

MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
ZONING BOARD OF APPEAL
November 12, 2019
6:30 P. M.

BOARD MEMBERS

James Thigpen, Chair
Paul Alznauer
Ray Brown
Pete Charpentier
David Sullivan

STAFF

Alyssa Durden, Planning Division Director
Mickey Eyre, Senior Planner
Elvira Rogers, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

James Thigpen, ZBA Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by David Sullivan to approve the agenda as presented, second by Pete Charpentier and so carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ray Brown to approve the October 15, 2019 Minutes as presented, second by Paul Alznauer and so carried 5-0.

PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

James Thigpen, Chair, read the Procedures for Public Meetings for the record.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- A. V-2019-022-** Owner: City of Suwanee. Applicant: Alan Williams. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1612 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance for an additional wall sign. The site contains approximately 0.56 acres in Land Lot 236 of the 7th District and is located at 343 Buford Highway.

The Planning Department Recommendation: Approval with conditions

- B. V-2019-023-** Owner: City of Suwanee. Applicant: Alan Williams. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1612 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance for a wall sign in excess of the maximum size. The site contains approximately 0.56 acres in Land Lot 236 of the 7th District and is located at 343 Buford Highway.

The Planning Department Recommendation: Approval with conditions

Staff presented the analysis for V-2019-022 and V-2019-023 combined. The subject property is zoned Old Town Commercial District (OTCD). This site has been

historically used as a fire station by Gwinnett County. When the fire station moved out, the building was converted into a brewery. The Variances are for signage at Stillfire, 343 Buford Highway. The City Zoning Ordinance allows for one sign per wall elevation not to exceed 4 wall signs per building. The total area of each sign may not exceed 5% of the wall area.

The applicant is requesting a wall sign on the building front at 105 sq. ft. and a secondary 28 sq. ft. wall sign on the front of the building indicating where “to go” sales are conducted. Together, these two signs total 133 sq. ft., doubling the maximum allowable signage for the front building elevation.

V-2019-022, if granted would allow the applicant to post one additional sign to the front of the subject building. Signage allowance total is 396 sq. ft. Proposed signage allowance totals 133 sq. ft. to include the current front sign (105 sq. ft.) and an additional front sign (28 sq..ft.) for “To Go” service.

The Board discussed the current signage and location of additional signage and if it would be visible on the sides. There were questions related to the “To Go” function of the building. Staff stated there is not enough room for a monument sign for the site.

Support: Randall Veugler, 565 Settles Cove Court

Mr. Veugler stated the sign on the building was placed under the assumption the contractor had permitted it. The “To Go” products will be packaged and served in cups with stickers as outlined in city policy. Mr. Veugler stated they agree with not having a monument sign.

There was no opposition.

Motion by Pete Charpentier to approve V-2019-022 with conditions, second by Paul Alznauer and so carried 5-0.

Conditions V-2019-022

- 1. The size of the second sign on the front elevation shall not exceed 30 sq. ft.***
- 2. No wall sign shall be permitted on either side elevation of the building.***

Motion by Pete Charpentier to approve V-2019-023 with conditions, second by Paul Alznauer and so carried 5-0.

Conditions V-2019-023

- 1. The combined square footage of signage on the front elevation shall not exceed 135 sq. ft.***
- 2. No free-standing sign shall be permitted on the property.***
- 3. Signage shall be consistent with Exhibit A.***

C. V-2019-024- Owner: Steven Glosson. Applicant: Main Street Building Group. The applicant requests a variance from Section 501 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for the reduction of a required front setback. The site contains approximately 0.17 acres in Land Lot 236 of the 7th District and is located at 553 Main Street.

The Planning Department Recommendation: Approval with conditions

D. V-2019-026- Owner: Steven Glosson. Applicant: Main Street Building Group. The applicant requests a variance from Section 604 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an accessory structure less than 50 feet from public roads. The site contains approximately 0.17 acres in Land Lot 236 of the 7th District and is located at 553 Main Street.

The Planning Department Recommendation: Approval with conditions

Alyssa Durden, Planning Division Director, presented the analysis for V-2019-024 and V-2019-026 combined. V-2019-025 was handled administratively. The applicant seeks 2 variances from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow for the construction of a single-family residence and an accessory structure. V-2019-024 is a request for a variance to allow for a reduction of setbacks on a substandard lot of record. V-2019-026 is a request for a variance in order to allow for an accessory structure less than 50 feet from a public road. The property is approximately 150 feet long by 45 feet wide. The property measures 45 feet from the adjacent lot to Stonecypher Road; therefore, the required 50 foot setback from Stonecypher Road alone would preclude any development on the 45 foot wide lot, thus the regulation clearly imposes a hardship on the property.

