

Gastonia Planning Commission
October 2, 2019 Minutes

Chairperson Goode declared a quorum and the Gastonia Planning Commission meeting opened at 5:31 pm on Wednesday, October 2, 2019, in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

Present: Commissioners Jerry Fleeman, Kristie Ferguson, Anthony Gallant, Pamela Goode, Bob Cinq-Mars, and Jim Stewart

Absent: Commissioner Rodney Armstrong

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

Item 1a: Role Call / Sound Check

Item 1b: Calls/Contacts to Planning Commission Members

Commissioners Fleeman and Cinq-Mars each received one contact. The remaining commissioners stated there were no contacts.

Chairperson Goode explained the rules of procedure and time limitations.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars made a motion to reorder the agenda and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0).

Item 3: Public Hearing – Kent Olson (File # 9280)

Subject hearing involves a request to zone (in conjunction with annexation request File 9318) approximately 8.694 acres from RS-12 (Gaston County, Single-family Residential District, minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots) to RMF CD (City of Gastonia, Multi-family Conditional Residential District). The subject property is located on the north side of Neal Hawkins Road. The property is owned by RGP Family Limited Partnership and Ricky Creedmore.

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

Ms. McMakin began by displaying the zoning map while providing the site description and background. Ms. McMakin stated this request is accompanying an annexation request and explained the process and timeline of an annexation filed with the City. The applicant has also submitted a corresponding annexation petition and the request is to assign the City of Gastonia's RMF CD (Residential Multi-family Conditional) zoning district. The applicant submitted a site plan and color renderings of building products, as well as, held a neighborhood meeting. Ms. McMakin briefly explained and displayed the site plan. The request is for two-story townhomes with front garages and a maximum of 80 units. She referred the commissioners to their packets to review the proposed zoning conditions in their agenda. Ms. McMakin explained adjoining properties and land use trends. She stated the Future Land Use Map in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan indicates residential use for the subject property and surrounding properties. Staff recommended the request be approved as presented.

Brief discussion ensued on nearby properties.

Mr. Thompson commented on the site plan as conceptual providing a general layout.

Chairperson Goode recognized Mr. Kent Olson, 11121 Carmel Commons Boulevard of Charlotte. Mr. Olson, applicant, thanked the commissioners for the opportunity. He commented how the townhomes, referred to as single-family attached, would be a good transition in this area and that the product would fit and complement the area. Working with staff, his company committed to the proposed conditions.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked if the homes will be townhomes or condominiums and Mr. Olson replied that these are single-family attached townhomes. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked if these were rental units and Mr. Olson was unsure if they would be rental or for sale. Mr. Thompson explained meeting the definition of a single-family attached.

Gastonia Planning Commission
October 2, 2019 Minutes

Brief discussion ensued on the required and proposed parking spaces, as well as open space. Clarification was made on the site plan requirement as 1 additional space per 10 units (8 spaces) and the proposed as 10 spaces (on-street). Mr. Olson reminded the commissioners that the site plan was conceptual and all the ordinance requirements would be met. Mr. Thompson commented that the Technical Review Committee and staff will review to ensure compliance with the details including open space.

Chairperson Goode called Ms. McMakin to the dais and Ms. McMakin referred the commissioners to the proposed zoning conditions.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars made a motion to accept the proposal (move forward a favorable recommendation) with the statement of consistency and reasonableness and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was approved (6-0).

Mr. Thompson reminded the public and commissioners that this item will move forward to Gastonia City Council on Tuesday, October 15th meeting.

Item 4: Public Hearing – Amending the Unified Development Ordinance (File #9338)

Subject hearing involves a request to amend the Unified Development Ordinance Table 12.46 of Chapter 12 Signs to clarify multitenant signage based on gross floor area.

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

Mr. Thompson commented that this amendment was aimed at flexibility to multitenant developments. He shared examples of businesses splitting a building, such as Academy Sports and Burlington, the old Target building, as well as a former Harris Teeter site. Mr. Thompson stated the ordinance currently regulates the overall area that a multitenant obtains and this amendment is aimed to help facilitate signage in these situations. He shared that businesses support this amendment.

Chairperson Goode stated this was definitely welcome and she asked if this allows each entity the same amount of signage. Mr. Thompson replied that this will allow them the same amount of potential increase, and to think about it within the context of the entire multitenant development and the multitenant development gets a cap.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked if there were any height limitations on freestanding signage. Mr. Thompson replied that there are height restrictions and this was not changing.

Commissioner Ferguson made a motion to approve (move forward a favorable recommendation) the request with the statement of consistency and reasonableness and Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was approved (6-0).

Item 1c: Approval of September 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes

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

Item 2: Public Hearing – West Franklin Urban Redevelopment Plan

Subject hearing involves the creation of the West Franklin Urban Redevelopment Plan to be undertaken by the Gastonia City Council, serving as the Redevelopment Commission, in the general area bounded by Gaston Avenue to the North; Whitesides Street to the East; West Garrison Boulevard and South Vance Street to the South; and Bessemer City Road to the West.

Chairperson Goode opened the public hearing and recognized Mr. Quentin T. McPhatter, ICMA-CM, Assistant City Manager for the purpose of staff presentation.

