

**MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
March 6, 2018**

PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBERS: Present: Anthony Manners, Glenn Weyant, Lila Kelley, Pete Charpentier, and Michelle Budd. Staff members present: Josh Campbell, Alyssa Durden and MaryAnn Jackson.

CALL TO ORDER

Michelle Budd called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Glenn Weyant moved to adopt the amended agenda, second by Anthony Manners. Motion carried 5-0 (remove item #2 from the agenda).

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: February 6, 2018

Glenn Weyant moved to approve the February 6, 2018 minutes, second by Anthony Manners. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

RZ-2017-009 – Owner: Karen Williams. Applicant: Jennifer Spencer. The applicant requests a rezoning from R-100 (Residential Single Family District) to OTCD (old Town Commercial District) to allow for a reception hall. The site is located in land Lot 210 of the 7th District along White Street across from White Street Park and contains approximately 1.5 acres.

Lila Kelley recused herself.

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: The applicant requests a rezoning from R-100 (Single-Family Residential District) to OTCD (Old Town Commercial District). The request is to allow for the development of an approximately 6,000 square foot reception hall and associated parking on the subject property. After looking at the site, the applicant is not sure that she will be able to use some of the railroad right of way for parking. The modified plan reduces the size of the reception hall to 4,000 square feet and reduces the parking spaces to 80.

The subject property is a 1.59 acre undeveloped parcel along White Street that slopes up steeply to the railroad tracks from White Street. The proposed reception facility would include an approximately 3,000 square foot ballroom room/meeting space. The building would be a rustic style, white farmhouse that sits approximately 30 feet tall with a large covered side porch facing a garden area. The proposed facility would have a direct sidewalk connection from the building's main entrance to a new sidewalk the applicant would provide along White Street.

A single curb cut on White Street would provide access to the subject property. The developer of the new adjacent Harvest Park neighborhood is extending White Street to intersect with Buford Highway just past White Street Park. This new public road will serve as the primary access for the proposed reception hall.

If the request is granted, the project would go through the development review and permitting processes in order to ensure compliance with applicable regulations. The applicant has not addressed how stormwater quantity or quality will be addressed on the site. This will need to be addressed to satisfy applicable regulations prior to issuance of a Development Permit.

The applicant proposes to extend sewer to the site from the new Harvest Park neighborhood prior to development.

The applicant will need a grading easement from the Norfolk Southern Railroad to grade the site.

The OTCD (Old Town Commercial District) zoning category allows for most commercial uses allowed in C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial District) along with some of the alcohol related uses allowed in C-2A (General Commercial District). The Old Town Overlay District may only be used within the Old Town Overlay District. This property is within the Old Town Overlay District, and the proposed use of a reception hall is an allowable use within the OTCD.

The property is located across the street from White Street Park (zoned R-140), which includes the Harvest Farm community garden, Harvest Farm barn and the newly completed orchard. The property to the north is occupied by a vacant church on property also zoned R-100. The 32 acres directly adjacent south of the subject property between White Street Park and McGinnis Ferry Road were recently rezoned from R-100 and C-2 to PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use Development) for the development of a new neighborhood called Harvest Park that will include detached single family homes and townhomes.

The subject property is currently zoned R-100 like most of the parcels along White Street. The Downtown Suwanee Master Plan (DSMP) calls for White Street to preserve its semi-rural character while incorporating a mix of small lot single family housing types. Although the proposed development would be a commercial use, the proposed development is rural in character and would therefore be compatible with the surrounding area.

The project appears to meet Suwanee standards for high quality, and the proposed agrarian character building across from the Harvest Farm barn would reinforce the unique identity of the area. The use as a reception hall is complimentary to the park and could potentially be used in conjunction with the park for events, but not all commercial uses allowed in the OTCD would be appropriate in this context. If the request is approved, the property use should be limited to a reception hall or single family detached similar to

what was approved for the adjacent new neighborhood to insure the preservation of the character of the area. Any other commercial uses should require the property to go through the rezoning process, so that Council can consider the appropriateness of future uses at this location.

The Future Land Use Plan in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan calls for the subject property to be Mixed-Use Village. Mixed-Use Village is defined in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan as “predominantly residential developments that may include a variety of housing types, both single-family and multifamily, and possibly such limited-scale nonresidential uses as a church, corner market or other neighborhood-oriented service uses.”

The 2009 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan further refined the vision for this area. The Plan established 10 distinct character districts to guide future development within downtown Suwanee. The proposed development is within the Suwanee Farm Village District, also known as Williams Farm Village District, which is anchored by Harvest Farm at White Street Park. The Plan calls for the Suwanee Farm Village District to be predominately residential and include a mix of dwelling types transitioning to mixed-use majority residential development in proximity to McGinnis Ferry Road. Per the vision of the 2009 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan, the conservation area was cultivated into a community garden known as Harvest Farm. It was intended that this park would set the tone for the development of this area.

