

Gastonia Planning Commission June 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The Gastonia Planning Commission meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 9, 2022 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Commissioners Rodney Armstrong, Jim Stewart, Kristie Ferguson, David Wilson, and Carl Harris

Absent: Commissioners Bob Cinq-Mars, Chad Ghorley and Anthony Gallant

Staff Members Present: Charles Graham, Jason Thompson, Quentin McPhatter, Chrystal Howard, Julia Baker-Granata, and Rusty Bost

Item 1a: Role Call / Sound Check

Chairwoman Ferguson declared a quorum.

Item 1b: Calls/Contacts to Planning Commission Members

Commissioners were not contacted.

Item 1c: Approval of May 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Stewart made the motion to adopt the May 5, 2022 minutes as presented and Commissioner Harris seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed (5-0).

Chairwoman Ferguson explained the rules of procedure and time limitations.

Item 2: Public Hearing - Andrew B. Horsley & Beth J. Horsley (File #202100402)

Subject hearing involves a request to assign a zoning district in conjunction with an annexation request for approximately 19.998 acres from Gaston County R-1 to City of Gastonia PD-RRDD (Planned Development-Revised Residential Development District). The subject property is located west of Nolan Farm Drive. The property is owned by Andrew B. Horsley and Beth J. Horsley. This item will be heard by City Council at the June 21, 2022 meeting at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Thompson, Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map was displayed. Mr. Thompson stated the applicant submitted an annexation petition and request to assign a zoning district. He noted adjoining properties and the request for a maximum of sixty single-family lots with rear alley garage and driveway. Site plan and elevation drawings were displayed.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Developer Mark McAuley with Suncrest Real Estate and Land, 11330 Vanstory Drive of Huntersville, NC. Mr. McAuley noted this was an extension of a road, part to Nolan Farm for a maximum of sixty lots, and approximately twenty acres to be preserved for open area.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Pam Brock, 9663 Margrave Drive of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Brock stated she lives in the DR Horton side of Nolan Farm subdivision. She commented that the project was behind on building the amenities, and asked if there will be an additional pool, park and greenway in the neighborhood.

Mr. McAuley thanked Ms. Brock for her comment. He stated the pool amenity was on its way, but labor and material shortages caused a delay. The goal is to open the pool by July 4th. He noted an open park nearby, the parcel having a lot of natural open space, and Ms. Brock's comment will be discussed with his team. Commissioner Harris asked if the BMP will be wet or dry and if the existing pond will remain natural, and Mr. McAuley replied that the BMP has not been designed yet and their intent is for the pond to remain natural. Commissioner Harris asked the size of the pond and Mr. McAuley replied that it may be a little over an acre.

Commissioner Stewart 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 3: Public Hearing - Jacob Hunter Hoffman (File #202200158)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 57.05 acres from RS-12 (Single-family Residential District, minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots) to PD-RRDD (Planned Development-Revised Residential Development District). The subject property is located north of Linwood Road. The property is owned by Jacob Hunter Hoffman.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Thompson, Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map was displayed. Mr. Thompson stated the

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applicant submitted a request to construct a maximum of two hundred and forty single-family detached homes with thirty-foot-wide rear loaded lots. The subject property will provide trails connecting to a future public park. He referenced the site plan showing layout and photos of similar products in the agenda.

Commissioner Harris inquired about the width of the sidewalk and Mr. Thompson replied that it was four feet.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Kent Olson with Development Solutions Group, 11121 Carmel Commons Boulevard of Charlotte, NC. Mr. Olson shared that Parklin was designed to fit with the park, compliment Westport, provide a lifestyle about recreation and outdoors, and connectivity. He talked about the materials to be used, homes being single-family detached, square footage range, and the clubhouse to be donated to Parks and Recreation Department.

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

Item 4: Public Hearing - PP-Franklin Blvd LLC, T-Lake LLC & Powell Realty & Trading Co. Inc. (File #202200207)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 12.71 acres from C-2 (Highway Commercial District) and C-3 (General Commercial District) to RMF CD (Multi-family Residential Conditional District). The subject property is located south of Maplewood Drive and north of Glenwood Drive. The property is owned by PP-Franklin Blvd LLC, T-Lake LLC, and Powell Realty & Trading Co. Inc.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Thompson, Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map was displayed. Mr. Thompson stated the applicant submitted a request for eight buildings with a maximum of three hundred and twelve apartment units and an amenity area. Renderings of the proposed buildings, site plan, and illustrative elevations were displayed. A neighborhood meeting was held and staff recommended approval of the request.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Michael Smith, 220 Hampton Avenue of Charlotte, NC, and Becky Cheney, 525 N. Tryon Street of Charlotte, NC. Mr. Smith commented that the project will solve issues with the property, enhance the neighborhood, have little impact on existing neighbors, and provide a transition between heavily dense commercial to neighborhood. He noted that conditions were added to limit flexibility of future development, a Traffic Impact Analysis study (TIA) was completed, stormwater will be underground, and the project will have four and one-half acres of open space. Ms. Cheney did not speak at this time.