Mr. McPhatter updated the commission about the various tools available to utilize for economic development purposes at the last meeting. This presentation is in the form of a public hearing of the West Franklin Urban Redevelopment Plan. He summarized the background in his memorandum provided in the agenda page 2-1. Mr. McPhatter clarified the following; this plan does not change zoning, the City is not looking to acquire additional properties in this area, the

Gastonia Planning Commission October 2, 2019 Minutes

goal and intent is to put properties on the tax rolls, and this plan does not change the tax status of the properties in the effective area.

Mr. McPhatter introduced Mr. Greg Kelly, Business Services Manager and Mr. Richard Smith, Business Services Director with McGill & Associates.

Mr. Smith began with his background working with the City and the need for this plan in the western region. He reiterated that this plan does not change zoning, the City is not looking to acquire additional properties in this area, the goal and intent is to put properties on the tax rolls, and this plan does not change the tax status of the properties in the effective area. Mr. Smith recognized Mr. Kelly to begin the presentation.

Mr. Kelly gave a quick overview of the West Franklin Redevelopment Plan. His ultimate goal is to move a redevelopment area from blight to bright, vibrant and sustainable. His presentation covered an introduction and an area description (general boundaries, zoning districts, historic overlay protection). He displayed and briefly explained the Proposed Redevelopment area, Zoning map, and Future Land Use Map. The presentation continued by covering four main goals to accomplish in a redevelopment plan, objectives, redevelopment controls, cost estimates, funding opportunities, modifications to the plan, and potential impediments to the completion of the project. He summarized the goals of the Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), the plan as a roadmap, and collaborative effort. He finished his presentation with transforming from blight to bright, to create a vibrant and sustainable community on the west side of Gastonia.

Mr. Smith briefly explained meeting a specific threshold of urban blight in order to qualifying to have a redevelopment plan.

Chairperson Goode recognized Ms. Tammy Nix, 206 S. Vance Street of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Nix was concerned about acquisition and asked if this related to properties that are not to city code or remodeled to historic standards. Mr. Thompson explained that York-Chester and Brookwood are the two local regulatory historic designations within the City of Gastonia. Other types of historic districts located in the City of Gastonia are non-regulatory national registered historic districts. Brief discussion ensued on a non-profit group that acquired properties fallen in disrepair and has rehabbed the homes to help with new investment into the Loray Village. Mr. McPhatter replied that this plan does not require residents to meet historic designation, but the plan does make homeowners meet basic building codes – health, safety and welfare.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked for confirmation that a large area has been designated that is viable for redevelopment and Mr. McPhatter replied as eligible for redevelopment. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked if it was possible that there are projects within this general area that would come before the Planning Commission for its approval and Mr. McPhatter replied that he was correct. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked who was on the Gastonia Redevelopment Commission and Mr. McPhatter replied that the Gastonia City Council will serve as the redevelopment commission. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked what makes this proposal a better success than what happened a couple years ago. Mr. McPhatter was unable to speak on past proposals. He commented on the economy and private investment interest. He stated that this plan will place the city in a better position to obtain some private investment in the proposed area and the intent of this project is to spur private investment.

Brief discussion ensued on improvements on Franklin Boulevard, relocations, the criteria of standard housing dwelling units, and legal requirements.

Mr. McPhatter and Mr. Thompson remarked that through public hearings, mail notices, speaking to citizens and being available to answer any questions offers opportunity for community involvement and engagement. Chairperson Goode and Commissioner Gallant shared their concern of this plan as possibly complex, confusing, and difficult for some to comprehend. Mr. Thompson shared that the City's long term plan has not changed and the community involvement with the long term plan.

Commissioner Stewart made a recommendation to approve the draft and that the Gastonia Planning Commission certifies the plan is in conformance with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Fleeman seconded the motion. The motion was approved (6-0).

Gastonia Planning Commission
October 2, 2019 Minutes

Item 4: Other Business

Commissioner Fleeman commented that Walter Kimble contacted him and he shared Mr. Kimble's concern of terrorists using vehicles as weapons. Mr. Kimble requested this issue be brought to the Gastonia Planning Commission's attention and he also requested this matter be considered and addressed when reviewing detailed plans, such as the FUSE and other public spaces. Bollards at entrances was an example given to stop a vehicle. Commissioner Fleeman noted that Mr. Kimble would be willing to provide a presentation. Commissioner Stewart stated there are other issues that also need to be associated with this safety concern. Discussion ensued on terrorist attacks and security measures. Mr. Thompson commented on the large team of city staff members that will take this matter into consideration. He shared proposed elements on the two main entrances to the FUSE stadium and streetscape enhancement designs that would provide dual purpose. Mr. Thompson reiterated that he is available if anyone has questions regarding the proposed redevelopment area. He reminded everyone that the FUSE groundbreaking ceremony will take place on Thursday, October 3rd at 5:00 p.m.

Representative for October 15th City Council Meeting (if needed)

Mr. Thompson stated these three agenda items recommended for approval will be presented to City Council on Tuesday, October 15th.

There being no further business, Chairperson Goode adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Pam Goode, Chairperson