

Gastonia Planning Commission
August 8, 2019 Minutes

Chairperson Goode declared a quorum and the Gastonia Planning Commission meeting opened at 5:30 pm on Thursday, August 8, 2019, in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

Present: Commissioners Jerry Fleeman, Kristie Ferguson, Pamela Goode, Jim Stewart, and Anthony Gallant

Absent: Commissioner Bob Biggerstaff, Bob Cinq-Mars and Rodney Armstrong

Staff Members Present: Charles Graham, Assistant City Attorney; Jason Thompson, Planning Director; Jana McMakin, Senior Planner; Quentin McPhatter, Assistant City Manager; and Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Chairperson Goode recognized Mr. Anthony Gallant as newly appointed and he was sworn in by Ms. Howard.

Item 1a: Role Call / Sound Check

Item 1b: Calls/Contacts to Planning Commission Members

Commissioners stated there were no contacts.

Item 1c: Approval of May 1, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fleeman made the motion to approve the May 1, 2019 minutes as written and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 1c: Approval of June 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fleeman made the motion to approve the June 6, 2019 minutes as written and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 1c: Approval of July 22, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fleeman made the motion to amend the July 22, 2019 minutes to include at the end of paragraph 7 on page 1c-3 that *Commissioner Fleeman intended to convey that he discusses the New Urban Design Ordinances, like the one being discussed by the Commission, with Mr. Bob Clay because of his experience in developing them within Belmont and other Cities in North Carolina. He is a resource from which to gain information. Mr. Baches commented that Mr. Clay was an excellent resource.* Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Chairperson Goode explained the rules of procedure and time limitations.

Item 2: Public Hearing – Kent Olson (File # 9279)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 10.07 acres from RS-12 (Residential District, minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots) to RMF (Residential Multi-family District). The subject property is located on the northeast corner of W. Davidson Avenue and Hargrove Avenue. The property is owned by Roane Investments, LLC.

Chairperson Goode opened the public hearing and recognized Ms. Jana McMakin, AICP, Senior Planner for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. McMakin thanked the Commission and public for being present this evening. She provided the site description, displayed the zoning map and explained adjoining properties and land use trends. Ms. McMakin commented on public facilities and the background of the subject property. The Future Land Use Map in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan indicates Public and Institutional for the subject property and residential for the surrounding properties. Ms. McMakin concluded with limitations for the RMF district that are found in 8.1.10 Multi-Family Development in the Unified Development Ordinance as presented in the staff report. Staff recommended the request be approved as presented. No questions were asked by the Commission.

Chairperson Goode recognized Mr. Kent Olsen, 11121 Carmel Commons Boulevard of Charlotte, NC. Mr. Olsen is the applicant and his company is Development Solutions Group. Mr. Olsen thanked the Commissioners for this opportunity. He provided his background. He commented on having no intention in building apartments and government assisted housing resulting in his reason to apply for a general rezoning. He briefly shared history on townhomes and houses his company has built. He shared his passion and the need for affordable housing. Mr. Olsen stated the intent is to build townhomes on this site. He commented on a possible opportunity for a park on a portion

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of the site. He finished his presentation by sharing his excitement about his business opportunity at the West Davidson site. No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Chairperson Goode recognized Ms. Daphne Lewallen, 1512 Hargrove Avenue of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Lewallen is in opposition of a residential multi-family district and she shared her history of residing in the area. Ms. Lewallen was concerned about existing rundown apartments and did not want another low-income apartment being built. She was for a park with the townhomes and wants the area cleaned up. Ms. Lewallen briefly explained concerns and suggestions she presented to City Council. No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Chairperson Goode recognized Ms. Melissa Tomberlin, 1469 Edison Drive of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Tomberlin is in opposition of a residential multi-family district and agrees with Ms. Lewallen. She shared her history of residing in the area. Her concerns were of existing neighborhood problems and she did not want any low-income apartments or houses. She also stated that she wants the area cleaned up. No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Chairperson Goode recognized Mr. Roger Morrison, 2001 W. Davidson Avenue of Gastonia, NC. Mr. Morrison was in opposition of anything other than townhouses. He was concerned about building townhouses next to a mobile home park. His concern was existing rundown areas and he also wants the area cleaned up. No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Fleeman made a motion to close the public hearing and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Chairperson Goode reiterated the applicant's intent addressing concerns and stated that she was in favor of approving the request as presented.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the request as presented with the statement of consistency and reasonableness and Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 3: Amending the Unified Development Ordinance (File # 9290)

Subject hearing involves a request to amend the Unified Development Ordinance Chapter 2 Definitions to establish a definition for Blood Plasma Facility, and Section 7.1 Table of Uses to establish the zoning district that allow Blood Plasma Facility and Charitable Relief Organization Category 1, 2 and 3, and Section 8.4.4 to establish new supplemental regulations for these land uses, and Table 10.5-1 to establish parking calculation requirements for these land uses.

