

Planning Commission



Minutes of the Thursday, May 21, 2015 Regular Meeting

Members of the Planning Commission

Woods Burnett

Chairman

Leonard Carter, Jr.

Bob Clark

Richard Fletcher

Timothy V. Key

JoAnn McKie

Larry Watts

REGULAR MEETING

1. **Call to Order** – The regular meeting of May 21, 2015, having been duly publicized, was called to order by Chairman Woods Burnett at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** – Members present were Chairman Burnett and Commissioners Len Carter, Bob Clark, Tim Key, JoAnn McKie and Larry Watts. On May 18, Commissioner Richard Fletcher, who is under contract with the applicant's principal, recused himself from discussion and consideration of Agenda Item #5 and was absent. Also in attendance were Scott Sterling, AICP, Director of Planning and Development; Christine DeCamp, AICP, Planner; the applicants; members of the public; and the press.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – The minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 16, 2015 were approved as written.
4. **Confirmation of Agenda** – There were no changes to the agenda.
5. **Application PD 15-001** – A request by the North Augusta Riverfront Company and the City of North Augusta to modify the General Development Plan for the Hammond's Ferry Planned Development. A recommendation to the City Council is required.

Public Hearing – Chairman Burnett briefly reviewed public meeting participation guidelines and opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Mr. Sterling began his presentation with a brief description of the multi-step PD development process. He then reviewed the application as outlined in Staff Report PD 15-001. The applicants are seeking to modify the 2010 General Development Plan (GDP) for Hammond's Ferry. As Step 1 in the GDP modification process, the applicants have requested that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation for approval of the proposed GDP to the City Council.

Mr. Sterling noted that the 2015 PD modification request originally proposed revisions to Phase C as well as Phase B. All references to a Phase C revision were withdrawn after

publication of the public hearing notice but prior to the publication of the Staff Report. All current modifications impact Phase B, the planned mixed commercial-residential phase of the development.

Mr. Sterling outlined the major proposed changes to the current General Development Plan. He noted, after the preparation and distribution of the Staff Report, that the applicants submitted additional information that modifies the building height limitations originally proposed.

Todd Glover, North Augusta City Administrator, introduced himself as representative for the applicant (City) and offered to respond to any questions.

Howard Kaufman, 89 Crystal Lake Drive, introduced himself as representative for the applicant (North Augusta Riverfront Company) and offered to respond to any questions. He also introduced James Dean to speak on his behalf.

James Dean, Greenstone Properties, 3301 Windy Ridge Pkwy, Atlanta, offered clarification regarding requested Phase B building heights. Mr. Dean stated that the applicants' maximum building height request for three proposed Phase B structures (originally 120 feet) would be modified to 90 feet, provided the language in Section 3.5.10 of the North Augusta Development Code (NADC) applies.

The following members of the public spoke, offering comments related to greenspace preservation along the Savannah River; protecting Brick Pond Park; requirements for development within a flood zone; confusion with the proposed PD plan as presented; parking needs and requirements; vehicular traffic; wildlife preservation; the need for a public referendum on the project; the highest and best use of the land; alternative locations for the proposed stadium; plans to extend West Avenue into Hammond's Ferry; impacts of the proposed development on the remainder of Hammond's Ferry; the need for additional public forums to discuss the project; the needs basis for the proposed hotel; and alternatives if the project fails. Members of the public also spoke of the historic intent that Phase B would be developed with a commercial component; the value of the stadium as a community asset (diversifier); the strong need for a hotel in the City; and the general perception that the City has planned well and continues to do so.

Kathleen Taylor-Lacey, 1301 Rivers Edge, Augusta
William Palladino, 415 East Avenue, North Augusta
Katrina Flowers, 20 Crystal Lake Drive, North Augusta
Mickey Ruben, 443 Arrington Avenue, North Augusta
Wade Gassman, 432 Edisto Drive, North Augusta
Deborah Heath, 23 Madison Street, North Augusta
Nancy Joyce, 83 Crystal Lake Drive, North Augusta
Cissy Boyd, 437 Railroad Avenue, North Augusta
Eric Monaco, 137 Rosemary Lane, North Augusta

John Dewes, 107 Snow Hill Court, North Augusta
Lee Byrd, 146 Macklin Lane, North Augusta

During the applicants' response period, Mr. Glover addressed several of the public comments. He stated that Brick Pond Park was built by the City and the North Augusta Riverfront Company, both of whom are committed to protecting its boundaries. Mr. Glover also provided additional detail on the proposed General Development Plan, including plans to maintain and enhance greenspace along the riverfront. He said that City staff work closely with the Corps of Engineers and FEMA on all plans to develop areas along the Savannah River.

Mr. Kaufman provided an historical context for the North Augusta Riverfront Company's work with the City, stating that Phase B was always intended to be developed commercially. The economic downturn during the past decade impacted development in Hammond's Ferry. Since "Project Jackson" was announced in 2012, however, housing sales have rebounded in the community. Mr. Kaufman considers Brick Pond Park to be a valuable asset to Hammond's Ferry and to the City and reiterated Mr. Glover's assertion that the Park will not be harmed as a result of Phase B development.

Chris Schoen of Greenstone Properties, 3301 Windy Ridge Drive, Atlanta, introduced himself as a primary developer of Phase B and provided an overview of his plan to bring restaurants, retail, housing and other commercial uses to the riverfront. He stated that the City will have a long term lease with the baseball team that is backed by both minor and major league baseball. Mr. Schoen presented his intent that the proposed stadium will be the site of year-round activity in the City and will serve as additional North Augusta greenspace that will be regularly available to the public.

Mr. Dean and Mr. Sterling were the final speakers, providing an historic context for the project and addressing additional public comments.

Chairman Burnett closed the public hearing at 8:40 p.m.

Consideration of Application PD 15-001 – Commissioners provided brief individual comments based on the information presented at the hearing as well as the Staff Report and supplemental documents.

Commissioner Key moved to recommend that the City Council approve Application PD 15-001, a request by the North Augusta Riverfront Company and the City of North Augusta to modify the General Development Plan for the Hammond's Ferry Planned Development, subject to the following condition:

- 1. The text of Section J.2. of Exhibit C, Project Narrative, be amended to read:
Maximum building height shall be four (4) stories not to exceed sixty (60) feet for buildings in Phase B, with an exception for the proposed hotel, office and**

Railroad Avenue ballpark outfield buildings which maximum building height shall be eight (8) stories not to exceed ninety (90) feet.

Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-1, with Commissioner Fletcher's recusal.

6. Staff Reports – Mr. Sterling:

- Referenced the April monthly report as well as supplemental reading material included in the Commission agenda packet.
- Notified Commissioners that Stantec is expected to begin some of its public work related to the 2015 Comprehensive Plan in June and that Commissioners' will be kept informed.

7. Adjourn – With no objection, Chairman Burnett adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Sterling, AICP, Director
Department of Planning and Development
Secretary to the Planning Commission