

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA**  
**ZONING APPEALS BOARD MEETING**  
**September 20, 2022**

**PLANNING AND ZONING APPEALS BOARD MEMBERS:** Present: Donald Lee, David Sullivan, Ray Brown, Paul Alznauer, and Beth Lembo. Staff members present: Alyssa Durden and MaryAnn Jackson.

**CALL TO ORDER**

David Sullivan 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 Donald Lee. Motion carried 5-0.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Donald Lee moved to approve the August 16, 2022 minutes, second by Paul Alznauer. Motion carried 5-0.*

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

V-2022-013- Owner/Applicant: Southern Healthcare Holdings, LLC. The applicant requests a variance from Section 1703 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to reduce the required landscape strip adjacent to a street. The site contains approximately 1.16 acres in Land Lot 239 of the 7th District and is located at 1500 Station Center Boulevard.

Alyssa Durden presented the staff report as follows: The applicant seeks a variance from Section 1703.2.1 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for the reduction of the required 15-foot front landscape strip. The subject parcel is 1.16 acres and is located at 1500 Station Center Boulevard and fronts Station Center Boulevard. The parcel is currently vacant and the owner is in the process of obtaining a development permit to allow for construction of a 10,800 square foot dental office. The applicant is currently in the development review process and is seeking to develop the property with a 10-foot-wide front landscape strip. The Zoning Ordinance requires a 15-foot landscape strip. As such, a variance would be required in order to develop the site as proposed.

The subject property is located just off of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (along Station Center Boulevard). The area is characterized by a mixture of commercial and residential uses. To the west of the subject property is an existing Pediatric Dentistry office (Zoned C-2). The subject property shares a driveway with the adjacent Pediatric Dentistry office. To the north of the subject property is the Epiphany Lutheran Church (Zoned C-2). Across Station Center Boulevard, to the south, is the Suwanee Jubilee (Zoned C-2A). Suwanee Jubilee is a commercial shopping center that includes a variety of office, retail, and restaurant uses. To the east of the subject property are

the driveway to the Epiphany Lutheran Church and some townhomes in the Suwanee Station mixed use project (Zoned PMUD).

The proposed building will match the architectural style of the existing buildings on the neighboring properties. The Pediatric Dentistry building was permitted and constructed in 2003. The buildings currently occupied by the Jubilee Suwanee Shopping Center were permitted and constructed in 2006. At the time the buildings were permitted, the required front landscape strip was 10 feet. Therefore, both buildings were built to code. The Buffer, Landscape and Tree Preservation ordinance was amended in 2009. Among the changes made to the article was increasing the minimum required front landscape strip from 10 feet to 15 feet.

The City of Suwanee encourages interconnectivity of neighboring properties, especially when the parking lots are adjacent to one another. The subject property is located adjacent to two already developed properties that have 10-foot front landscape strips. The applicant is requesting a variance to reduce the front landscape strip from 15 feet to 10 feet to match the neighboring properties and to provide a straight and uninterrupted drive aisle that will connect the two adjacent properties. The number and spacing of the trees within the landscape strip will be consistent with current standards. This variance would only affect the width of the strip in order to match the adjacent properties.

The City of Suwanee's Zoning Ordinance grants the Zoning Board of Appeals the authority to grant variances. According to Section 2006 of the Ordinance, the Board is authorized to grant variances when literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in unnecessary hardship to a property owner. A variance may be granted if the conditions are unique to the property and/or are unlikely to cause substantial detriment to the public good or if the variance will not undermine the intent of the zoning ordinance. In addition, a variance may be granted when such conditions are not the result of any actions of the property owner.

In this case, approval of the requested variance would allow for a parking lot that functions more seamlessly with the adjacent parking lot. Additionally, as noted before, the surrounding developments were constructed with 10-foot-wide landscape strips.

Reducing the subject property's front landscape strip to 10 feet would be consistent with surrounding developments, and therefore, approval of variance in this situation should not undermine the Zoning Ordinance.

Reducing the front landscape strip will allow for improved interconnectivity with the neighboring property. This parcel is uniquely affected by the changes that occurred to the landscape regulations. It would be the only property in the area with the wider landscape strip. Approval of this variance will not circumvent the intent of the ordinance and will allow for continuity within the commercial subdivision. As such, staff recommends approval with conditions of V-2022-013.

David Sullivan called upon the applicant.

Tim Watford, 4782 Tarry Post Lane, Suwanee, GA. Mr. Watford is the architect on the project. He will submit the plans to Gwinnett County for review. He is available to answer any questions.

David Sullivan called for opposition. There was none.

*Ray Brown moved to approve V-2022-013 with staff conditions, second by Beth Lembo.  
Motion carried 5- 0.*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Paul Altnauer moved to adjourn at 6:41 pm.*