

Gastonia Planning Commission February 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Gastonia Planning Commission meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, 2023 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Commissioners Jim Stewart, Chad Ghorley, Anthony Gallant, David Wilson, Glen Silverman

Absent: Commissioners Kristie Ferguson, Carl Harris, Rodney Armstrong

Staff Members Present: Charles Graham, Jason Thompson, Quentin McPhatter, Jason Pauling, Maddy Gates, Shelley DeHart and Tucker Johnson

Item 1a: Role Call/ Sound Check

Vice Chair Stewart declared a quorum.

Item 1b: Calls/Contacts to Planning Commission Members

Commissioners were not contacted.

Item 1c: Approval of December 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to adopt the December 8, 2022 minutes as presented and Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed (5-0).

Vice Chair Stewart explained the rules of procedure and time limitations.

Item 2: Public Hearing – Gaston County Fleet Services (File #202200505)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 3.3 acres on the northeastern corner of East Long Avenue and North Avon Street from O-1 CD (Office – Conditional District), C-3 (General Business), and I-U (Urban Industrial) to C-3 CD (General Business – Conditional District). The property is owned by Gaston County.

Vice Chair Stewart opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map and aerial image of the site were displayed. Mr. Pauling stated that the current use of the property is for Gaston County's fleet maintenance. He noted adjoining properties and the request to expand the fleet services building along E. Long Avenue. Mr. Pauling noted that the front portion of the site is located in the Gateway overlay district. The site plan and elevations were displayed showing the new addition to the site, a new driveway and parking on E. Long Avenue and a relocated driveway on N. Avon Street. Mr. Pauling noted that future expansion of the site is identified on the plan and includes additional parking to the rear of the site.

The Future Land Use Map and conditions were displayed. Mr. Pauling stated the future land use for the site is indicated as mixed use which is consistent with the transitional Gateway overlay district and suggests a blend of commercial, mixed use and civic uses. The statements of consistency and reasonableness were displayed and Mr. Pauling stated that staff recommends approval.

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Stephen Boyd, 340 Club View Lane, Matthews, NC. Mr. Boyd stated he is the architectural engineer for the site with ADW Architects and is available for questions. Commissioner Ghorley asked Mr. Boyd if the new addition will match the current brick façade. Mr. Boyd replied "Yes".

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Carrie Rodriguez, 1035 S. Belvedere Avenue, Gastonia NC. Ms. Rodriguez shared that she is the project manager from Gaston County Public Works. She stated the county's current fleet service site has been out grown and that the project would include renovation and expansion.

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Mark Breen, 2005 Philadelphia Road, Lawndale, NC. Mr. Breen stated he is the project engineer from Robinson and Sawyer. Commissioner Stewart asked how floodplain would be controlled on the right side of the site. Mr. Breen replied that the floodplain is low under the ground on the site and is currently controlled. Commissioner Stewart asked if there are future stormwater control measures planned. Mr. Breen replied that future retention on the site, if necessary during construction documents or TRC, will be underground.

Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project as presented with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Silverman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Gastonia Planning Commission February 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Item 3: Public Hearing – 733 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way (File #202200641)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 6.34 acres from I-U CUP to I-U (Urban Industrial). The subject property is located on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way across from East Davidson Avenue. The property is owned by Restauracion Casa De MSRCD, Inc.

Vice Chair Stewart opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map and aerial image of the site were displayed. Mr. Pauling noted adjoining properties and the existing conditions of the site. He explained the current CUP File (7744) for the property was for a church but that the applicant wishes to rezone back to straight I-U. The Future Land Use Map was displayed, indicating the future land use for the site as Industrial. The statements of consistency and reasonableness were displayed and Mr. Pauling stated that staff recommends approval.

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Sunil Kothapalli, 1215 Ladera Drive, Waxhaw, NC. Commissioner Ghorley asked Mr. Kothapalli if there are plans for the site. Mr. Kothapalli replied that there are currently no plans but that it would most likely be something related to manufacturing or distribution in the future.

Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project as presented with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 4: Public Hearing – 1501 & 1503 W. Franklin Boulevard (File #202200654)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 0.66 acres from I-U to C-3 (General Commercial). The subject property is located at the southwest intersection of West Franklin Boulevard and South Webb Street. The property is owned by Scott and Elizabeth Cunningham – Seahamz, LLC.

Vice Chair Stewart opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map and aerial image of the site were displayed. Mr. Pauling stated that the request includes two properties and that both were previously operated for automobile uses. Adjoining properties were identified and it was noted that the land use along W. Franklin Boulevard has been consistently commercial with the exception of these two parcels. The Future Land Use Map was displayed, indicating the future land use for the site as Commercial. The statements of consistency and reasonableness were displayed and Mr. Pauling stated that staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Wilson asked Mr. Pauling what the plans for the site would be. Mr. Pauling replied that he was not aware of the future plans but that the applicant was present.

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Scott Cunningham, 316 S. Main Street, Belmont, NC. Mr. Cunningham stated that the property is for sale and that he believes the C-3 zoning district is a better fit along W. Franklin Boulevard. Commissioner Gallant asked Mr. Cunningham to confirm that the properties are for sale. Mr. Cunningham replied “Yes”. Commissioner Ghorley asked if the intent of the rezoning is to return the site to C-3 to be consistent with the overall area. Mr. Cunningham replied “Yes”.

Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project as presented with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 5: Public Hearing – 1998 West Davidson Avenue (File #202200674)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 0.497 acres from RS-12 (Single-family Residential) to RMF (Residential Multi-family). The subject property is located at the southeast corner of West Davidson Avenue and Westerly Hills Drive. The property is owned by Niles and Mary Miller.

Vice Chair Stewart opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map and aerial image of the site were displayed. Mr. Pauling stated the property is currently vacant and is adjoining the previously known Rhyne Elementary site which is now the Rhyne Court development. The Future Land Use Map was displayed, indicating the future land use for the site as Residential. The Rhyne Court development site plan was displayed to show the relation to the subject property. The statements of consistency and reasonableness were displayed and Mr. Pauling stated that staff recommends approval.

Gastonia Planning Commission February 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Silverman asked Mr. Pauling to reference the subject property in the Rhyne Court development site plan. Commissioner Silverman also asked if the subject property was not originally included in the Rhyne Court development. Mr. Pauling replied "Yes".

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Niles Miller, 417 Pryor Street, Gastonia, NC. Mr. Miller stated that the intent of the rezoning is to make his property the same zoning district as Rhyne Court. He explained further that the subject property would be used as an entrance for the development.

Vice Chair Stewart recognized Melissa Tomberlin, 1469 Edison Drive, Gastonia, NC. Ms. Tomberlin stated she is a neighboring resident to Rhyne Court. She expressed concern for the expansion of the development, specifically that it would include section 8 housing. Commissioner Wilson asked if the current housing there is section 8. Ms. Tomberlin replied "Yes". Commissioner Gallant confirmed with Assistant City Attorney, Charles Graham, that section 8 housing is not in the Planning Commission's purview. Mr. Graham replied "Yes", that the boards consideration is land use and that it cannot control who lives in the development.

Commissioner Ghorley asked Ms. Tomberlin if she understands what Mr. Graham is explaining. He stated further that the boards purpose is limited to land use and that they cannot base their decision on whether or not there is section 8 housing. Ms. Tomberlin replied that she understands.

Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project as presented with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Gallant seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 6: Other Business

Planning Director, Jason Thompson, stated that there is no other business to discuss.

Item 4: Adjournment

There being no further business, Vice Chair Stewart made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion. Hearing none in opposition, the meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maddy Gates, Planner

Kristie Ferguson, Chairwoman