



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2021**

Council Chambers, City Hall, 2342 Oak Road, Snellville, Georgia

Members present: Leo Armstead, Vice-Chair; Rachel Barnes; Kerry Hetherington; and Ann Sechrist.

Members absent: Bill Kingsbury, Chairman and Al Henry.

Planning and Development Department staff present: Jason Thompson, Planning Director and John Dennis, Zoning Administrator.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Armstead called the January 26th regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ann Sechrist made a motion to approve the agenda for January 26, 2021.

Rachel Barnes made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ann Sechrist made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2020 regular meeting.

Rachel Barnes made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

NOMINATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO POST 2 OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION (TERM EXPIRES 6-30-2022)

Rachel Barnes made a motion to nominate Antonio Jones for appointment to Post 2 of the Planning Commission.

Kerry Hetherington made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

The Planning Commission recommendation will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for appointment consideration at the February 8, 2021 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

RZ 20-03 LUP 20-02 SUP 20-02 – Consideration and Recommendation on applications by Khalid Javed & Rita Shah to amend the Snellville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map from Office-Professional to Commercial Retail; Official Zoning Map amendment from OP (Office Professional) District to BG (General Business) District; and request for a Special Use Permit for a 95 room hotel development on a 5.08± acre property located at 2752 W. Main Street, Snellville, Georgia (Tax Parcel 5007 018).

Planning Director Jason Thompson presented a summary of the applications received for a proposed 11,000 sq. ft. five story 95-room Avid branded hotel on a tract of land that is split zoned BG and OP and has two future land use map designations of Commercial Retail and Office Professional. The Planning Department recommends approval of LUP 20-02 and RZ 20-03 with the staff recommended conditions in the Staff Report; however, the Planning Department recommends denial of SUP 20-02, special use permit for a hotel.

Mohsen Ashfaque, 2456 Bent Oak Trail, Snellville stated that a market feasibility study was completed and that market conditions due suggest that a hotel is the highest and best use of the property. Light and noise pollution and really not valid issues due to the distance that separates the hotel with the adjacent residential properties, topography of the land and stream and vegetation buffers separating the two uses. City hotel and motel tax revenues are estimated at \$120,000 annually.

The meeting was opened to public comments, 15 minutes per side.

Richard Adcox, 2786 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition stating that the Twin Springs subdivision residents do not want a 5-story hotel in their backyard, but if approved, they would like a privacy fence erected to keep people from cutting through their subdivision.

Kim Maddox, 2805 Twin Springs Drive, Snellville emailed her concerns earlier to the

Planning Commissioners. Concerned about the impact to the subdivision intersection on Hwy. 78. where it is already difficult for residents to turn right onto Hwy. 78 and then get into the left lane to be able to go westbound on Hwy. 78. Another hotel in Snellville is not needed. Very concerned about the environmental impact of the proposed development.

Kim Long, 2259 Valley Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition about the lighting and noise pollution from a 5-story hotel is not appropriate for the use of the property.

Stephen Moonen, 2856 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition stating that there will be an increase in cost of city services and policing due to the increase in traffic by the hotel use.

Joanne Morris, 2725 Twin Springs Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition about the extra trash in the area and increase in lighting and noise.

Don Morris, 2345 Valley Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition about the proximity of a 5-story hotel in their backyard and hopes that there is something else that can be developed there than a hotel.

Planning Director Jason Thompson stated Planning Commission Chairman Bill Kingsbury emailed comments about the applications sharing his concerns about the proposed use of the property and supports the Planning Department's recommendations.

David Clack, 2759 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and concerned about the increase in crime that it the use will bring to their stable and crime-free neighborhood.

Brett Molder, 2719 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and questioned the need for another hotel and has concerns about the stormwater runoff from the proposed development.

Danny Hiam, 2845 Twin Springs Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and shared concerns about the impact to safety in the neighborhood. Stormwater will be a problem. Not a good use for the property.

Jim Hodges, 2348 Valley Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and has concerns about the safety impact to their neighborhood and that the development will have on the school system.

Mohsin Ashfaq, 2456 Bent Oak Trail, Snellville stated he understands their concerns but the proposed hotel is the highest and best use for the property. Traffic will not be adversely impacted by the hotel use which will bring hotel motel tax revenue to the city. Because of a tree and vegetation buffer spanning about 150 feet in width, the 5-story building height will not easily be visible from the neighborhood.

