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CITY OF COLUMBIA  
PLANNING COMMISSION



February 4, 2013  
5:15 P.M. Regular Session Minutes  
EAU CLAIRE PRINT BUILDING

3907 Ensor Avenue • N. Main Street and Monticello Road • Columbia, SC

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**In attendance:** Richard Cohn, Gene Dinkins, Jr., Moryah Jackson, Mark James, Mary Winter Teaster, Paige Tyler

**Absent:** Chris Brownlee, Maryellyn Cannizzaro, John Taylor

**Staff:** Krista Hampton and Johnathan Chambers

## **I CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Meeting called to order at 5:19PM by Chairperson Mark James. Mr. James explained the purpose and process of the Planning Commission and explained the rules of order for the Planning Commission.

Roll call and quorum established. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services, proceeded with review of the Consent Agenda.

## **II CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Approval of Minutes**

1. Approve **January 7, 2012** minutes.

### **Annexation with Map Amendment**

2. **4454 Rosewood Drive and W/S Gills Creek Parkway**, TMS# 13809-03-20 and 13809-03-24; request recommendation concerning application to annex and zone the properties D-1 (Development District). The property is zoned GC (General Commercial) in Richland County.

### **Street Name**

3. **Street Name Approval Request** - Request to name a proposed street within The Park at Woodcreek Subdivision Autumn Fern Road; TMS# 25816-10-05, -04, -03.

Request to remove annexation with map amendment for 4454 Rosewood Drive and W/S Gills Creek Parkway by the public.

**Motion by Ms. Teaster to remove item 2, annexation with map amendment, and approve Consent Agenda consisting of items 1 and 3; seconded by Mr. Dinkins. Motion carries 6-0.**

### **Annexation with Map Amendment**

**4454 Rosewood Drive and W/S Gills Creek Parkway**, TMS# 13809-03-20 and 13809-03-24; request recommendation concerning application to annex and zone the properties D-1 (Development District). The property is zoned GC (General Commercial) in Richland County.

Property is owned by the City of Columbia. Upon review of adjacent properties, it was found the parcel was not located in the city; though it is owned and maintained by the city for wetlands mitigation. Annexation is being pursued to clean up this donut hole. A portion of the property is currently zoned general commercial, and the request to zone to D-1 (Development District) is to retain the property for a mitigation bank and not for development purposes.

James Atkins, director for the conservation department for Richland County, commented on the annexation of the properties. Mr. Atkins referenced the penny transportation tax that passed the last year, saying a part of the transportation tax allows for \$22M of greenway projects that are included within that penny. One of the high priority projects is a greenway running from Lake Katherine to the Congaree River. He also staffs the Staff Richland County Conservation Committee which provides grants to various entities. This year, there is an active grant with the Gills Creek Watershed Association to develop a concept plan for the middle watershed project. When the concept plan is completed, most likely, the trail will go along this property and along the right of way of Gills Creek parkway. He wanted to make the Planning Commission aware of this. The road will soon be resurfaced by the city of Columbia. As they move forward with the Greenway, Mr. Atkins wants to ensure that nothing will prohibit having this as a potential route.

Ms. Hampton stated there should be no impact on the Greenway; the property is still owned by the city regardless of whether it is in the county. She was unsure of any expansion proposed for the roadway. A sidewalk is planned along with the resurfacing, but setbacks would not affect that as they apply only to structures.

Erich Miarka, Gill Creek Watershed Association, echoed Mr. Atkins' comments saying there are some plans for the area. They do not feel the annexation and zoning will adversely impact the creek, the watershed, or any on-going plans in that area.

**Motion by Mr. Cohn to approve** the request for annexation with map amendment for **4454 Rosewood Drive and W/S Gills Creek Parkway**; *seconded by Ms. Tyler. Motion carries 6-0.*

### **III REGULAR AGENDA**

#### **Site Plan Review**

- 1. 101 Wayne Street being the block bounded by Whaley Street, Wayne Street, Heyward Street and Church Street**, TMS# 08913-16-05; Request site plan review of a 4-Story, 172-Unit multi-family development with 6,500 sq. ft. of retail space. The property is currently zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) with -PD (Planned Development) overlay and is being considered for rezoning to MX-1 (Mixed Use) without -PD overlay.

Mr. Chambers stated the Planning Commission recommended rezoning for the property on January 7<sup>th</sup>. The project entails the construction of a 96,000 sq. ft. mixed use building on approximately 5.8 acres. The proposed building will contain 148 one-bedroom units and 24 two-bedroom units, and 6,500 sq. ft. of retail space. Grand trees will be preserved, as well as the addition of a park area.

