

Gastonia Planning Commission November 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The Gastonia Planning Commission meeting opened at 5:32 p.m. on Thursday, November 3, 2022, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Chairwoman Kristie Ferguson, Vice-Chair Jim Stewart, Commissioners David Wilson, Carl Harris, Anthony Gallant, Rodney Armstrong, Chad Ghorley, and Bob Cinq-Mars

Absent:

Staff Members Present: Charles Graham, Quentin McPhatter, Jason Pauling, Maddy Gates, Tucker Johnson, Chrystal Howard, and Jalen Nash

Item 1a: Role Call / Sound Check

Chairwoman Kristie Ferguson declared a quorum.

Item 1b: Calls/Contacts to Planning Commission Members

No commissioners received contacts.

Item 1c: Approval of October 6th, 2022 GPC Minutes

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to adopt the October 6th, 2022, minutes as presented. Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

Chairwoman Ferguson explained the rules of procedure and time limitations.

Item 2: Public Hearing (Continued) – Union Road (File #202200487)

Subject hearing involves a request to assign a zoning district in conjunction with an annexation request for approximately 1.46 acres from Gaston County O-1 (Office) to City of Gastonia PD-RRDD (Planned District – Revised Residential Development District). The subject property is located between Union Road and Robinson Road, adjacent to Pineridge Lane. The property is owned by South Oak Partners, LLC.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Pauling stated that the applicant has requested for this item to be tabled. Commissioner Cinq-Mars motioned for this item to be tabled to the 8th of December. Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

Item 3: Public Hearing – Neal Hawkins Road (File #202200393)

Subject hearing involves a request to assign a zoning district in conjunction with an annexation request for approximately 28.5 acres from Gaston County RS-12 (Single-family Residential, minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots) to City of Gastonia PD-RRDD (Planned District – Revised Residential Development District). The subject property is located at the intersection of Neal Hawkins Road and Dixon Howe Road. The property is owned by Andrew, Charles, and Gilda Dixon.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map was displayed. Mr. Pauling stated that the property includes three parcels along Neal Hawkins Road and at the intersection of Neil Hawkins and Dixon Howe Road to the south. Mr. Pauling stated that this request also includes a request for annexation and will be presented to the City on November 15th for final approvals. Mr. Pauling stated directly north/northeast there is an existing subdivision that is within the City Limits zoned RS-12. He stated the property directly to the north is zoned RMF within the County Jurisdiction, but is currently vacant. Mr. Pauling stated to the south along Dixon Howe Road are existing single family residences, and directly west is a subdivision, approved as a Planned Residential Development in 2004 along Forbes Road.

The aerial map was displayed. Mr. Pauling stated that the property is mostly vacant and rural with parts open grassland and some heavily wooded. He stated that there is an existing electric utility transmission line that borders the property to the north and also an existing cell tower on the property. Mr. Pauling stated that an additional overhead electric easement cuts through the property on the southeastern side as well.

The proposed Rezoning Plan is presented. Mr. Pauling stated that the proposed Rezoning Plan includes a total of 155 single-family attached units with entrances lined up on both sides of Neal Hawkins Road. He stated that this would include 92 units on the north side of Neal Hawkins and 63 units on the south side. Mr. Pauling stated that Neal Hawkins will be improved as part of this development to meet the

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City's standards and a secondary entrance on the south side is proposed from Dixon Howe Road. Mr. Pauling stated that the overall density will be just under five and a half dwelling units per acre, and open space will far exceed 50% including the area within the power easements. He stated that an amenity area is proposed on the south side within an area just over six acres to meet the improved open space requirements. Mr. Pauling stated that the applicants are also proposing perimeter buffers, a street yard buffer on both sides of Neal Hawkins, and tree save areas to meet Chapter 20 of the City Code of Ordinances. He stated that the internal streets will meet the City's Specifications whereas architectural fronts for all units are proposed along the public streets, with public alleys and rear loaded garages at the back of the units.

Proposed elevations are presented. Mr. Pauling stated the applicants have provided elevations proposing a mix of brick or stone and variations of siding and colors to meet the intent of section 8.1.11. He stated final elevations will be approved by staff according to the rezoning conditions for each building at either the preliminary plat or zoning permit review. Mr. Pauling stated that staff will also require elevations of the amenity center area if a building is proposed.