Vice-Chairman asked for a motion on LUP 20-02.

Ann Sechrist made a motion to deny LUP 20-02.

Rachel Barnes made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 3 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Ms. Sechrist said she misunderstood and wants to start over with her motion.

Ann Sechrist made a motion to approve LUP 20-02.

Rachel Barnes made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Jason Thompson asked for a motion on RZ 20-03.

Rachel Barnes made a motion to approve RZ 20-03 with the staff recommended conditions.

Ann Sechrist made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Jason Thompson asked for a motion on the hotel special use permit SUP 20-02.

Ann Sechrist made a motion to deny SUP 20-02 to develop and operate a hotel.

Kerry Hetherington made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

The Planning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for consideration and action at the February 22, 2021 7:30 p.m. Mayor and Council Public Hearing.

A five minute recess was called at 8:24 p.m.

The regular meeting reconvened at 8:31 p.m.

RZ 20-04 LUP 20-03 – Consideration and Recommendation on applications by Meritage Homes of Georgia (applicant) and Crawford F. Juhan, Jr. (property owner) and Edjen Finance, LLC (property owner) requesting to amend the Snellville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map from Office-Professional and Low-Density Residential to Medium-Density Residential; Official Zoning Map amendment from OP (Office Professional) District and BG (General Business) District to R-TH (Single-family

Residential Townhome) District and request for variance from the front-load garage setback requirement for a 101-unit townhome development on a 14.724± acre site having a density of 6.859 units per acre, located at 2465 Scenic Highway S, Snellville, Georgia (Tax Parcels 5006 002 and 5006 003).

Planning Director Jason Thompson presented a summary of the applications received for a proposed 101-lot single-family attached townhome development on a tract of land that is split zoned RS-30 and OP and has two future land use map designations of Low-Density Residential and Office Professional. The Planning Department recommends approval of LUP 20-03 and RZ 20-04 (rezoning to R-TH) with the staff recommended conditions in the Staff Report and one additional condition to require that a 6-foot tall vinyl-coated chain link fence be installed around the sides and rear of the development.

Jim Jacoby, Lyons Engineering and Planning, representing the applicant Meritage Homes of Georgia stated the site is 14.7 acres for a 101 townhome development by Meritage Homes who has earned the distinction of being one of the highest rated home builders for energy efficiency. There is a large central open greenspace for use by the residents with a total open space of 38% for the entire site.

They are requesting a variance from the requirement to have the front of the garage to be offset 10 feet from the front plane of the building. This is almost impossible for a townhome development so it forces the townhomes be rear entry, with access from a rear alley. This requirement would eliminate the backyards and increase the amount of impervious surface and reducing the open space to about 31%. These additional infrastructure costs would force three-story units with home prices in the \$360's which is too high for a townhouse in this market. We would be happy to make some architectural enhancements to the garage doors and front building facades.

The meeting was opened to public comments, 15 minutes per side.

Richard Adcox, 2786 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition stating that the Twin Springs subdivision residents do like the project. A 40 foot buffer is not enough. Concerned about a lot of foot traffic coming from the development to the commercial uses on Main Street.

Stephen Moonen, 2856 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition stating that he is concerned that people will end up using his property as their backyard. There is a stormwater drainage pipe that comes from the church property parking lot next door and terminates at the property line, dumping all that stormwater onto the townhome development.

Brett Molder, 2719 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and concerned about the foot traffic from the townhome residents cutting through their subdivision to get to the commercial users on Main Street. There needs to be a fence to discourage the cut-through foot traffic.

Kim Long, 2259 Valley Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition about the lack of fencing to separate the two developments. Trash is always a problem. Lack of security of the residents will be a concern.

Don Morris, 2345 Valley Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and has concerns about what the townhome development will become after 20-30 years. There needs to be a buffer that separates their subdivision from the townhomes. There are too many homes for that size site.

Danny Hiam, 2845 Twin Springs Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and said they like the security in their neighborhood and concerned about the housing type becoming a glorified apartment development. Because the development is in the South Gwinnett school cluster, the price point has to be such that the homes will sell but not low enough to bring down the area.

David Clack, 2759 Lanier Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and asked how the 90% owner-occupancy requirement would be enforced. Shared concerns about the increase in foot traffic and there definitely needs to have fencing installed.