The project is presenting to the Planning Commission for site plan review because square footage of the development is greater than 100,000 sq. ft. and the number of dwelling units on

the property are greater than five. The required off-street parking is 344, whereas 294 are being provided. In addition, the height of the building exceeds the maximum height requirement of 50'. It is 59' in some areas based upon grade. The applicant will present to the Board of Zoning Appeals on February 12<sup>th</sup> with regard to the height and variance request to the parking requirement. The building will be situated to minimize coverage.

The project large meets the requirements as noted in the staff comments, and the applicant has continued to work with staff regarding the comments. The site plan presented today has been revised to address some of concerns of staff. The applicant has agreed to continue to work with staff regarding installation of crosswalks, bicycle lanes along Heyward Street, the design of the park, and light fixtures; and has met with the neighborhood association as well. If the Planning Commission is inclined to grant approval, staff asks approval include staff comments.

Some of the staff comments made by the planning administrator with regard to the sidewalks, the installation of bicycle lanes and parking spaces on Heyward, as well as the crosswalk would be off of site with relationship to the site. They are within the right of way. These mirror the crosswalk and bicycle rack on the other side. Currently there is no on-street parking, and the proposed parking spaces will require the relocation of the bicycle racks, crosswalks, and sidewalks. There were some concerns with regard to the 36 proposed parallel parking spaces on Heyward Street however the applicant and Mr. Fellows have agreed to work through that during the permitting phase once the plans are approved.

Scott Garvin with Garvin Design Group, architects for the project, said in terms of the parking requirements, most of the apartments are one-bedroom units. The Zoning Ordinance currently calls for 1.75 spaces per apartment which they feel is excessive. They are also providing the retail component, and depending on the type of retail, will dictate how many parking spaces are required for off street parking. If there was no retail, they would be close to meeting the required parking requirements. The neighborhood and developer has requested retail be pursued, therefore the request for the variance.

The project was oriented on the western boundary to keep Olympia Mill visible. Plans are to keep the floor plane level in all areas of the building. The grade on Heyward is 48' and coming around Whaley is 59' at its highest. The entire building is not above 50', it is 59' at its highest.

Currently the park is very conceptual in design. Several meetings have been held with the neighborhood to try and engage them in the actual design of the park. Primarily, the applicant would like it to remain open and formal, and leave the trees in place. There will be some walkways to connect the retail to the park to animate the park and support the retail. A landing area, primarily of green space, will be created at the corner at the crosswalk to have some sort of area where people can gather. There will be an outdoor seating area adjacent to the retail to encouraging pedestrian flow from the outdoor seating area to the park. Currently the main entrance drive is off Whaley Street with a side road that cuts along the western boundary which will be eliminated. The main egress and exit will be located at Heyward and Whaley which will control a lot of traffic problems with cars going in and out of the site.

The building sets back to the western boundary and does not obstruct the views of the Mill at all. The architecture of the building is very simple to respect the architecture of the mill buildings in the neighborhood, with many details from 701, Granby and Olympia in the interpretation of the design. There will be an open space in the building that lines up with directly with the tower across Heyward Street that may eventually serve as an exit.

Mr. James asked if the applicant was comfortable with one driveway access on Whaley Street and on Heyward Street. He voiced concerns that the location of the Heyward Street access makes it truly a secondary point of access. The primary point of access for all residents and guests will come off of Whaley Street which has been advertised as a pedestrian friendly component. He felt that was in conflict and asked staff thoughts.

Mr. Garvin responded they are, and that City traffic engineer and SCDOT are appreciative of having only two entrances/exits. Many conversations have been held regarding the Whaley Street exit and potentially making that a right-turn only exit and right turn only entrance; as well as having a traffic signal at Heyward and Olympia. The developer has ordered a traffic study of the entire area at their expense. That information will be provided to the City and to SCDOT to further discuss these issues.

Ms. Hampton stated that staff is comfortable with the configuration. The paving material is different so it alerts both pedestrians and drivers that it is a different place which is generally how those interfaces are treated.

Mr. Dinkins is very pleased with the incorporation of the park area, the grand trees, and the pedestrian connectivity. He voiced concerns with the proposed rezoning and retail component and the shortage of parking, and asked if there was an additional parking.

Mr. Garvin said the type of retail will dictate the parking required. A coffee shop or sandwich shop, which is what is desired, will be about 20 spaces short; a full service restaurant will be more. There is no additional parking available. If this were a private or public dormitory, and more than 600' away from Olympia Mill, one car per unit could be used and there would be plenty of parking spaces to comply with zoning. Because the project is so close to Olympia, it cannot be classified as a dormitory. The requirement for 1.75 for a single-room unit is excessive. All parking requirements are met if the retail is taken out, and it is just pure parking.

The stormwater plan will exceed the requirements for water runoff for the site. Power is working with city staff to find out what the calculations will be. There will be a certain amount of underground storage at the lower level at the parking lot of Heyward and Olympia. Island areas at the lower are of the parking lot are also being researched to look at additional LID mitigation type procedures to help with runoff. They are aware that flooding is a big issue in this area.

