers in place. Mrs. Hodges said the third requirement is the special exception that is granted that is required to be screened from adjacent properties which can be either on the front or the sides.

Commissioner Key questioned Mr. Snelling if the one parcel will be subdivided into three parcels. Mr. Snelling replied possibly. Commissioner Key asked Mr. Snelling if he would expand the storage facility into the other parcels. Mr. Snelling answered no. He explained there is no plan at this point to do anything with the parcels and he anticipates that they would subdivide at some point and go with a commercial retail use.

Commissioner McKie questioned if Mr. Snelling had added a few more trees to the landscape plan. Mrs. Hodges replied yes. Commissioner McKie asked what else had been done besides the added trees and shrubs. Mrs. Hodges referred to the foundation planting and explained there is a small strip at the front of the building that was added from the previous meeting and if this is done as the required buffer there are enough plants to meet that requirement. She said the 5-foot landscape strip does not give her any particular plant amounts or types required and making sure it is screened per the zoning exception. Commissioner McKie questioned if the screen were to be a fence. Mrs. Hodges stated there is a proposed fence but there are not a lot of quantitative ways to screen it that way and the width is going to be more than 5-feet. She said her goal is to ensure that these items mesh together so that they work properly the way it is intended in the ordinance.

Mrs. Hodges explained that the purpose of what we are reviewing today is whether or not the Planning Commission is satisfied with allowing a variance of some of the 5-foot strips around the building per the PD Ordinance.

Commissioner Crawford stated the Commission just wants some assurances that if we were not to give the waiver that the landscaping were to disappear completely and we would have a self-storage unit with no landscaping. She said the Commission wants to be sure that there is sufficient landscaping and as much of it as possible would be relocated.

After further discussion, all comments and questions were addressed.

The Planning Commission found in the affirmative that all of the standards for granting the waiver were met.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion. Commissioner Crawford made a motion for Application MW19-002 Stowaway Storage, Waiver A. PD Ordinance 2007-16, I.N.12 foundation/perimeter landscaping to be granted with the following agreements, stipulations, and directives:

- 1) That all future development must meet the standards at the time of submittal. These waivers do not apply to any future phases or other parcels within the Sweetwater Planned Development.
- 2) These waivers only apply to the site plans as submitted and will not apply to any further sections of the parcel. Minor site revisions are permitted as determined by the Director.
- 3) The total required landscape materials for any buffer will be provided within the site shown on the most recent site design submittal. Landscape used for this purpose may not be "double-counted" and must be provided in addition to any other landscaping required.
- 4) All previous conditions of the Special Exception must be met.
- 5) Final approval will be granted by staff when the plans are in substantial compliance with the requirements of the North Augusta Development Code and any proposed conditions.

Commissioner Clark offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

Waiver C of Application MW19-002, Stowaway Storage, PD Ordinance 2007-16, Landscape buffer:

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Waiver C of Application MW19-002, Stowaway Storage, PD Ordinance 2007-16, Landscape buffer.

Mr. Snelling explained there is a sewer issue in the right-of-way area in front of the development where there is a major 24-inch or 30-inch sewer line and he is unable to provide a buffer that has large trees and other certain types of plantings in that area. He said if it were not for this he would not be applying for the waiver.

Mr. Bo Slaughter, Engineer for the Stowaway development, introduced himself and was sworn in by Chairman Williams. He explained there is an existing water and sanitary sewer easement and referred to the handout of the site plan showing where the easements were. Mr. Slaughter explained that what is planned is to remove all the trees from that area and put in shrubbery and the trees would be relocated to the back buffer. He said there will be the total amount of landscaping that is required without the waiver, and they are being relocated.



Commissioner Key questioned the diameter of the sewer pipe. Mr. Slaughter replied that it is an 8-inch or 10-inch sewer pipe and an 8-inch water line. He said they are deep enough to where the shrubs, that have a shallow root system, will not affect the utilities.

Commissioner McKie clarified that Mrs. Hodges had noted no trees. Mrs. Hodges answered yes. Mr. Snelling stated he is flexible on final placement and will get all the necessary plantings in so that the requirements would be met.

Commissioner Clark asked for clarification that in order to have a buffer it would have to be over the sewer, the water line, or in the right-of-way. Mrs. Hodges explained that the plantings would not be allowed in the right-of-way and the issue is that between all of the sewer and water easements all of the plants would not fit. She said it would not be good for the plants and they would eventually look bad, and the possibility of them all being removed if it is decided that something needs to be dug up for some reason. Mrs. Hodges stated this is balanced by the 5-foot strip that is added at the front of the building that adds some greenery in front of the building. She said this is also mitigated by some of the architectural finishes that they will be required to do for the Highway Corridor Overlay Standards and the Special Exception Standards that they have to meet separately.

After further discussion, all comments and questions were addressed.

The Planning Commission found in the affirmative that all of the standards for granting the waiver were met.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion for Application MW19-002 Stowaway Storage, Waiver C. PD Ordinance 2007-16, I.F. & N., and NADC 3.8.5.8.5, Table 3-9 Landscape buffer to be granted with the following agreements, stipulations, and directives:

- 1) That all future development must meet the standards at the time of submittal. These waivers do not apply to any future phases or other parcels within the Sweetwater Planned Development.
- 2) These waivers only apply to the site plans as submitted and will not apply to any further sections of the parcel. Minor site revisions are permitted as determined by the Director.
- 3) The total required landscape materials for any buffer will be provided within the site shown on the most recent site design submittal. Landscape used for this purpose may not be "double-counted" and must be provided in addition to any other landscaping required.
- 4) All previous conditions of the Special Exception must be met.

Commissioner McKie offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

9. **Application SP18-004, Stowaway Development** – A request by AIK Partners to approve the Major Site Plan.
- a. Consideration of the Major Site Plan application by the Commission
  - b. Recommendation

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application SP18-004, Stowaway Development, a request by AIK Partners to approve the Major Site Plan and asked Mrs. Hodges if she had any information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges stated that approval of the site plan, associated with the waivers that were previously reviewed, are an intermediary step between the variances and final approval of the site plan.

Commissioner Clark questioned with the variances in place, and the concerns that were noted, can staff handle those issues. Mrs. Hodges replied yes, and she explained that it is part of the review to send anything that is out of the ordinary to the Planning Commission for determination.

After further discussion, all comments and questions were addressed.

Chairman Williams invited the Planning Commission to make a motion.

Commissioner Crawford motioned to approve Application SP18-004, Stowaway Development, a request by AIK Partners to approve the Major Site Plan with the condition that all conditions and comments will be addressed prior to final approval. Commissioner Clark offered a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

## 10. **Staff Report**

- a. July Performance Report

Mrs. Hodges included the July performance report in the information packet for the Commission. She stated the budget was submitted last week and she has requested an additional staff member and a part-time code enforcement assistant.

Commissioner Williams asked Mrs. Hodges if she made the request to City Council. Mrs. Hodges explained that she has budgeted for Development Code revision, Comprehensive Plan revision, Comprehensive Transportation Plan and revision, and has provided breakouts of smaller plans.

Commissioner Crawford stated seeing the reports and how the numbers are increasing that certainly they would support your additional budget request.

Commissioner Williams stated he feels very positive on the budget submittals and feels it makes sense. Commissioner Key concurred.

**Adjourn**-- With no objection, Chairman Williams adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



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