Cynthia Wesson, 2345 Valley Drive, Snellville spoke in opposition and has concerns that the townhome development will affect their quality of life. Foot traffic will become a major nuisance. Noise will increase dramatically from the development. A 10-foot fence is not enough and will eventually be torn down.

Planning Director Jason Thompson said the Planning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for consideration and action at the February 22, 2021 7:30 p.m. Mayor and Council Public Hearing.

Jim Jacoby, Lyons Engineering and Planning, said kids these days don't really play outside and rarely wander. These will be low-maintenance townhomes and the HOA will maintain all buildings and the property. This will not be a rental community. The price point is priced within the sweet spot for the area. The stormwater pipe issue that was mentioned will be evaluated during the preparation of the stormwater management plan. Meritage will be happy to erect a 6-foot high vinyl coated chain-link fence along the sides and rear of the project and create a 25-foot landscaped buffer along the property lines.

Kerry Hetherington asked if there are townhomes already in the city.

Jason Thompson stated there is a 161-unit townhome development behind the Cooper Village Shopping Center at Hwy. 78 and Cooper Road.

Ann Sechrist asked if Tract 2 was part of the proposed development.

Mr. Thompson said no it is not.

Mr. Thompson said we need a motion for LUP 20-03.

Rachel Barnes made a motion to deny LUP 20-03.

Ann Sechrist made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion is approved.

Jason Thompson said he wants to recommend additional conditions for Planning Commission consideration to require the developer to erect a 6-foot tall vinyl coated chain link fence around the perimeter of the development, excluding the front of the property and require a 25-foot landscape buffer along the sides and rear of the property.

Vice-Chairman Armstead asked for a motion on RZ 20-04.

Rachel Barnes made a motion to approve RZ 20-04 with the conditions recommended by staff in the staff report and two additional conditions.

Kerry Hetherington made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

A five minute recess was called at 9:20 p.m.

The regular meeting reconvened at 9:27 p.m.

SUP 20-03 – Consideration and Recommendation on application by Melvin Lee Harris (applicant for the Love Center Family Ministry) and MCRE Management Partners, LLC (property owner) requesting a Special Use Permit for a Place of Worship located in Suites 2124-2130 of the Fountain Square Shopping Center, zoned BG (General Business) District, 2110 McGee Road, Snellville, Georgia (Tax Parcel 5007 230).

Planning Director Jason Thompson presented a summary of the application received for a special use permit for a place of worship operating in the Fountain Square Shopping Center. In 2018 the city amended the zoning ordinance to require special use permit approval for places of worship with the belief that the intended purpose is to allow the use on a single lot development and not to continue place of worship uses in the multi-tenant shopping centers. Therefore, the Planning Department recommends denial of SUP 20-03.

Sandra Harris and Melvin Harris, 1260 Castle Pointe Lane, Grayson, co-pastors for The Love Center Family Ministries, said they already signed a two-year lease with the shopping center and was not aware of the city's zoning requirements requiring a special use permit. Members of the small congregation are willing to utilize the underutilized parking spaces that are nearer McGee Road. To date they have already spent over \$17,000 in operating costs including rent, utilities, insurance and improvements to the

tenant space.

We are not looking for this location to be a permanent home and ask that the Planning Commission allow us to stay in Snellville through the end of the lease term.

The meeting was opened to public comments.

There was none.

Mr. Thompson stated the Planning Department's recommendation is solely based on the policy direction by the Mayor and Council.

Ben Bucksbaum, property manager for the shopping center, stated that a church had previously occupied the same tenant space so that is why they leased the space to Ms. Harris.

Vice-Chairman Armstead asked for a motion on SUP 20-03.

Rachel Barnes made a motion to deny SUP 20-03.

Ann Sechrist made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

The Planning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for consideration and action at the February 22, 2021 7:30 p.m. Mayor and Council Public Hearing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jason Thompson said we have two new cases for Planning Commission consideration at the February 23rd meeting.

Mr. Thompson announced that tonight will be Rachel Barnes' last meeting on the Planning Commission as she and her family is moving to the City of Buford. Mr. Thompson thanked Rachel for her time on the Planning Commission and service to the City of Snellville and wished her great success.

ADJOURNMENT

Rachel Barnes made a motion to adjourn.


Kerry Hetherington made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.



Leo Armstead, Vice-Chairman



John Dennis, Secretary

THESE ARE OFFICIAL MINUTES AND WERE APPROVED
BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THE FEBRUARY 23,
2021 REGULAR MEETING.