

MINUTES
CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2015

Meeting Location: City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue

Attendees: Jimmy Burnette, Mayor
Beth S. Hilscher, Mayor Pro Tempore
Richard I. Goodman, Councilmember
Daniel F. Foster, Councilmember
Doug Ireland, Councilmember
Linnea Miller, Councilmember
Marty Allen, City Manager
Elvira Rogers, City Clerk

Absent: Gregory Jay, City Attorney

6:00 P.M.
DINNER SESSION
BIG SPLASH ROOM, #2302

City Council Informal Session

Informal discussion among City Councilmembers and staff. Food provided for Elected Officials and staff. No action to be taken during session.

6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

1. Call to Order

Mayor Burnette called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M and read the rules of public meetings for the record. Due to the large number of attendees, Council agreed to extend the comments from 10 minutes to 20 minutes per side.

2. Public Hearing: RZ 2015-001

The City of Suwanee is initiating a rezoning from M-1 (Light Industry District) and PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development District) to PMUD with conditions to allow for mixed-use development including multi-family and commercial uses. The tracts are located in Land Lot 236 of the 7th District on the southeast corner of Buford Highway and Chicago Street

Josh Campbell, Planning Director, presented the staff analysis as follows: This rezoning is a city initiated rezoning of approximately 5 acres along Buford Highway and Chicago Street. The current zoning is a combination of M-1 (Light Industrial) and PMUD (Mixed use). The proposed zoning is Planned Mixed Used Development for consistency with the

Downtown Master Plan. Mr. Campbell presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the proposed rezoning which highlighted the following:

Project details:

- Developer: Terwilliger-Pappas
- 5 Story building
- 10,000 Square feet of commercial space on the first floor
- 235 Class “A” apartment units above
 - ❑ 55% One-bedroom or studio units
 - ❑ 40% Two-bedroom units
 - ❑ 12 or fewer 3 bedroom units
 - ❑ Average size 956 square feet.
- 7 stories of parking with 2 stories below street grade. Wrapped by the building.
- Interior-entry controlled-access residential units.
- Construction Type 1 on the commercial and Type 5A on the residential.
- Detention Pond will be enhanced with landscaping and decorative fencing.
- Anticipated school enrollment:
 - ❑ 35 Elementary School Students
 - ❑ 17 Middle School Students
 - ❑ 22 High School Students
- City Adopted the Town Master Plan (2020 Comprehensive Plan) in 2000.
- The Plan noted that the City was challenged by lacking a unique identity and lacking an identifiable town center.
- The Plan called for creating and encouraging a strong town center.

Related Planning Efforts:

- Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment (2001)
- Old Town Master Plan (2002)
- Suwanee Town Center Plan (2003)
- 2030 Comprehensive Plan (2008)
- Downtown Suwanee Master Plan (2009)
- 20/20 Vision Plan (2012)
- Downtown Suwanee Master Plan Update (2015)
- Based upon these plans, staff recommends rezoning the property to PMUD with 9 zoning conditions.

- The conditions of zoning are intended to control the integrity and quality of the project and cover elements of the project such as design, architecture, number of units, amount of commercial space, and other details.

On August 4th, the Planning Commission voted to recommend denial of the rezoning. On August 25th, the City Council postponed the rezoning to September 8. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Support

- Nick Masino, 4274 Yosemite Court. Purchased property in Town Center as investment properties and are original owners. This additional type of residential development will provide alternative living options. This is exactly what Suwanee and Gwinnett County needs at this time. This residential option will provide economic development efforts to retain businesses. Mr. Masino stated he was saddened and embarrassed by the recent comments in a recent community meeting. Mr. Masino stated the people who rent his properties are not transients and make six figure salaries. Traffic concerns, crime and transients have been a common thread to speak against new development in the past.
- Shaun Mulligan, 3968 Boston Common Street. In favor of the new development. This will bring a new set of life and livelihood.
- Earl Mitchell, 4120 Lansfaire Terrace. His hope is all sides will listen and make decisions based on the good for Suwanee as a whole. Shadowbrook and Town Center were opposed during the development stage. This project will provide considerable support for existing retail businesses who have set the stage for what we call Town Center today. A vibrant retail area will benefit the entire County. What is positive about apartments? This development will have upscale units that appeal to professional millennials and empty nesters. It will be made of high quality materials and aesthetics for lasting appeal. This will be a first class mixed use facility. Urban living such as this attracts young people. This will be a plus for Suwanee. It also fits the future land use plan. This is an opportunity that will have a magical effect on Town Center. Respect the future land use plan and vote in favor of this project.
- Bernie Kirkland, 340 Town Center Avenue. Ms. Kirkland stated the people at the community meeting were heart felt and had information that was not accurate. She and her husband had conversation with City staff and gathered information that convinced them this project would be an asset for the City. Ms. Kirkland encouraged Council to listen to the concerns of the people and address their concerns. She and her husband have a “front row seat” to Town Center and are more than happy to share.
- James Davenport, 703 Scales Road. 20 year resident of Old Town Suwanee. Member of DDA for 10 years and member of North Gwinnett Parent Council for 4 years. Checked Save Suwanee Facebook page and referenced a letter written by

