

# Planning Commission



## Minutes of the Thursday, June 18, 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 June 18, 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, Richard Fletcher, Tim Key and JoAnn McKie. Commissioners Bob Clark and Larry Watts were absent. Also in attendance were Scott Sterling, AICP, Director of Planning and Development; Christine DeCamp, AICP, Planner; the applicants and their representatives; members of the public; and the press.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – The minutes of the Study Session and Regular Meeting of May 21, 2015 were approved as written.
4. **Confirmation of Agenda** – There were no changes to the agenda.
5. **Application RZM 15-004** – A request by Michael J. Woodward, representing Prescott Properties, LLC, to rezone ±10.00 acres of land located on West Martintown Road, Tax Parcel Number 106-00-00-061, from PD, Planned Development, to GC, General Commercial. A Planning Commission recommendation to City Council is required.

**Public Hearing** – Chairman Burnett reviewed the public hearing process and opened the hearing at 7:02 p.m.

Mr. Sterling reviewed the application as outlined in Staff Report RZM 15-004, stating that there is a potential interest in developing the site as a medical office complex.

Michael Woodward, 217-B Edgefield Road, the applicant's representative, briefly reviewed the map amendment request and the owner's plans to commercially develop the site.

Dr. David Allen, 1052 Cannon Mill Drive, introduced himself as the potential developer who is interested in moving his medical office and possibly others to the site.

Chairman Burnett briefly reviewed the Planning Commission's public meeting procedures and opened the floor to public comment.

Brenda Bancroft, 219 Jackson Avenue, asked if the potential medical offices were permitted under the current PD zoning and expressed concern over the need for a commercial rezoning. Ms. Bancroft also commented on the site's proximity to Fox Creek, the existence of a pond on the property and the importance of buffering and greenspace to effective land preservation.

Commissioners discussed the site history; the proposed use; Exit 1 traffic studies, issues and mitigation plans; whether a Martintown Road widening is warranted; the on-site detention pond; past and planned site grading; buffer requirements; current PD requirements; the site plan review and approval process; appropriateness of the requested zoning; and the benefits of redevelopment in the area.

Mr. Sterling, Mr. Woodward and Dr. Allen responded to all questions and comments.

There were no other public comments. Chairman Burnett closed the public hearing at 7:22 p.m.

**Consideration of Application RZM 15-004 – Commissioner Fletcher moved to recommend that the City Council approve the request by Michael J. Woodward, representing Prescott Properties, LLC, to rezone ±10.00 acres of land located along West Martintown Road, Tax Parcel Number 106-00-00-061 from PD, Planned Development, to GC, General Commercial.**

**Commissioner McKie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

6. **Application PDM 15-002**– A request by Philip Green, P.E., representing Wando Partners, LP, for approval of a minor modification to the approved General Development Plan for the Wando Woodlands Planned Development.

Mr. Sterling reviewed the application as outlined in Staff Memorandum 15-25. The applicant seeks consideration of the following requests:

- A. To revise the lot layout in Phases 5-9, moving 18 lots from Phases 8 and 9 to Phases 5-7;
- B. To reduce the minimum lot width and overall size of lots in Phases 5-7 from 80 feet by 150 feet, generally, to 60 feet by 140 feet, generally;
- C. To relocate required street trees in Phases 5 through 7 from the right of way to front yards; and
- D. Eliminate the current \$500 per lot traffic fee going forward for a Martintown Road access connection that is required in the current PD ordinance.

Mr. Sterling stated that the first two modification requests, to reallocate lots and reduce the minimum lot width, require a Planning Commission decision. Modification requests C and D, to relocate required street trees and to eliminate the \$500 traffic fee, require a Planning Commission recommendation to City Council.

Philip Green, 1233 Augusta West Parkway, Augusta, the applicant's representative, provided a brief history of the Wando Woodlands PD. The project, which began in 2006, is about halfway to completion. The applicant is currently reevaluating the original plan and is asking for the noted changes. The lot reallocation is requested because current Phases 8 and 9 cannot hold all of the lots assigned to them. Smaller overall lot sizes in Phase 5 through 7 are requested to provide adequate spacing for the reallocated lots and to support the builder's desire to keep the lots affordable as construction costs increase.

With regard to street trees, Phase 1 of the development had subdivision (yard) trees. Phases 2, 3 and 4 either have or are planned to have street trees. Placing the required street trees in the right of way has impacted utility line placement and in some cases has required locating utility boxes closer to homes than homeowners wish. Maintenance of street trees (watering, etc.) can be problematic for homeowners. Also, trees in rights of way are owned by the City and add to the tree inventory that City staff must care for and replace as necessary. Yard trees, if permitted, would be the responsibility of individual homeowners.

Finally, the \$500 per lot fee is a requirement of the current PD Ordinance. The applicant, while willing to comply with the Ordinance terms, feels that all other developers along Bergen Road should be required to meet the same terms. There is no record to date of the lot assessment being spent towards a Martintown Road access connection.

Commissioners offered comments and asked questions about overall project and phase density; the basis for the original lot width requirements; the pros and cons of decreased lot widths; housing affordability; tree canopy requirements; maintenance responsibility for newly planted trees if they are located in front yards instead of the right of way; tree perpetuation; feasibility of utilizing subdivision covenants to require homeowners to maintain, and replace as necessary, subdivision (yard) trees; community aesthetics; lot layout and street design; required greenspace; the reasons for establishing the \$500 per lot fee in 2006, the equity of the decision and changing conditions since that time.

Mr. Sterling, Mr. Green and Don Howard, Wando Woodlands, LP Principal responded to all comments and questions.

**Consideration of Application PDM 15-002** – At the request of the Chairman, there was a separate vote for each of the four requests. The first two requests (A and B on page 2) are Planning Commission decisions. Requests C and D require a Planning Commission recommendation to City Council.

**Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the request by Wando Partners, LP to reallocate 18 lots from Phases 8 and 9 to Phases 5-7.**

**Commissioner Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the request by Wando Partners, LP to reduce the minimum lot size in Phases 5-7 from 80 x 150 feet, generally, to 60 x 140 feet, generally.**

**Commissioner Key seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Commissioner Key moved to recommend that the City Council approve the request by Wando Partners, LP to relocate required street trees from the right of way to front yards of individual lots.**

**Commissioner McKie seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 3-2 vote.**

**Commissioner Fletcher moved to recommend that the City Council remove, as no longer required, the current \$500 per lot traffic fee listed in the current PD Ordinance.**

**Commissioner McKie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**7. Staff Reports – Mr. Sterling:**

- Referenced the May monthly report as well as supplemental reading material included in the Commission agenda packet.
- Updated Commissioners on the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The City's consultants are planning to be here at the end of the month for a project update. Mr. Sterling polled Commissioners on their date preference to meet with consultants, either June 30 or July 1.
- Stated that the lawsuit against the City with regard to "Project Jackson" had been decided in the City's favor.

**8. Adjourn – Commissioner Fletcher spoke briefly on the recent demolition of two historic Georgia Avenue structures and expressed his support for better efforts toward historic preservation in the City. He stated his preference that a Certificate of Appropriateness be required before a property owner can obtain a demolition permit. Commissioners discussed how this could best be accomplished and suggested the reactivation of the City's former Design Review Board as an option. Commissioners agreed to continue this discussion at a future meeting.**

With no objection, Chairman Burnett adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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