The Downtown Suwanee Master Plan encourages a distinct character for this area that is influenced by the character of White Street Park. The City has made significant investment in creating a park that fits in with the rural nature of the property surrounding White Street Park. Harvest Farm barn, the community garden, and the Orchard create a unique identity referencing Suwanee’s agrarian history. These public investments are attracting private investment such as recent renovation of a historic home on White Street, the creation of a new neighborhood embracing the agrarian character of White Street Park, and the proposed development.

The 32 acres directly south of the subject property between White Street Park and McGinnis Ferry Road were recently rezoned from R-100 and C-2 to PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use Development). The intent of the PMUD zoning category is to allow for a larger master-planned projects that connect residential uses to non-residential uses, encourage pedestrian mobility, promotes more efficient use of land, and allows for the creation of neighborhoods with their own distinct character. The proposed new neighborhood that is currently in the development review phase is creating just that, a unique, master planned neighborhood with a mix of single family housing types, open spaces, and pedestrian and vehicular connectivity throughout the neighborhood and to Suwanee’s larger bicycle and pedestrian network. As a condition of zoning, this new neighborhood will embrace a farmhouse character inspired by adjacent Harvest Farm and White Street Park. The addition of a non-residential use directly adjacent to this new neighborhood would add a non-residential use to the area to better fit the overall vision of a mixed-use village. The proposed project would be compatible in style to the new neighborhood as well as White Street Park.

The 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan states that “the emerging vision of downtown Suwanee is that of an intentionally connected series of distinct places and character areas.” The proposed project will enhance the Suwanee Farm Village District by creating a use that does not currently exist in Suwanee in a style that is unique to Suwanee’s Farm Village District, which will further establish the sense of place and identity for this part of Old Town.

The requested OTCD rezoning is appropriate for the subject property for the proposed use of a reception hall. If approved, the architecture and landscaping for the project should be subject to approval of the City to insure the facility meets the vision of the Suwanee Farm District and enhances the White Street Park area. As such, the Planning Department recommends approval with conditions.

Anthony Manners asked about restrictions for on-street parking. Josh Campbell explained that restrictions for on-street parking can be mandated through the development process.

Michelle Budd asked about the site becoming single family detached homes. Josh Campbell stated that the applicant would have to meet the minimum requirements. There could possibly be about 10-12 homes.

Anthony Manners asked about noise. Josh Campbell gave a brief over view of the noise ordinance.

Michelle Budd called upon the applicant.

Jennifer Spencer, 3479 Baxley Ridge Drive, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Spencer is a resident of Suwanee and a local business owner. Ms. Spencer has owned a business off of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard for the last six years. Ms. Spencer has been in the event business for 11 years. The rustic farmhouse will fit in with Harvest Park and White Street Park.

Tonya Cristiano, 5984 Wild Creek Road, Sugar Hill, GA. Ms. Cristiano stated that the event facility will be located 300 feet from homes. The building will be fully insulated. There will not be any speakers located outside. There will be trees for privacy. Staff will be onsite for every event. There will be approximately 30 to 80 cars onsite for each event. Traffic will only be on the weekends.

Michelle Budd called for support.

Robert Adkinson, 3979 Cherokee Trail, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Adkinson grew up in Suwanee. He believes a wedding venue would be beneficial to the area.

Michelle Budd called for opposition.

Bill Mashburn, 712 White Street, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Mashburn stated that there is already a parking issue in the area. Mr. Mashburn said that he has to chase people out of

his driveway during events. He does not feel that the wedding venue is appropriate for the area.

John Bonano, 2635 Century Parkway, Atlanta, GA. Mr. Bonano is the developer for Harvest Park. Mr. Bonano stated that he is concerned about parking. There will be infrastructure improvements made to White Street. White Street will be fixed up to the property line and there will be on street parking out front. The sales operation for the two builders will be right on White Street so this could be a possible conflict. Mr. Bonano does not believe the plan is viable. Mr. Bonano stated that he needs to be able to explain to potential residents what is going next door. If he had known the property was going to be zoned commercial, he would have put townhomes next to the event facility.

Rebecca and Nathan Calhoun, 662 White Street, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Calhoun stated that traffic is already at the maximum. Having a business on White Street will bring more traffic to the area. The weekend is time for residents to enjoy their neighborhood.

Alan Dandar, 593 White Street, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Dandar stated that traffic is his main concern.

Jennifer Spencer stated that she does weddings inside neighborhoods. There will be sidewalks.

Anthony Manners moved to deny RZ-2017-009. There was no second.

Michelle Budd called for another motion. There was none.

There was no recommendation from the Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Manners moved to adjourn at 7:10 p.m.