



Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
August 22, 2023
Meeting Minutes

AUGUST 22, 2023 CHATHAM COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Members Present: James Coursey, Chairman
Robert Vinyard
Ashley Field
Meredith Stone
Benjamin Polote

Members Absent: Kewaan Drayton
Coren Ross

Others Present: Edward Morrow, Development Services Director
Melissa Paul-Leto, Development Services Planner
Mary E. Mitchell, Administrative Assistant
Hind Patel, IT Helpdesk & Support

Virtual Attendance: Pamela Everett, Esq., Assistant Executive Director, Compliance & Operations

Chatham County Staff Present: Jefferson Kirkland, Environmental Program Manager
Yolanda Washington, Zoning Administrator

I. Call to Order and Welcome

[1. Call to Order and Welcome](#)

Mr. Coursey called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. He explained that this is a quasi-judicial proceeding. He asked that all those wishing to give testimony during these proceedings please sign in. Witnesses were sworn in prior to giving testimony. All proceedings of the Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals are recorded. Decisions of the Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals are final. Challenges to the decisions of the Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals must be filed through the Superior Court of Chatham County.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

[2. Pledge of Allegiance](#)

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

III. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

IV. Petitions Ready for Hearing

V. Approval of Minutes

[3. Approval of July 25, 2023. Meeting Minutes](#)

📎 [July 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

The Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the July 25, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Robert Vinyard

Second: Meredith Stone

James Coursey	- Aye
Meredith Stone	- Aye
Robert Vinyard	- Aye
Benjamin Polote, Jr.	- Aye
Ashley Field	- Aye

VI. Item(s) Requested to be Removed from the Final Agenda

VII. Consent Agenda

VIII. Old Business

IX. Regular Agenda

[4. Variance Request to Use Standards | 400 Johnny Mercer Boulevard](#)

[📎 Staff report.pdf](#)

[📎 SITE MAP ZBA-0723-000401.pdf](#)

Ms. Melissa Paul-Leto gave the staff report. Ms. Paul-Leto explained that this request is for 400 Johnny Mercer Boulevard. The Petitioner is requesting to establish a personal service firm in the I-P zoning district with frontage on a local road where frontage is on a collector or arterial is required by Section 4-5.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed business is a tattoo shop for a single technician. The shop is proposed to be less than 1,200 square feet in area and to operate by appointment only. The subject property is located on Wilmington Island and is zoned P-I-P/TC (Planned Institutional Professional Town Center Overlay). The property is appropriately 0.5 acres in size. The subject parcel is currently developed as a multi-tenant office building called "Island Park" with tenants of varying trades occupying its suites. Visible from 2019 Google Streetview imagery are a dentist office, hair salon, nail salon, massage therapist, and a roofing contractor's office.

Ms. Paul-Leto said the subject parcel has frontage on both Shipwreck Court and Johnny Mercer Frontage Road. Personal Service shops are limited to 1,000 square feet of leasable area and requires access via a throughfare classified as a collector or arterial in the IP Zoning District. She said because the unit is facing the frontage of Johnny Mercer and not actually on Johnny Mercer is the reason the variance is being requested. No record of variances to the required standard were found for the subject parcel as there are other licensed units that are nail salon and hair salon dating back to 1994. They all front Johnny Mercer Frontage Road.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that the subject parcel contains thirty-one (31) parking off-street parking spaces for tenants and guests use. At a maximum 1,200 square feet, the proposed use would require seven (7) off-street parking spaces and one (1) additional parking space for the tattoo artist. She said that the subject parcel is likely zoned P-I-P because of its frontage on Shipwreck Court which leads into a residential area. The zoning classification limits intensity of uses. Johnny Mercer Frontage Road, however, provides access to parcels zoned for more intense business uses. Ms. Paul-Leto said that the long-time existence of personal service establishments at this location, even without a variance, serves as an indication that the P-I-P zoning is likely sufficient to keep use intensity low enough to avoid erosion of residential quality of life.

Ms. Paul-Leto said that the parcel has curb cuts on both Shipwreck Court and Tybee Drive. Nearby are a Dollar General and a Childcare Network daycare center, which also share access via Tybee Drive. The addition of the proposed use is unlikely to substantially alter the character of the area. She showed the Board

a photo of the subject parcel.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that as the impact of introducing a new low-intensity personal service firm at this location is likely minimal, Staff recommends approval of the requested variance. She entertained questions from the Board. She informed the Board that the Petitioner is present and would entertain their questions also.

Mr. Coursey stated that his belief is that Johnny Mercer Frontage Road is not considered a collector road. Is this correct?

Ms. Paul-Leto answered that Johnny Mercer Road is a collector. It is somewhat like Derenne Frontage and then there is Derenne Avenue.

Mr. Coursey said he would have assumed that Johnny Mercer, itself, would have been an arterial.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that Johnny Mercer, itself, is. It is just that the frontage is not considered.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Delan Canclini stated that he has a one-person shop. Currently, he is moving from Oregon to Savannah and did not know this area at all. He ended up putting a shop on Montgomery Street, which has been great for him. But it is also a lot further away from home. However, the shop he is trying to open now, is only about three minutes from this home. Mr. Canclini said he has rented a shop for 12 years; this will be the first time that he is buying the property for his business. This is all new to him.

Mr. Coursey welcomed Mr. Canclini to Savannah and asked him what brought him all the way here.

Mr. Canclini said the wet weather brought him here. Oregon has about nine months of dreary weather. The area is beautiful, but he can only take so much of cold and rainy weather.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Vinyard stated that personal services are already here. It appears that Mr. Canclini is already an entrepreneur. He is buying his spot.

The Board was in agreement with the Staff recommendation.

Mr. Coursey entertained a motion.

Motion

The Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals does hereby approve the variance request to Use Standards at 400 Johnny Mercer Boulevard.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Robert Vinyard

Second: Ashley Field

James Coursey - Aye

Meredith Stone - Aye

Robert Vinyard - Aye

Benjamin Polote, Jr. - Aye

Ashley Field - Aye

X. Other Business

XI. Adjournment

5. Adjourned

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Coursey adjourned the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward Morrow
Development Services Director

EM:/mem

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.