

**MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
ZONING APPEALS BOARD MEETING
April 16, 2019**

PLANNING AND ZONING APPEALS BOARD MEMBERS: Present: James Thigpen, Ray Brown, Pete Charpentier, David Sullivan and Paul Altnauer. Staff members present: Alyssa Durden, Kylie Adams, and MaryAnn Jackson.

CALL TO ORDER

James Thigpen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Ray Brown moved to approve the agenda as presented, second by Paul Altnauer. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

V-2019-004- Owner: Suwanee Redbridge LLC. Applicant: Altair Sign and Light. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1611 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an electronic sign. The site contains approximately 1.33 acres in Land Lot 169 of the 7th District and is located at 3226 Lawrenceville Suwanee Road.

V-2019-005- Owner: Suwanee Redbridge LLC. Applicant: Altair Sign and Light. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1611 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an electronic sign. The site contains approximately 1.33 acres in Land Lot 169 of the 7th District and is located at 3226 Lawrenceville Suwanee Road.

V-2019-006- Owner: Suwanee Redbridge LLC. Applicant: Altair Sign and Light. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1611 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an electronic sign. The site contains approximately 1.33 acres in Land Lot 169 of the 7th District and is located at 3226 Lawrenceville Suwanee Road.

V-2019-007- Owner: Suwanee Redbridge LLC. Applicant: Altair Sign and Light. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1611 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an electronic sign. The site contains approximately 1.33 acres in Land Lot 169 of the 7th District and is located at 3226 Lawrenceville Suwanee Road.

Kylie Adams presented the staff report as follows: The applicant seeks four variances from Section 1611 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for the replacement of two existing menu boards with electronic display menu boards and to install two new electronic display pre-browser boards. The subject property is located at 3226 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and totals approximately 1.33 acres.

The City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance does not allow for “electronic signs used for purposes other than traffic management and official government signs” (Section 1611). The request to

replace two existing display menu boards with electronic signs and install two new pre-browser boards with digital displays results in the need to obtain four variances. The applicant has indicated these electronic signs will be able to provide options for limited time offers, new items to the menu, and assist in making changes to prices or menu items, reducing down time.

The existing menu boards total 41 and 43 square feet. The applicant is proposing to replace the menu boards with 2 digital menu boards that both total 20 square feet and add 2 pre-menu boards both of which total 10 square feet. The proposed change would result in less overall signage, but because the City prohibits electronic signs variances are required in order to install the signs. Typically, the City allows for menu boards without sign permits because the message contained on them is conveyed in such a way (small print/symbols) that it is clearly targeting users on the property. Electronic signs are capable of being used in such a way that the boards could convey messages out to the general public making them signage regulated by the Zoning Ordinance.

Although there does not appear to be a hardship, the site being located so far below grade and the size and locations of the four requested signs should not cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the purposes or intent of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, staff recommends approval with conditions of V-2019-004, V-2019-005, V-2019-006, & V-2019-007.

David Sullivan asked how often the menu board will change. Kylie Adams stated that the menu board will change once per hour.

James Thigpen called upon the applicant.

Felicia Johnson, Altair Sign and Light. 33008 Holly Springs Parkway, Holly Springs, GA. Ms. Johnson stated that McDonalds is upgrading their signage. The menu boards will change from the breakfast menu to the lunch menu.

Pete Charpentier asked if there will be video on the new signage. Ms. Johnson indicated that there will not be video.

James Thigpen called for opposition. There was none.

Pete Charpentier moved to approve V2019-004 with staff recommended conditions, second by David Sullivan. Motion carried 5-0.

1. The sign shall be no larger than 20 square feet.
2. The sign shall be located in approximately the same location as shown on “Exhibit A”
3. The displayed message shall not change more than once per hour.
4. The size of the font and any symbols on the sign shall not be large enough to be clearly visible from the right-of-way.

Ray Brown moved to approved V-2019-005 with staff recommended conditions, second by Pete Charpentier. Motion carried 5-0.

1. The sign shall be no larger than 20 square feet.
2. The sign shall be located in approximately the same location as shown on “Exhibit A”

3. The displayed message shall not change more than once per hour.
4. The size of the font and any symbols on the sign shall not be large enough to be clearly visible from the right-of-way.

Paul Altnauer moved to approve V-2019-006 with staff recommended conditions, second by David Sullivan. Motion carried 5-0.