This item will be heard by City Council on Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 6:00 PM in the Public Forum Room at the Gaston County Courthouse.

Chairperson Goode opened the public hearing and recognized Mr. Jason Thompson, AICP, Planning Director for the purpose of staff presentation.

Mr. Thompson stated this item is being addressed because of concerns expressed. To address some of the concerns, staff proposed amending Unified Development Ordinance to establish a definition for Blood Plasma Facility, as well as a zoning district that allows Blood Plasma Facility and Charitable Relief Organization Category 1, 2 and 3, new supplemental regulations and parking calculation requirements for these uses. Concerns heard at a community meeting were largely based on observation on an existing plasma, parking, foot traffic, drug activity, loitering, as well as other concerns. Mr. Thompson explained that non-profit professional counselling services would be defined under the Charitable Relief Organization definition with three categories based on services provided. Mr. Thompson summarized the memorandum provided in the agenda.

Commissioner Fleeman requested clarification on the three categories. Mr. Thompson stated category 1 is similar to office use administrative functions of the Charitable Relief Organization. Other than counseling, this category is not a destination point facility for materials. The higher the number category the more intense of what is provided at the facility, such as meals, clothing provided and shower facilities. Also considered to the level was daily visits to a destination (light to heavy). Concerns and discussion ensued on the Salvation Army. Mr. Thompson commented that The Salvation Army is a facility that provides overnight stays not accommodated in these 3 categories. Commissioner Fleeman and Attorney Graham talked about state or federal laws, such as the ADA and Fair Housing Act and that the City can be forced to make reasonable accommodations if the facility is protected under the law. Commissioner Stewart shared his

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concern about The Salvation Army being in the Central Business District (CBD) and their need for expansion and housing. Mr. Thompson commented that the Charitable Relief Organization definition and each of its categories does not permit homeless shelters under the current uses, and he felt that if the City revisited the issue of homelessness, it deserved a broad based community conversation. The proposed ordinance amendment does not relate or change anything for The Salvation Army. Brief discussion ensued.

Commissioner Fleeman asked if soup kitchens would be within category 2 or 3 and Mr. Thompson replied that he was correct. Brief discussion ensued on soup kitchens, food banks and churches.

Commissioner Fleeman made a motion to approve the request as presented and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Item 4: Other Business

New Urban Redevelopment Area

Mr. McPhatter shared that the City is working on an Urban Redevelopment plan and the Gastonia Planning Commission will get involved. Twenty-six million dollars has been committed to build the FUSE facility. The goal is about private investment around the ball field. The Urban Redevelopment plan will allow the City to be more competitive to tap into Opportunity Zone funding and New Market Task Credit (NMTC) funding to facility private development around the ball field and nearby area. The proposed plan will be seen by City Council first to get familiarized with the plan and ask questions. Then the proposed plan is expected to be presented in September to the Planning Commission for a public hearing and certification. After the Planning Commission meeting the proposed plan will move forward in October or November to the City Council for their approval. City Council will be serving the report as a Redevelopment Commission. Mr. McPhatter briefly explained the proposed area. Commissioner Fleeman mentioned Lowell as an Opportunity Zone. Mr. McPhatter defined Opportunity Zone and commented that the FUSE district is one of six Opportunity Zones. He commented on why developers like to use the program and brief discussion ensued on the program. More information including maps will be presented at the next Planning Commission.

Commissioner Goode asked about Main Street as an entertainment district. Mr. McPhatter stated the FUSE will be the entertainment district and the Wayfinding signs program will indicate the FUSE district. Streetscapes will also enhance the corridor. A map of the Urban Redevelopment Area was circulated and Mr. McPhatter commented that at the next meeting the consultant will talk about the plan.

Brief discussion ensued on the Center City Park and Apartment Complex project, as well as, the Rotary Pavilion expansion. Mr. McPhatter stated he can provide a slide show on a couple programs.

Representative for August 20th City Council Meeting (if needed)

Mr. Thompson stated two items, the UDO amendment presented this evening - File # 9290 and the Residential Development Standards - File # 9283, will be presented at the next City Council meeting. With both items being unanimously approved, it was determined that a representative was not needed at the City Council meeting.

Thompson announced that due to Commissioner Biggerstaff's health, he will not be continuing as a Gastonia Planning Commissioner.

There being no further business, Chairperson Goode adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Pam Goode, Chairperson