Proposed conditions are presented. Mr. Pauling stated that these conditions are mostly standard conditions and staff has been using this predominately for the RRDD projects. Mr. Pauling stated the future land use map does indicate residential for this property and staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Gallant asked Mr. Pauling if he could go into more detail about the improvements being made to Neal Hawkins Road. Mr. Pauling responded that it would mostly be curb/gutter and sidewalk on both sides. He also stated there is probably going to be a required TIA and that'll be discussed when it is in Technical Review Committee with engineering.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Matt Kirchner, 2013 Van Buren Ave, Indian Trail, NC. Mr. Kirchner presented an aerial view of the surrounding project area and pointed out the cell tower on the site. Mr. Kirchner presented the site plan and stated that there are 155 proposed townhomes all with alley fed, so everything will be rear loaded and you won't be able to see any garages as you drive around. Mr. Kirchner continued to explain what is presented on the site plan, including the natural and planted buffers, alleys, trails, and the option to use a large amenity area. Mr. Kirchner presented the community features and the proposed elevations, stating the material change will have variation, so every townhome will be different. Mr. Kirchner presented proposed amenities on the site plan and explained that the dashed lines represent trails.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked the applicant if the plan was to park on the street. Mr. Kirchner responded that there are alleys behind the townhomes for parking that may not be visible because of the trees in the site plans. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked the applicant if most families have two cars, where would they park the second. Mr. Kirchner responded that most of these will have driveways that can accommodate four cars, two in the driveway and two in the garage, or four in the driveway if there is not a garage. Mr. Kirchner stated that there will be additional parking around the site as well.

Commissioner Harris asked the applicant what is their zoning requirement for vehicles per dwelling. Mr. Pauling stated that this normally gets decided a Technical Review Committee, but its typically two or three per unit and there is a setback as well for small driveways. Commissioner Harris asked the applicants about the power lines being closer than what is being shown. Mr. Kirchner presented the rezoning plan and pointed out the power easements and what lines will be relocated.

Commissioner Harris asked the proposed square footage of the dwellings. Mr. Kirchner responded that the minimum square footage is 1600 sq. ft., and they go from a twenty-four-foot interior unit to a twenty-seven-foot end unit. He also stated that the alleys will be large enough that garbage trucks and other municipal transportation can fit.

Commissioner Harris asked about the neighborhood meeting communications. Mr. Kirchner responded that they did have a community meeting on October 15th and there were no comments made that were not taken care of. Commissioner Harris asked how this proposed development will work with all the other developments in the area in regards to traffic. Mr. Kirchner responded that Neal Hawkins is a DOT road and depending on the rating of the road, DOT may require improvements. He stated that he would follow up with DOT for the area.

Commissioner Wilson asked Chairwoman Ferguson if anyone has signed up to speak against this hearing and Chairwoman Ferguson responded there is not. Commissioner Ghorley asked the applicant if an HOA would be established for the property. Mr. Kirchner responded yes. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked the applicant if this is currently in County property or the City. Mr. Kirchner responded that they are annexing it into the city.

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Commissioner Cinq-Mars made a motion of recommendation to annex the subject property from the County and assign the zoning district PD-RRDD. Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion of recommendation. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

Item 4: Public Hearing – Brookfield Residential (File #202200423)

Subject hearing involves a request to assign a zoning district in conjunction with an annexation request for approximately 46.45 acres from Gaston County R-1 (Single-family Limited) and I-2 (General Industry) to City of Gastonia PD-RRDD (Planned District – Revised Residential Development District). The subject property is located south of Crowders Creek Road and west of Highway 321. The property is owned by Mark and Lucy Penegar.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map is displayed. Mr. Pauling stated the property includes two properties along Crowders Creek Road close to South York Highway. He stated bordering the property to the north and west there is a mix of rural residential land uses, including some individual homes on larger lots, some manufactured homes, and a manufactured home community. Mr. Pauling stated the property to the south is vacant, and to the east there are industrial uses and some single family fronting on York Highway. The aerial map is presented. Mr. Pauling Stated that it is mostly wooded with the exception of the two existing residences along Crowders Creek Road. He stated there is a gas easement that borders the south side of the property.

The Site Plan is presented. Mr. Pauling stated this proposal for an RRDD development will include single-family detached on one side, and single-family attached on the on the other coming off of one main collector entrance, with another street connection planned for the single-family detached area. He stated the total number of units will be 305, whereas 200 will be in attached single-family area, and 105 in the single-family detached section. Mr. Pauling stated all proposed units have rear loaded garages, whereas the architectural fronts will either face Crowder’s Creek Road, or internal open space. He stated 10% open space is proposed, as well as 15% tree save to meet code. Mr. Pauling stated the tree save areas are mostly proposed on the south side (at the rear) of the property along with the proposed storm water structures. Mr. Pauling stated there is also a planned right-of-way extension to the property to the south so that a road connection could be made once a proposal to develop that property comes in.

