

MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
November 1, 2022

PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBERS: Present: Michelle Budd, Brad Cox, Muthu C. Narayannan, Alan Dandar, and Glenn Weyant. Staff members present: Josh Campbell, and Alyssa Durden.

CALL TO ORDER

Michelle Budd called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Glenn Weyant moved to approve the agenda as presented, second by Muthu C. Narayannan. Motion carried 5-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: September 6, 2022

Glenn Weyant moved to approve the September 6, 2022 minutes with corrections, second by Brad Cox. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

AMD-2022-003 – A proposed amendment to the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance in order to add the definition of “backyard chickens” to Article III. Definitions, and add “backyard chickens” as a permitted use in Section 500 (R-140 Residential Single-Family District), Section 501 (R-100 Residential Single Family District), Section 501A (R-85 Residential Single Family District), Section 502 (R-75 Single Family Residence District), Section 510 (PMUD Planned Mixed-Use Development District), Section 511 (Conservation Subdivision Overlay District), and Section 512.2 (IRD Infill Residential District).

Josh Campbell presented the staff report as follows: As you know, Council directed staff to develop backyard chicken regulations for their consideration based upon Gwinnett County’s regulations. In order to adopt regulations similar to Gwinnett County, a Zoning Ordinance amendment that defines Backyard Chickens and identifies which districts will allow the keeping of backyard chickens, and a Backyard Chicken Ordinance. The Planning Commission will only be voting on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

The Zoning Ordinance amendment is fairly straightforward, allowing backyard chickens in single family residential districts (R-140, R-100, R-85, R-75, IRD) and in PMUD areas with single family residential uses. The amendment also includes a definition of backyard chickens. Both the definition and each listing of Backyard Chickens as an allowed use reference the Backyard Chicken Ordinance. It is important to make sure readers of the Zoning Ordinance are made aware of additional regulations on the subject.

The proposed Backyard Chicken Ordinance is based very closely on Gwinnett County regulations. It is important to note that the Gwinnett County regulations are a small part of a larger Unified Development Code, so there are elements in the draft of the Suwanee Backyard Ordinance (such as purpose and intent, permitting, appeals, etc.) that would not be found with the chicken regulations in the Gwinnett Ordinance.

The draft Suwanee Backyard Chicken Ordinance regulates the keeping of chickens as pets and/or for egg production. The draft ordinance sets a minimum lot size of 10,500 square feet and establishes a maximum number of chickens based on lot size. The maximum number of chickens for the smallest lot size is 5 and the maximum for lots over 2 acres is 15. Chickens are required to have housing (a coop) and be contained in a fenced in area if they are not in the coop. Housing is required to be at least 20 feet from any property line. Roosters are prohibited. Slaughter of chickens is prohibited. Chickens are not allowed to create a nuisance as defined by state law.

Alan Dandar asked if Gwinnett County has an ordinance in place for chickens. Josh Campbell explained that Gwinnett County does have an ordinance in place but they cannot enforce their requirements inside the city limits. The City of Suwanee has modeled the ordinance after the Gwinnett County ordinance partially to avoid confusion.

Alan Dandar asked what the genesis of this ordinance was. Josh Campbell explained that it came from a conflict between property owners. In addressing that issue, some council members felt chickens were like pets so why not regulate them the same way. Staff was asked to look at how other jurisdictions regulate chickens. Gwinnett County was recommended as a model because of its proximity to Suwanee and it is a thorough regulation.

Michelle Budd called for support.

Ryan Parish, 4350 Settles Bridge Road, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Parish stated that he has had chickens and that it has been a positive experience. Mr. Parish cited information regarding the noise level of chickens stating that the decibel level is similar to other neighborhood noises including human conversation or a barking dog. Mr. Parish also cited information regarding chicken waste and stated that dogs generate more waste than chickens and 40% of chicken matter is compostable and can be used as fertilizer unlike dog waste. Mr. Parish also added that there are many benefits having chickens including: they are family pets and kids hold and pet them, they are educational for children teaching economic and environmental sustainability and responsibility from chores to care for the chickens, and they provide fresh eggs.

Jeremy Brimer, 141 Buford Highway, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Brimer stated that he has never had chickens but would like to. His children are excited about the possibility. Mr. Brimer feels it will be a good educational experience and will teach responsibility. He stated that a decision to approve this amendment would be in line with the Suwanee vision and quoted from the 20/20 Vision in the Suwanee 20/20 Vision Plan.

Zelda Brimer, 141 Buford Highway, Suwanee, GA. Ms. Briner asked the Planning Commission to please let her have chickens.

Michelle Budd called for opposition. There was none.

Alan Dandar asked Josh Campbell if this ordinance did not exist and he wanted to have 1000 chickens on a half acre lot, would it be allowed. Josh Campbell explained that no chickens would be allowed because of the lot size is too small under the current regulations.

Alan Dandar asked Josh Campbell what the current minimum lot size is. Josh Campbell explained that it depends on the zoning district.

Glenn Weyant recommended approval of AMD-2022-003, second by Alan Dandar. Motion carried 5-0.

PROPOSED 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

Muthu C. Narayannan moved to approve the 2023 Planning Commission meeting schedule with typo corrections, second by Glenn Weyant (deletions = strikethrough, additions = bold). Motion carried 5-0.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE (5:00 P.M.)	ADVERTISEMENT DATES	P & Z MEETING DATE
11/28/22	12/07/22 12/21/22	01/03/23
12/30/22	01/11/23 01/25/23	02/07/23
01/30/23	02/08/23 02/22/23	03/07/23
02/27/23	03/08/23 03/22/23	04/04/23
03/27/23	04/05/23 04/19/23	05/02/23
05/01/23	05/10/23 05/24/23	06/06/23
06/05/23	06/14/23 06/28/23	07/11/23
06/26/23	07/05/23 07/19/23	08/01/23
07/31/23	08/09/23 08/23/22-23	09/05/23

08/28/23	09/06/23 09/20/23	10/03/23
10/2/23	10/11/23 10/25/23	11/07/23
10/30/23	11/08/23 11/22/23	12/05/23
11/27/23	12/06/ 22 23 12/20/23	01/02/24

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Glenn Weyant moved to adjourn 6:55 p.m.