Mr. Cohn complimented the applicants on the project but also voiced concerns with parking saying he would like a few more parking spaces.

Mr. Garvin said they could get a few more. Taking 20% to 30% of the site and leaving it as a park makes it difficult. No one wants to remove the existing trees to have a huge parking lot. .

Based on conversations with city staff, they are net 20 spaces for retail. There are 20-30 spaces on site for retail if the one car per unit rule is used. The Zoning Ordinance is forcing the number higher than it needs to be, and it makes it appear there is not enough parking for retail but actually there is. There is parking on-site currently, however it will be shut down once the project begins. The developer will institute new procedures to where the parking will occur for Granby and Olympia behind it. This will only support this project.

Ms. Hampton added with regard to the parking issue, the parking requirements over park for multi-family. Discussions have been held with multi-family project developers regarding that and the City is looking at amending that because multi-family is desired without 'seas of parking'. For one bedroom units, city parking requirements are excessive. Multi-family is per unit as opposed to private dormitory which is per bed.

Bob Guild with the Granby neighborhood complimented the developer and the development team as they have been very co-operative in working with the area. The developers have been very committed to preserve open space and trees, and because of the developer's commitment to the neighborhood, is losing buildable space. The neighborhood plan has long called for neighborhood scale retail on this location. The neighborhood has been working very closely with the developer, city staff, and parking. The neighborhood is support of the developer's site plan, and plan to support the developer's request for parking and height variance. They are also in support of on-street parking on Heyward Street, mindful of the impact that will have on the bicycle lanes already striped out. Mr. Guild is an avid biker and feels these bike lanes have a very unique feature. They represent a visual connection between Granby Park and the piece of the greenway that runs down Lincoln Street that connects the university. Students currently park where the bike lane is. Having on-street parking on Heyward provides an important safeguard for the community because it provides spill-over parking for the community and retail, would deter people from parking in neighborhood streets. The developers have been very willing to work with the neighborhood which is very much appreciated. Many conversations are still being held regarding the design of the park, and actual final design of the buildings. They are doing their best to preserve existing vegetation on the site, using low impact development storm water techniques at some of the parking islands along with underground detention. With green space preservation, neighborhood retail and a design that compliments the neighborhood; the neighborhoods are supportive of the site plan as presented.

?? echoed Mr. Guild's comments saying they have been meeting once a week for many weeks regarding the development. The neighborhoods have very high expectations of the developers who been "the textbook of how things should be done". He was very complimentary of the project and Garvin architects who have very responsive to comments and ideas made by the neighborhoods.

Ryan Nevius, executive director of Sustainable Midlands, member of the Granby Board, and a tenant of 701 Whaley, feels the mixed use part of this type of student housing is very critical to the city. Having those students in that area and keep them from not get into their cars and driving elsewhere for retail use is very important to the city, as well as allowing neighborhood residents to avail the use of that retail. She applauds the developer and architect for this project, and appreciates the Planning Commission's approval of the site plan.

**Motion by Ms. Teaster to approve** the site plan for **101 Wayne Street being the block bounded by Whaley Street, Wayne Street, Heyward Street and Church Street** as presented, subject to staff comments; *seconded by Ms. Tyler.*

Ms. Teaster echoed comments made by the public. She feels the developer has been very thoughtful in working with staff and the community who stands the greatest to lose or win in the situation. She feels that while it is not perfect in every aspect, with potentially traffic and parking issues, they have been so thoughtful in the view corridor and many other aspects of this project which makes the Planning Commissions' jobs, which members take very seriously, much easier. They have done many good things with communication and involvement aspect.

**Motion approved 6-0.** Mr. James added the developers received many very nice comments at this meeting. He thanked them for their willingness to present, and congratulated them.

#### **Map Amendment**

2. **1428 Heidt Street**, TMS# 11411-01-11; request to rezone from RG-2 (General Residential) to C-3 (General Commercial). *DEFERRED*

3. **Presentation and Discussion of 2012 Five-Year Update for The Columbia Plan: 2018**

Mr. Fellows spoke on The Columbia Plan saying it has been about five years since the comp plan was written. The Plan must be re-evaluated every five years, and a new plan will be done in 2018.

Jeff Crick, city planner, presented on the different aspects of the Plan. He reviewed data and the various sections of the Plan.

The Plan was adopted in 2008, and is a ten-year plan that is a very broad plan that will be used as a guidance tool.

State law mandates that a casual evaluation of the Plan must be done and reviewed by the Planning Commission.

#### **IV OTHER BUSINESS**

4. **Adjourn.**

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Ms. Teaster; meeting adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Wolfe  
Sr. Admin. Secretary  
Planning and Development Services Department  
City of Columbia