Commissioner Harris inquired about an owl habitat concern and the applicant agreed to add some owl houses in the tree save area on the eastern side of the property. Commissioner Wilson asked if anyone was present to speak in opposition of the request and Chairwoman Ferguson replied that no one was signed up in opposition.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Cindi Boyer, 2233 Glenwood Drive of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Boyer stated she was across the street from the subject property and was for the project. However, she was very concerned about flooding as she already experienced this three times due to the old water main pipes breaking twice and also a water meter. She was also concerned about existing sewer and speeding traffic problems. Mr. Thompson suggested departments who handle these matters discuss the issues. Chairwoman Ferguson suggested that she call the police department and request a two-week watch and Commissioner Wilson agreed. Assistant City Attorney Graham noted these concerns were not for the Planning Commission and should be addressed to City Council.

Commissioner Stewart 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 - Lakshmi Hotel, Inc. (File #202200263)

Subject hearing involves a request to revise conditions on an existing conditional district on approximately 2.32 acres. The subject property is zoned C-2 CD (Highway Commercial Conditional District) and O-1 CD (Office Conditional District). The property is located at the northeast corner of N. New Hope Road and Remount Road. The property is owned by Lakshmi Hotel, Inc.

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Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Thompson, Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Thompson stated the applicant submitted a request to amend the conditions. The conditions relate to a screening wall along Sinclair Street.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Attorney John Russell, 301 S York St of Gastonia, NC. Attorney Russell stated the request was to amend the conditional zoning resulting from site conditions. He noted the slope on the property near SinClair Street and the hotel as severe. Attorney Russell continued that a structure, including a privacy wall, cannot be constructed on top of the retaining wall based on the original design. Engineering problems identified were integrity of the retaining wall with high winds and the weight of brick on the top the retaining wall would undermine the integrity of the wall and slope. Also, footers would compromise utility lines, retaining walls, and interfere with landscaping if the brick privacy wall was moved away from the retaining wall. The landscaping development plan was displayed and Attorney Russell noted the benefit of noise deterrent from the wall with trees and plantings. Lastly, brick pulled away from the retention wall and close to the street would undermine the long term integrity of the street. Attorney Russell displayed a slate gray polyvinyl material as an alternative allowing landscaping in front and behind, have a higher coefficient for sound barrier, and material would not fade or discolor. A neighborhood meeting was held, one person was present, and her questions were answered. Technical conditions needed to be modified are the retaining wall, privacy fence, and the dumpster to be screened with materials to match screening wall.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized General Contractor Kurt Giesler, 1613 Essex hall Drive of Rock Hill, SC. Commissioner Harris inquired about the slope and Mr. Giesler replied that the slope near Remount Road was very steep with the highest slope, and the existing segmented block wall would remain.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Andy Shah, Applicant/Owner, who declined speaking.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Mark Armstrong, 1824 Burt Avenue of Gastonia, NC. Mr. Armstrong was concerned about the developer's lack of preparation, brick being changed to the polyvinyl material, traffic issues, roads damaged from trucks, and the polyvinyl material not being aesthetically pleasing to the existing brick.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized, Carol Bennett, 1817 Burt Avenue of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Bennet stated she was the last house on Burt Avenue and the resident who attended the neighborhood meeting. She stated she was concerned about the polyvinyl material not blending well with the brick. She asked if the wall will stop short of the guard rail or be in front of the guard rail. Mr. Giesler replied that the retaining wall was there, and the proposed screening wall will extend to the corner of SinClair Street and Remount Road on top of the retaining wall.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the proposed screening can match the retaining brick and Mr. Bennet replied that the wall will be covered on both sides by landscaping.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the change with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. Brief discussion ensued on the dumpster to be screened with materials to match the screening wall and the community not permitted to select a color for the wall. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 6: Public Hearing - Unified Development Ordinance Amendments (File #202200341)

Subject hearing involves a request to amend Section 8.1.11 Revised Residential Development District to the Unified Development Ordinance to make clarifications and amend standards. This item will be heard by City Council at the June 21, 2022 meeting at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Thompson, Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Thompson stated this amendment involved corrections to recent amendments, such as dimensional standards to side-yard houses. Staff recommended approval of the request as presented.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to close the public hearing and approve (move forward with a favorable recommendation) with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Harris seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 7: Other Business

Update on Council Votes:

Regarding public hearing items heard this evening, Mr. Thompson noted the text amendment was scheduled to be heard by the Gastonia City Council on June 21st. Regarding file #202100402, the

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applicant is requesting City Council to continue their annexation and assignment of zoning to the second City Council meeting in July.

Representative for May 17th City Council Meeting, if needed

The Planning Commission determined no representative was needed.

Other Business:

Assistant City Manager Quentin McPhatter stated the next joint meeting with City Council will be held on Thursday, June 16th at 5:30 p.m. in the Police Department's Community Room. Agenda topics are being discussed.

Item 4: Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairwoman Ferguson entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chairwoman Ferguson made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. Hearing none in opposition, the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Kristie Ferguson, Chairwoman