

MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
April 4, 2023

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

CALL TO ORDER

Alyssa Durden called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

Michelle Budd nominated Glenn Weyant for Chairperson, second by Muthu C. Narayannan. Motion carried 4-0.

Alyssa Durden turned the meeting over to Glenn Weyant.

Muthu C. Narayannan nominated Michelle Budd as Vice Chairperson, second by Glenn Weyant. Motion carried 4-0.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Alan Dandar moved to approve the agenda as presented, second by Muthu C. Narayannan. Motion carried 4-0.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES: January 3, 2023

Muthu C. Narayannan moved to approve the January 3, 2023 minutes, second by Michelle Budd. Motion carried 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

W-2023-001 – Owner/Applicant: Sawmill Drive Industrial Partners, LLC. The applicant requests a waiver from Section 6.13 of the City of Suwanee Development Regulations which requires the construction of sidewalks along all road frontages. The site is located in Land Lot 170 of the 7th district at 195 Sawmill Drive and contains approximately 26.4 acres.

Alyssa Durden presented the staff report as follows: The applicant requests a waiver from Section 6.13 of the City of Suwanee Development Regulations which requires the construction of sidewalks along all road frontages. The site is approximately 27 acres and is being developed with a 327,825 square foot distribution facility. The project is located along Sawmill Drive, just east of Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road.

The City of Suwanee Development Regulations provide for a Waiver process to deviate from the regulations. The Planning Commission is authorized to review and consider said

deviations. If denied by the Planning Commission, the applicant has the right to appeal that decision to the City Council.

Section 6.13.1 of the City of Suwanee Development Regulations states, “Sidewalks shall be installed along all road frontages, as well as all subdivision streets (on one side), within the City limits with the exception of Satellite Boulevard.” The subject property fronts Sawmill Drive. The development is proposed to include a single driveway, which will serve trucks and cars, onto Sawmill Drive. The subject property went through the development review process indicating a sidewalk. The applicant believes the sidewalk along Sawmill Drive will not be used and now seeks to eliminate the required sidewalk.

Of the 27 acre site, only the southern portion fronts a road and is therefore required to provide a sidewalk. The other three sides of the rectangularly shaped property do not front onto roadways. On the developed portion of the project, there do not appear to be any site constraints that would prevent installation of a sidewalk. The applicant contends lack of usage make it unreasonable to provide a sidewalk along Sawmill Drive.

The subject property is located on Sawmill Drive northeast of the intersection with Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, within the highly commercialized Suwanee Gateway character area. To the west of the subject property is a Wal-Mart and an associated shopping center both zoned C-2A. To the south of the subject property is a shopping center formerly anchored by a business supply store zoned C-2A. There are also hotels (one zoned C-2A and the other C-3), undeveloped land, and a liquor store, zoned C-2, C-2A, and C-3, located to the south of the property. To the north of the subject property, along Sawmill Drive, are four M-1 zoned properties developed with office warehouse buildings (similar to what is proposed on the subject property). Each of these buildings are oriented with access onto Satellite Boulevard but not access onto Sawmill Road. A power line easement runs between Sawmill and the buildings that access Satellite. Across Sawmill Drive, to the east, are undeveloped commercially zoned tracts, an M-1 zoned tract developed with a self-storage facility, and I-85.

It should be noted that the other properties along Sawmill were developed in Gwinnett County and then annexed into the City. Since these properties are already developed, it is unlikely that the private sector will be developing sidewalks along Sawmill Drive in the near future. The City adopted an updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan in September of 2022. The recently adopted plan does not include any future plans for sidewalks along Sawmill Road. North of the subject property there are no pedestrian destinations within a reasonable walking distance of the subject property. South of the subject property is a highly commercialized area within reasonable walking distance of the driveway.

The applicant notes that the property lies on a connector road between Satellite Boulevard and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and they contend the road is not a pedestrian route due to the lack of businesses fronting Sawmill Drive. The applicant insists a sidewalk along the subject frontage will not be used.

The Commission has the ability to deny the waiver, approve the waiver as submitted, or approve it with certain conditions.

Glenn Weyant called upon the applicant.

Rees Waite, Sawmill Drive Industrial Partners, 1176 Peachtree Street, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA. Mr. Waite stated that a sidewalk would not be used on Sawmill Drive.

Glenn Weyant called for opposition. There was none.

Michelle Budd moved to approve W-2023-001, second by Muthu C. Narayanan. Motion carried 4-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Alan Dandar moved to adjourn 6:48 pm.