1. The sign shall be no larger than 10 square feet.
2. The sign shall be located in approximately the same location as shown on “Exhibit A”
3. The displayed message shall not change more than once per hour.
4. The size of the font and any symbols on the sign shall not be large enough to be clearly visible from the right-of-way.

David Sullivan moved to approve V-2019-007 with staff recommended conditions, second by Ray Brown. Motion carried 5-0.

1. The sign shall be no larger than 10 square feet.
2. The sign shall be located in approximately the same location as shown on “Exhibit A”
3. The displayed message shall not change more than once per hour.
4. The size of the font and any symbols on the sign shall not be large enough to be clearly visible from the right-of-way.

V-2019-008- Owner/Applicant: David Luney. The applicant requests a variance from Section 500 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an accessory structure to exceed 800 square feet. The site contains approximately 2.7 acres in Land Lot 276 of the 7th District and is located at 150 Abbey Hill Road.

Kylie Adams presented the staff report as follows: The applicant seeks a variance from Section 500.A.1 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an accessory building exceeding the maximum permitted square footage. The applicant seeks to construct an approximately 2,400 square foot accessory structure located at the rear of the property. The subject property is located at 150 Abbey Hill Road and is zoned R-140.

The subject property consists of 2.7 acres and contains a two-story primary residence of approximately 3,500 square feet not including an unfinished basement. The applicant is seeking to construct an accessory building that is approximately 2,400 square feet in size. Section 500.A.1.c of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance states that an accessory building “shall not exceed 800 square feet of gross floor area.” As such, a variance would be required in order to build the accessory structure as proposed. The proposed accessory dwelling will be used as a garage for the storage of cars, a boat, and a motorhome, all of which are currently located on the property.

The site is heavily wooded with large trees that block the house from view from Abbey Hill Road. The proposed accessory structure would not be visible from Abbey Hill Road.

Accessory buildings are permitted uses in all of the City's residential zoning districts. All of the residential zoning districts have the same standard for accessory buildings in terms of maximum square footage allowed. However, a heavily wooded 2.7-acre lot is more capable of accommodating a larger accessory building without negative impacts on adjoining properties than a half-acre cleared lot in a subdivision.

The lots along Abbey Hill Road are larger than many of the residential lots in Suwanee. These larger lots can accommodate more development than a typical residential lot without negatively impacting nearby properties, because larger lots create greater distance between structures on adjacent lots. In this case, the nearest home in the neighborhood is approximately 220 feet from where the proposed accessory dwelling would be located. The proposed accessory structure would be located approximately 345 feet away from the primary residence to the east and 220 feet away from their tennis court. To the south, the accessory dwelling would be located 40 feet from the rear property line and approximately 120 feet from the single-family homes in Sugar Hill.

While there does not appear to be a hardship, the lot is larger than a typical residential lot in Suwanee; therefore, exceeding the maximum permitted accessory square footage is unlikely to negatively impact neighboring properties. Therefore, approval of this variance would not be a substantial detriment to the public good and will not undermine the intent of the Zoning Ordinance, which is to limit the number and size of accessory buildings on smaller lots in more densely populated neighborhoods. As such, staff recommends approval with conditions of V-2019-008.

James Thigpen asked what the accessory structure will be used for. Kylie Adams stated that the accessory structure will be used to store a boat and cars.

David Sullivan asked if anyone will reside in the structure. Kylie Adams explained that the accessory structure will be used solely as a garage.

James Thigpen called upon the applicant.

David Luney, 150 Abbey Hill Road, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Luney stated that he needs the accessory structure to house his boat and vehicles. It will not be used as a residence.

Pete Charpentier asked Mr. Luney if he planned to operate a business out of the accessory structure. Mr. Luney stated he will not operate a business out of the accessory structure. It will be used as a garage.

James Thigpen called for opposition.

Ms. Hyuk, 339 Bridlington Street, Sugar Hill, GA. Ms. Hyuk asked if the applicant will plant more trees. Ms. Hyuk also asked if the items currently in the backyard will be housed in the garage.

Mr. Luney stated that he does not plan to plant any trees and that the items in the yard will be moved to the garage.

1. The accessory building shall be a maximum of ~~2,400~~ **2520** square feet in size.
2. The accessory building shall be located approximately as shown on Exhibit "A".
3. The architecture of the accessory building shall be consistent with the architecture presented in Exhibit 'B'.
4. Maintain a 40-foot wide undisturbed buffer to the east, west, and south of the accessory dwelling, with the exception of the existing gravel driveway.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENT

ADJOURNMENT

David Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.