The subject property is currently occupied by a one-story, 900 sq. ft. single family residence that sits approximately 5 feet from the property line adjacent to Stonecypher Road and approximately 10 feet from the property line adjacent to Main Street. The property also contains a small metal shed and a chain link fence behind the house.

The applicant proposes to remove the existing structures and construct a new single-family home and an accessory structure on the property. The house would face Main Street with a detached garage located to the rear of the main dwelling accessed from Jackson Street. The applicant anticipates finishing the space over the garage as an accessory dwelling unit and does not have proposed architecture for either structure.

The Board discussed distance from pavement to the house, setbacks and square footage of the house to be placed on the property.

James Thigpen stated the current setback is 50' and the current house is at five feet. How is a 3' setback better than 5' setback. What is the hardship?

Support: Chuck Rigdon, 207 Daves Farm Road, Jefferson, GA 30549

Mr. Rigdon stated the property is a challenge due to fronting three roadways (Main Street, Stonecypher Road and Jackson Street). He is currently constructing a house to the left of the site. He stated the house on this site is proposed to be 3,000 sq.ft. with a front porch to face Main Street and on Stonecypher. The additional square footage on the property is needed to accommodate the house on the lot. The lot is tight and he plans to make the right side pleasing with two front elevations.

There was no opposition.

Motion by Paul Alznauer to postpone V-2019-024 to December 10, 2019 in order to obtain additional information regarding the distance from the road, second by David Sullivan and so carried 5-0.

Motion by David Sullivan to postpone V-2019-026 to December 10, 2019, second by Ray Brown and so carried 5-0.

- E. V-2019-027-** Owner: Rick Stevens. Applicant: Rick Stevens. The applicant requests a variance from Section 501 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow an accessory structure exceeding 800 square feet. The site contains approximately 0.34 acres in Land Lot 236 of the 7th District and is located at 571 Jackson Street.

The Planning Department Recommendation: Approval with conditions

Alyssa Durden, Planning Division Director, presented the staff analysis for V-2019-027. The applicant seeks to allow for an accessory building exceeding 800 sq. ft. within the R-100 zoning district. The applicant is building a single-family home and a detached two-car garage on the property. Both structures are currently under construction. The proposed carriage house meets all other regulations of the zoning ordinance that pertain to accessory structures.

The proposed development would be consistent with the surrounding area and the vision for the Old Town Character Area as expressed in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that the need for a variance could be avoided by either separating the two proposed accessory uses (dwelling and garage) into separate structures or by physically connecting the garage to the primary structure. Both of these options could be done in a way that complies with the regulations but would lead to site development that is less consistent with the style of development found in the historic Old Town area (and other historic downtown areas throughout the country).

The request to build an accessory structure exceeding 800 square feet in order to combine two accessory uses is appropriate in the Old Town Character Area. Approval of the requested variance would help to make the property more compatible with current and anticipated development in the surrounding area and is unlikely to negatively impact nearby property. Approval would not undermine the zoning ordinance.

Support: Rick Stevens, 400 Buford Highway

Mr. Stevens stated the construction was an honest mistake. The builder asked if he wanted additional storage and he replied yes, forgetting the stipulations placed on construction. The top area is 400-500 square feet. The total building max is 1400 square feet.

There was no opposition.

Motion by Ray Brown to approve V-2019-027 with staff conditions and adding condition #5 total structure square foot to be no more than 1400 square feet, second by David Sullivan and so carried 5-0.

Conditions V-2019-027:

- 1. This variance approval only applies to a single accessory structure.***
- 2. Said accessory structure may have a footprint of up to 800 square feet.***
- 3. Said accessory structure shall include a two-car garage.***
- 4. Said accessory structure shall be located approximately as shown in Exhibit "A" and be consistent with architecture shown in Exhibit "B".***
- 5. Total structure square footage not to exceed 1400 square feet.***

7. OTHER BUSINESS - None

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Paul Alznauer, second by Ray Brown and so carried 5-0.

*Draft Minutes prepared by
Elvira Rogers, City Clerk*