Proposed Elevations are presented. Mr. Pauling stated elevations have been submitted for the attached, and also a few varieties for the detached. He stated the applicant has also provided some details of elements of the common open space. Proposed rezoning conditions are presented. Mr. Pauling stated these are mostly similar to the same conditions you saw in the previous case, and standard for most RRDD projects. Mr. Pauling stated the future land use map does indicate residential for this property and staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked Mr. Pauling how is the topography of the property. Mr. Pauling responded that he believes it slopes from north to south, but will let the applicant respond.

Chairwoman recognized Kent Olsen, 11121 Carmel Commons Blvd, Charlotte, NC. Mr. Olson stated that the challenge here was making sure to fit into the other neighborhoods surrounding the property. He also stated he wanted to be sure to have a variety of product. Mr. Olson stated they are embracing RRDD and all parking entered through the rear, with front yards facing common open space. He stated both of these communities will share the amenity area. Proposed elevations are presented and Mr. Olson explained the large pavilion amenity area.

Commissioner Harris asked the applicant what the pricing would be per unit. Mr. Olson responded the townhomes will be valued in the high 200s and the single-family detached in the low 300s. Commissioner Harris asked the architectural style of the single-family dwellings. Mr. Olson stated he would characterize them between a bungalow and a tiny home. Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners and the applicant over the multiple listing service.

Commissioner Ghorley asked the applicant if there would not be garages on the single-family detached. Mr. Olson responded that there would be a garage option or non-garage, but they will be parked in the rear. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked the applicant if the dwelling would be for sale. Mr. Olson responded “Yes”, but stated that the current economic state has caused some problems. He stated that either way an HOA will be in place to maintain the community.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked the applicant about the problems of renting out single bedrooms. Mr. Graham responded that those type of things are dealt with in zoning and there are zoning regulations

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that only allow renting of rooms in certain areas. Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners and legal over the authorities of renting.

Commissioner Harris asked the applicant if sustainable building material will be used. Mr. Olson responded “Yes”.

Commissioner Stewart made a recommendation to annex to subject property into the City of Gastonia and assign the zoning district PD-RRDD with a statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion. The motion is unanimously approved (8-0).

Item 5: Public Hearing – Crowders Bluff Apartments (File #202200467)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 4.5 acres from RMF CD (Multifamily Residential Conditional District) to RMF CD (Multi-family Residential Conditional District). The subject property is located east of Archie Whitesides Road between Crowders View Drive and Carson Road. The property is owned by Kent Olson – Development Solutions Group, LLC.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. The zoning map is presented. Mr. Pauling stated this request is to develop 3 apartment buildings, totaling of 72 units. He stated the property is currently zoned RMF-CD which was originally approved as a duplex development.

The aerial map is displayed. Mr. Pauling stated the property is adjacent to Fire Station #8 bordering the property to the south, existing Crowders View Neighborhood to the east, the recently approved Crowders View planned development just north, which will consist of 125 townhomes, and a manufactured home community to the west across Archie Whitesides Road.

The site plan is presented. Mr. Pauling stated the applicant is proposing three, 3-story buildings each with 24 units total for a total of 72 units. He stated the RMF standards according to section 8.1.10 of the UDO require that the units either front on the existing roads, or face internally with appropriate buffering. Mr. Pauling stated the applicants have chosen to front the units internally and are planning to include a perimeter buffer and street yard buffer on all sides. He stated this would be a type ‘B’ buffer along Crowders View and Archie Whitesides, and a type ‘C’ buffer along the other property boundaries. Mr. Pauling stated that all side of each building will have the same elevations and material, which will include 50% mix of masonry and fiber cement siding. He stated open space is proposed in a couple of locations according to the site plan as well as tree save areas.

Proposed elevations are presented. Mr. Pauling discussed some details on the open space. The proposed conditions are presented. Mr. Pauling stated as far as the conditions, the one unique condition here outside of what is standard is the request for a multi-use path along Archie Whitesides Road, which is a requirement per section 9.18.3. He stated most other conditions are standard and will further be discussed as the applicant gets through the Development Review Process.

Mr. Pauling stated the future land use plan for this area recommends residential and staff feels that this request with all appropriate conditions and standards listed in the UDO is appropriate recommends approval.

Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Pauling if the commissioners have seen these elevations before. Mr. Pauling stated that is probably very similar to something you have seen.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked Mr. Pauling what the project is just north of this location. Mr. Pauling stated that he believes it is 125 townhome units.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Kent Olson, 11121 Carmel Commons, Charlotte, NC. Mr. Olson stated this is really to revamp the multi-family plan for this site, a plan that is around 15 years old. Mr. Olson stated the current plan is for duplexes, but the current proposal provides a more modern look and twenty-seven more units.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked the applicant what he means by better price point and if the apartments are for rent or sale. Mr. Olson responded that these are apartments for rent. Commissioner Ghorley asked the applicant if he was the developer of the property north of this property. Mr. Olson responded that “Yes”. Mr. Olson stated that the neighborhood meeting had two folks show up and it was a well-received small meeting. Mr. Olson stated that he ran into the pastor of one of the adjacent properties and it was well received also. Commissioner Ghorley asked the applicant that his purpose is to basically get 27 more units’. Mr. Olson responded “Yes”.

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Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to approve the project with the statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0)

Item 6: Public Hearing – Cox Road Industrial (File #202200473)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 16.5 acres from O-1 (Office), OLC (Office Light Commercial), and I-2 (General Industrial) to I-1 CD (Light Industrial Conditional District). The subject property is located east of Cox Road and south of Lowell Road. The property is owned by ICLUB Investments, LLC. and Bala Palani, LLC.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Pauling stated that the applicant has requested for this item to be tabled to the December 8th Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to table the petition to the December 8th GPC meeting. Commissioners Stewart and Cinq-Mars seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

Item 7: Precious Moments Daycare (File #202200515)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 0.34 acres from TMU CD (Transitional Mixed Use Conditional District) to TMU CD (Transitional Mixed Use Conditional District). The subject property is located north of W. Fifth Avenue between S. Myrtle School Road and Heathwood Drive. The property is owned by Christian and Crystal Davis

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Pauling stated the next case before you this evening is another amendment to a previously approved TMU-CD that's Traditional Mixed Use, for Precious Moments Daycare located at 2148 West Fifth Avenue.

The Zoning Map is displayed. Mr. Pauling stated the property is approximately 0.64 acres, it is surrounded by residential to the north, east, and west. He stated across the street is a church and fellowship hall. An aerial image is presented. Mr. Pauling stated this amendment request will allow the property owners to develop a new daycare center building, and also keep the existing building, whereas their site plan has been amended to accommodate traffic circulation and parking requirements.

The original approved site plan and the proposed conditions are presented. Mr. Pauling stated as far as conditions, the majority of these were pulled from the original approval, including most importantly the 7.6.5 compliance, that's the architectural standards for commercial buildings. Mr. Pauling stated there are also buffer requirements for Daycares which in this case is type 'B' buffer. He stated that we also added the condition referencing back to other allowed uses in RS-8 zoning.

Mr. Pauling stated the future land use plan recommends residential for this area. He stated staff feels this amendment is appropriate with proper conditions, and therefore recommends approval of this request.

Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Pauling if the parcel or plot of land is .34 of an acre or .64 of an acre. Mr. Pauling responded that the parcel is .64 of an acre and he believes the parcel used to be split in two. Commissioner Gallant asked Mr. Pauling if it was basically an expansion of the daycare. Mr. Pauling responded "Yes:

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Eric Riley, 914 Moose St., Gastonia, NC. Mr. Riley stated Ms. Davis has accumulated a waiting list for the services she provides for the neighborhood and as time progressed she realized she needed to retain that existing facility. Mr. Riley stated that the building does meet the architectural requirements as described in the UDO. He stated it is going to be a gable building, it has full brick veneer, column accents, quite a bit of glass, and a timber frame porch. Mr. Riley stated the existing lot is currently a playground and is already in use. Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Riley if the building is a steel building. Mr. Riley responded "No", it is going to be an all wood frame building.

Commissioner Stewart made the motion to approve the project as presented with statement of consistency and reasonableness. Commissioner Cinq-Mars seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