Mayor Burnette dated September 4, 2015 addressing the concerns brought up in the prior community meetings. The project will be a catalyst to enhance and support the retail of Town Center. The project is consistent with several other planning sessions by the City of Suwanee. These discussions have been on-going for more than 14 years. This will be a positive for Suwanee overall not a negative.

- Dave Williams, 4379 Yosemite Court. This process of the rezoning started more than 16 years ago. We'd be hard pressed to find someone to say the changes that created Town Center were not vital to who we are today. This process is the City implementing what the citizens of Suwanee want. The process has been very healthy and open.
- Lila Adams, 682 White Street. Purchased this property to be close to the live, work, play, pedestrian friendly environment created by Suwanee. A strong supportive population is needed to give and maintain life in Town Center. High end apartments will bring in people who will pay the same as a homeowner. It's not about the size but about location.

Opposition

- Sabrina Galara, 3955 Savannah Square Street. She stated she started the Facebook page to ask questions. She has received answers to some of the questions and is no longer in total opposition to the project. The interaction with the City has opened her eyes to a lot of things she was not aware of. The City did reach out to her to answer questions. She is not concerned about transients, but safety continues to be a concern.
- Christine Salara, 362 Portland Trail Drive. As a wife, mother and community volunteer her family chose Suwanee for the school system and sense of safety. Disagree with Mr. Williams in previous plans this site was noted as a green space. Ms. Salara read portions of recent plans and stated the 2020 Plan noted identified the need for more parks. Current plan reflect maximum 5 story buildings. She expressed concerns for traffic and speeding in Town Center. She stated she is not saying "no" but does not think this is the right time.
- Zack Meeks, 3953 Savannah Square Street. President of Board of Directors. Shadowbrook is the cornerstone community of Town Center. He stated he called a special meeting a few weeks ago of the voting members of the community. There was strong opposition. He believes this was due to a lack of communication between the Board and the City. They would like to collaborate with the City to have the best possible solution to Town Center. Growth is needed in the city, measured growth, correct growth. He asked what is the rush to move forward with the project.

There being no additional comments the Public Hearing closed.

3. Consider RZ 2015-001

Motion to approve RZ2015-005 by Mayor Pro Tempore Hilscher with amended conditions:

Condition 4g. Add electric car charging station to the amenities.

Add Condition 4i. The building and parking area for the residential development shall be via controlled access.

Add Condition 10. Developer shall improve the aesthetics of the existing shared detention pond to include the use of landscaping materials such as grasses, shrubs, and trees. Any fencing materials used around the pond shall be decorative and consist with existing fencing in the area.

Add Condition 11. Developer shall participate in a public meeting held at City Hall for the purpose of articulating and sharing the building layout and design to the general public. Said meeting shall be conducted at least 30 days prior to the issuance of a building permit for the site.

Add Condition 12. The construction types for the site shall meet or exceed the construction types of the existing mixed-use buildings in town Center.

Specifically, commercial construction shall be Type 1 and the residential portions shall be Type 5A.

Additionally, in response to some of the concerns voiced today staff is asked to evaluate traffic on Suwanee Avenue from an existing and future traffic standpoint. If the results of the evaluation call for additional traffic calming or traffic manage, the City should explore the use of additional stop signs, roundabouts, one way streets, speed tables and/or other measures, second by Councilmember Foster and so carried 6-0.

Mayor Burnette shared he is a life time resident of the City and his intent is to keep Suwanee a great place to live.

Councilmember Foster stated he is open to speak with citizens as are the remainder of the Council.

4. Adjournment – 7:21 PM

Motion to Adjourn by Councilmember Goodman, second by Councilmember Ireland and so carried 6-0.

Approved October 27, 2015