



City of Statesboro
Department of Planning and Development Memorandum

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Statesboro Planning Commission
June 5, 2018
5:00 P.M.
City Hall Council Chamber
Meeting Minutes

Present: Planning Commission Members: James W. Byrd, Sr., Carlos C. Brown, Jr., David McLendon, Jamey Cartee, Benjamin McKay, and Russel Rosengart **Absent:** Mary Foreman; **City of Statesboro Staff:** Director of Planning and Development Frank Neal, City Planner Sharon Anton, Code Enforcement Officer Scott Brunson.

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Byrd called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

II. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation and pledge of allegiance were given by Commissioner McLendon.

III. Approval of Minutes

1. April 3, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner McLendon made a motion to approve the April 3, 2018 meeting minutes; there was no Planning Commission meeting held in May, during which these minutes would have been brought for approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown and carried 5-0.

IV. New Business

Prior to the commencement of the discussion of New Business, it was proposed to change the order of the agenda items, to take into consideration the number of members of the public in attendance regarding Application RZ 18-05-05. It was determined that this item would be moved up in the agenda, depending on the arrival time of a designated speaker.

1. **APPLICATION V 18-05-01:** HFA, LLC requests a variance from Article XV Section 1509(C) Table 4 of the Statesboro Zoning Ordinance regarding the maximum allowed total square feet of signage in Sign District 2. (Tax Parcel MS842 000100E 000).

Frank Neal presented the case to the Planning Commission, and took questions. He clarified for the Commission that the orange paint on the building in the area of the sign was not calculated in the total sign square footage, and answered a question from the public.

Sara Baker spoke on behalf of the request and distributed a rendering of the sign to the Commissioners. Commissioner Brown expressed concern regarding the changes to that portion of the lot, given that it experiences a large amount of traffic, but Ms. Baker confirmed that this alteration had already been approved by Walmart.

Commissioner McLendon made a motion to recommend approval of this application, seconded by Commissioner Cartee. The motion carried 5-0.

2. **APPLICATION V 18-05-02:** Whitfield Signs requests a variance from Article XV Section 1509(C) Table 3 of the Statesboro Zoning Ordinance regarding the maximum allowed total square feet of building signs in Sign District 1 (Tax Parcel S44 000065 000).

Frank Neal presented the case to the Planning Commission. Commissioner McLendon asked if the existing monument sign would remain, which Mr. Neal confirmed. There were no representatives from the applicant present to answer questions on this application. When asked by the Commission why this variance was recommended, Mr. Neal explained that there had previously been a sign in this location, but it was removed when some renovations took place; it was smaller than this proposed sign.

Commissioner Rosengart expressed concern about setting a precedent, given the amount by which this sign exceeds the ordinance standards. He wondered if the Commission would be able to approve a portion of the sign, the word "Wesley" without the "W" logo. After some discussion, Commissioner McLendon made a motion to table this item, seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion carried 5-0.

3. **APPLICATION RZ 18-05-05**: John Fortino requests a zoning map amendment of 0.49 acres of currently undeveloped property addressed as Fair Road from the R-3 (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential) zoning district to the CR (Commercial Retail) zoning district to permit additional possible uses on the property (Tax Parcel MS61 000018 000).

Frank Neal presented the case to the Planning Commission. Chris O'Malley, of the Woodlawn Neighborhood Association, got up to speak to the Commission on this item, and Mr. Neal asked if Sam DiPolito would like to speak first, in favor of the application. Mr. DiPolito declined and ceded the floor to Ms. O'Malley, who read out a letter on behalf of the neighborhood association that was submitted to the Planning Department for the record and distributed to the Commissioners. Mr. DiPolito then spoke in favor of the application, explaining the owner's situation. John Fortino, owner of the property, had inherited this land and has been unable to develop it as he would like to given its current zoning. He does not feel that a duplex type investment would be the "highest and best use" of the property, nor does he believe the development would be disruptive to surrounding uses, since there is no intent to add something like a gas station or hotel on this 0.5 acre lot on this portion of a 5 lane highway.

