

Minutes

MCDUFFIE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

210 RAILROAD STREET, SUITE 1544, THOMSON, GEORGIA 30824

Phone: 706-595-5355 Fax: 706-595-4204

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Board Members Present: Fred Guerrant (Chair.), Georgia Hobbs, Howell Roberts, Penny Lowe, Paul Coughlan, and Bobby Toulson

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present: Chase Beggs (Administrator), Denise Etheridge (McDuffie Progress)

Visitors Present: David Banks (Sprint Applicant - Engineer), Andy Jones (Sprint Owner), Bennett Dudley (Sprint - Current Property Owner), Rupinder Jauhal (Rezoning Applicant)

Call to Order Fred Guerrant

Invocation Georgia Hobbs

“Our Father, we pray for our country today. We thank you for this beautiful day. We pray for peace in our community. We’re thankful for the relatively healthy community. We pray for peace in our nation and we pray for guidance in our deliberations tonight. In Jesus Name, Amen.”

Determination of Quorum- All members present.

Approval of Minutes Previous meeting minutes were signed prior to the meeting by the previous board members.

Information & Announcements

None

Old Business:

(Rupinder “Richie” Jauhal submitted an application requesting to rezone 401 Gordon Street, Thomson, GA 30824, parcel 0T220186A00, from R-1B (High Denisty Single Family Residential) to B-1 (Highway Business).)

Beggs stated that the application was submitted by Rupinder “Richie” Jauhal in January and was tabled in March. Due to Covid-19, the planning commission did not meet in April or May. The building has always been used for commercial purposes, but has sat vacant for many years. In order to reopen a business in this building, the zoning would need to be corrected. Beggs stated that the applicant purchased the building as a package deal with the house behind the building. In order to renovate and open for business, the zoning must be changed. The board reviewed the current zoning map. Building and zoning requirements were discussed before the meeting with Mr. Jauhal. Beggs explained the situations of the zoning codes of the various parcels surrounding this parcel. Chairman Guerrant asked the applicant if he was aware of the many issues that were problems of the building. Guerrant stated that the problems included Georgia DOT’s right-of-way which comes within 10 feet of the front of the building, the building would require paved parking (with turn-around room), and the small size of the building. Guerrant explained to the applicant that the parcel was in the City of Thomson’s Historic Preservation District and would require approval for any exterior change.

Guerrant stated that the type of business that goes into the building is a concern to the planning board. Mr. Coughlan asked for the parking plan that Mr. Jauhal submitted. Coughlan then asked if this plan met the required amount of parking spots. Beggs answered that this plan did provide enough spots for the intended purpose (more spots may be needed if the type of business changes). Mr. Coughlan’s concern was that it would be hard to restrict patrons from parking in front of the building. He then suggested some sort of landscaping that would prevent this from happening. Mr. Toulson asked about the current location of the driveway and agreed with Mr. Coughlan that something was necessary to prevent patrons from jumping the sidewalk.

Mr. Coughlan made a motion to conditionally approve the rezoning request with the conditions that parking be restricted to the North side of the building (Anderson Ave.), parking be paved (designed to not back in the street), and that a restrictive landscape buffer be planted to keep patrons from parking in the front yard or side yard of the building. Mr. Roberts seconded the motion. The planning board voted unanimously to approve the rezoning with the aforementioned conditions.

New Business:

(David Banks, with Southern Partners, INC., submitted an application on behalf of the property owner Dudley Family Limited Partnership requesting a reduction in side and rear setback requirements and buffer requirements on a 1.32 acre parcel

addressed as 2093 Washington Road, Parcel 00290015 and 00290014, Thomson, GA 30824 for a proposed Sprint Food Store.)

Andy Jones, CEO and founder of Sprint Food Stores, introduced himself and described his history with the existing Sprint store on Jackson Street in Thomson. Jones explained that the shape of the current property was unique and allowed the developer to design a layout that would be spacious, but would require a couple of variances. Jones then showed the planning board pictures of a new store that was recently constructed and stated that this building would be identical except for the retail spaces attached to the rear. The Sprint Kitchen will have the feel of a restaurant offering a full breakfast, as well as, lunch and dinner options.

Bennett Dudley spoke about the history of the property and an on-going landscaping project between GDOT, Dudley Nurseries, and McDuffie County. Chairman Guerrant made mention of the tall Interstate Highway Sign that is located on the property and needed to be removed.

Mr. Roberts asked the applicant to explain the variances that were being requested. David Banks explained that in order to make the site more spacious, they are requesting that the rear setback be reduced from 30' to 6' and the side setback be reduced from 30' to 23'.

Chairman Guerrant also mentioned that in order to grant the Love's Truck Stop variance many years ago, the board required Love's to construct a brick building (without stucco) that would beautify and set the tone for the interstate interchange area. Jones assured the planning board that the new Sprint Food Store would be red brick and beige brick like in the photographs. David Banks, the engineer, reiterated that the purpose if this variance is to provide a safer and more spacious layout for the store. Banks explained that the driveways and site would be elevated and reconstructed, as well as all landscaping around the new store.

Mrs. Hobbs made a motion to grant the variance. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Lowe. The planning board voted unanimously to approve the variance.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Roberts motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mrs. Lowe seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

(Fred Guerrant)

(Georgia Hobbs)

(Howell Roberts)

(Penny Lowe)

(Paul Coughlan)

(Bobby Toulson)