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Item 8: Public Hearing – Flint Mill Parking (File #202200516 & #202200517)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone two parcels of approximately 0.63 acres and 0.98 acres from RS-8 (Single-family Residential, minimum 8,000 sq. ft. lots) to I-U (Urban Industrial). The subject properties are located south of Hunt Avenue between Hilltop Circle and Separk Circle. The properties are owned by 1910 Hunt, LLC.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Pauling presented the zoning map and noted the zoning of adjacent properties. Mr. Pauling presented the aerial map and noted the existing apartments immediately to the east and south, single-family to the north, and additional vacant properties to the west. He stated that the future land use plan is recommending residential growth in this area, therefore, staff is recommending approval.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked Mr. Pauling if Flint Mill is still in operation and what they produce. Mr. Pauling responded that he was unaware and would suggest that the applicant answer.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized David Murray, 1901 Roxborough Road – Suite 120, Charlotte, NC. Mr. Murray stated that he represents Marathon Development group who is the owner of the subject properties. He noted that there is an additional parcel for parking for the project but that it is already zoned for the appropriate use. Mr. Murray stated that the Flint Mill project would be a multi-family development similar to Loray Mill and Trenton Mill. He also stated that the parcels in subject have previously been parking for the mill for several decades.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Kevin Westra, 121 W. Trade Street, Charlotte, NC. Mr. Westra noted that Flint Mill opened in the 1920's and operated until the 1990's. Commissioner Cinq-Mars asked Mr. Westra if the Flint Mill development is going to be apartments. Mr. Westra responded "Yes", that it would be 200 units and that the subject parcels for parking would be redesigned to include planting islands and would follow the necessary requirements in the UDO. Commissioner Ghorley asked if there will be screening for the adjoining residents. Mr. Westra replied that there is required screening in the I-U zoning district for parking which includes a 25 ft. landscape buffer.

Commissioner Harris asked if the building is a typical post and beam design? Mr. Westra replied "Yes" and added that it would need framing and include various on-site amenities. He also noted that because the mill is a historical site, that the developer is limited in architectural elements. Mr. Westra stated that the original windows will be replaced and that the new design will replicate how the mill looked in the 1920's.

With no further questions, Chairwoman Ferguson asked for the wishes of the board. Commissioner Cinq-Mars made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project with a statement of reasonableness and consistency. Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

Item 9: Public Hearing – 1002 N. Oakwood Street (File #202200518)

Subject hearing involves a request to rezone approximately 1.1 acres from RS-12 (Single-family Residential, minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots) to RS-8 (Single-family Residential, minimum 8,000 sq. ft. lots). The subject property is located east of N. Oakwood Street and north of W. Davidson Avenue, adjacent to Trexlar Avenue. The property is owned by Snarkus Holdings, LLC.

Chairwoman Ferguson opened the public hearing and recognized Jason Pauling, Assistant Planning Director, for the purpose of staff presentation. Mr. Pauling presented the zoning map and noted the zoning of adjacent properties. He added that this property is in the Highland neighborhood where density and development is currently increasing. Mr. Pauling presented the aerial map and noted that staff believes RS-8 versus RS-12 zoning encourages residential development. He stated that the future land use plan is recommending residential growth in this area, therefore, staff is recommending approval.

Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Pauling if the applicant is planning to build one single-family home or multiple. Mr. Pauling responded that he will refer to the applicant for this question. Commissioner Harris also noted an error in the acreage listed in the staff report. Mr. Pauling stated there is not a survey but that the zoning map states 0.9 acres.

Chairwoman Ferguson recognized Tish Sanchez, P.O. Box 1405, Harrisburg, NC. Mrs. Sanchez addressed the discrepancy of the acreage shown on the staff report, adding that they intend to buy a portion of the parcel south for sewer access which would increase the acreage. Commissioner Harris asked Mrs. Sanchez what the plan for development is on the subject parcel. Mrs. Sanchez responded that the plan is subdivide the lot and build two single-family homes. Commissioner Harris also asked

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Mrs. Sanchez if she is the property owner of the lots to the north. Mrs. Sanchez replied “Yes”, that her husband is the owner. Mrs. Sanchez also stated that there is not an existing structure on the lot, that is has gone through demolition.

With no further questions, Chairwoman Ferguson asked for the wishes of the board. Commissioner Ghorley made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project with a statement of reasonableness and consistency. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0).

Item 10: OTHER BUSINESS

Chairwoman Ferguson thanked Commissioner Ghorley for his presence at the September City Council meeting on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Cinq-Mars announced that he is resigning his position on the Commission, after 21 years, due to a changing of residence and City ward. Chairwoman Ferguson thanked Commissioner Cinq-Mars for his service to the City of Gastonia and his mentorship on the board.

Assistant City Manager Quentin McPhatter announced that Commissioner Cinq-Mars will be recognized at the November 15th City Council meeting.

Item 11: Adjournment

With no further business, Commissioner Cinq-Mars made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ghorley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (8-0). Hearing none in opposition, the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jalen Nash, Planning Technician

Jim Stewart, Vice-Chair