Following Mr. DiPolito, Verdery Kennedy spoke against the request, also reading from a letter; the letter was then submitted for the record to the Planning & Development Department. Melany Bowen then also spoke against the request, citing the reasons she had selected Statesboro as the location for her new home purchase when she decided to move, including how Statesboro manages its growth while still feeling like a "real town." Following Ms. Bowen, Aaron Cohen spoke to the Commission. He asked what the hardship would be to this property owner that is requiring a "variance,"** and expressed the opinion that there wasn't one. Mr. DiPolito replied that there is an economic hardship.

Cathy Shriver then spoke against the request as well, arguing that just because this particular plan does not include a particular commercial use like a gas station, that does not mean future developers could not then build one anyway, once the zone is changed. Verdery Kennedy made an additional suggestion regarding what could be done with the property following Ms. Shriver's statements. Finally, Commissioner Byrd asked if there were any additional comments from the public and opened discussion

Commissioner McLendon asked whether there was already a curb cut and received an affirmative answer. Commissioner Byrd express appreciation of the community's expression of trust in the commission, and added that he felt this could set a precedent for commercial interest in the area; furthermore, maintaining the green space there is important. Commissioner Brown said that he does not want to see Statesboro grow in this manner, and expressed concern regarding the disruption to the traffic pattern. Commissioner Rosengart echoed the concern about precedent and added that businesses come and go, but residents stay.

Commissioner McLendon made a motion to disapprove this application, seconded by Commissioner Rosengart. The motion carried 5-0.

*** To clarify for the record, the application under discussion was not a variance application, it was for a zoning map amendment, for which there is not any requirement to prove that the applicant is experiencing a hardship.*

4. **APPLICATION V 18-05-03:** Fendig Signs, Inc. requests a variance from Article XV Section 1509(C) Table 4 of the Statesboro Zoning Ordinance regarding the maximum allowed total square feet of building signs in Sign District 2 (Tax Parcel S72 000014 000).

Frank Neal introduced the case. Gary Sanchez spoke on behalf of the applicant, explaining that this size sign would be symmetrical with the adjacent tenant (Aspen Dental) and would help promote the brand. Commissioner Rosengart commented that there seems to constantly be a battle with the sign ordinance, and questioned at what point a percentage of variance is too much. He suggested the Commission discuss this at a later point, to general consensus.

Commissioner Cartee motioned to approve this application, seconded by Commissioner Brown, and the motion carried 5-0.

5. **APPLICATION V 18-05-04:** McKeithen True Value Hardware requests a variance from Article XV Section 1509(C) Table 5 of the Statesboro Zoning Ordinance regarding the maximum number of building signs allowed in Sign District 3 (Tax Parcel MS88 000026 005).

Frank Neal introduced the case and Mr. Tom McKeithan, who spoke for the request. Mr. McKeithan pointed out to the Commission that the area indicating the building pad on the map is slightly off; it should be placed more towards the center of that portion of the lot and thus, is largely shielded from view from the road. Additional signs of the variety requested help indicate to the passerby that this is a hardware store if they miss the main sign, since signage like this is common on this type of store.

After brief discussion, Commissioner McLendon motioned to approve the application and Commissioner Rosengart seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

V. Announcements

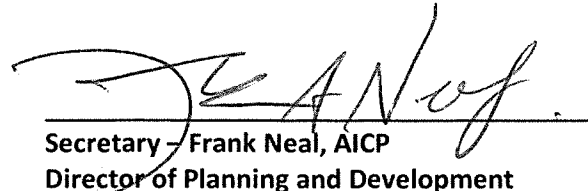
Frank Neal mentioned the possibility of future planning commission training. Commissioner McLendon inquired about the procedure for updating the ordinance, given the number of sign variance requests that come through. Mr. Neal explained that revising the ordinance would not necessarily reduce the number of variance requests, and also that each case is treated individually; granting a variance in one case does not obligate the approval of a similar variance in a case that is located differently or has different circumstances.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:02.



Chair – James W. Byrd, Sr.



Secretary – Frank Neal, AICP
Director of Planning and Development