



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: June 16, 2009

TO: Metropolitan Planning Commission

FROM: MPC Staff

SUBJECT: Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
 Re: Amend Section 8-3025 (46) B&I Use Schedule
 Meredith Gaunce, Agent for Cadie McEachin
 Marcus Lotson, MPC Project Planner
 MPC File Number Z-090420-38821-2

Issue:

The petitioner is proposing a text amendment to Section 8-3025 (46) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance in order to accommodate free standing ice vending units which produce and distribute ice to customers on site at any time.

Background:

The automated ice vending technology is a relatively recent phenomenon. The existing zoning ordinance addresses the storage of ice but not the automatic dispensing that has recently become possible. While these machines are not traditional structures they require the attention of governing bodies as they tend to be placed along high traffic corridors and have the potential to proliferate throughout the city.

Findings:

1. The Zoning Ordinance is not a static document. From time to time amendments are necessary to embrace changing standards, heretofore unknown uses, or new technologies. Such is the case with automated ice vending units. The current Ordinance does not address or make provision for these types of units.

2. The automated ice vending business is likely to continue to grow as it is a low overhead investment vehicle and relatively few are currently operating in our area.
3. Automated ice vending units are often placed on land already occupied by a principal use. They can, however, be placed upon a parcel as the sole use. As such, the units should be considered a principal use and be subject to group development standards where necessary. Additionally, to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses and that the proposed unit is in conformance with buffering, setback, and other development standards including maximum size, a site plan submittal should also be required.
4. Ice vending units are generally not compatible with the character of the Savannah National Landmark Historic District. To protect and preserve this valuable resource, such units should not be allowed to locate within the boundaries of the National Landmark District.
5. Ice vending units may be an appropriate use in certain locatiions. However, the placement of these units should be regulated and limited to more intense commercial areas located on roadways designated as collectors or higher. This restriction would be designed to minimize neighborhood impacts and potential traffic issues.
6. Although appropriate signage should be allowed commensurate with the use, limitations should be placed on the amount and location of signage for ice vending units. Such limitations should be designed to provide visibility, yet provide safeguards to ward against visual and character blight.

Alternatives:

1. Approve the petitioner's request to amend the Ordinance.
2. Deny the proposed text amendment.
3. Approve the alternative text amendment.

Policy Analysis:

Evolving technologies require us to consider matters that are not expressly delineated in our municipal codes. The proposed use can be a valuable asset to a retail or commercial location and a convenience to the neighborhood as long as it does not detract from the neighborhoods character by, for example, decreasing parking or impeding public rights-of-way. The ice vending unit must meet the development standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance for the district in which it resides. This amendment will allow a use that will likely become more common throughout our community while regulating location and impact.

RECOMMENDATION: DENIAL of the petitioner’s request to amend section 8-3025(46) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance by adding the language “*retail sale (limited manufacturing permitted with no off-site delivery of ice products.*” It is further recommended that the following alternative amendment be **APPROVED:**

ENACT

Section 8-3002 Definitions

Ice Vending Unit. A freestanding, unmanned, self-contained machine or facility designed to store and/or manufacture ice for the purpose of dispensing the same on-site at any time.

Section 8-3025(b) Provisions Regarding Use in B Districts and I Districts

(46a) Ice Vending Unit [allowed in BH, BC, BG, BG -2, IL, and IH Districts]

- a. Such units shall be not less than 30 or more than 250 square feet in size, and shall be considered principal use structures.
- b. The use shall front on an arterial or collector roadway.
- c. A site plan shall be submitted for review according to Section 8-3031.
- d. No ice vending unit shall be located on or in required parking spaces attributable to another principal use.
- e. Ice vending units shall provide a minimum of two off-street parking spaces.
- f. Signage shall be permitted on one side of the unit only and shall not exceed one square foot for each lineal foot of unit wall as measured along the longest wall. In no case shall permitted signage exceed 20 square feet.
- g. Not more than one ice vending unit shall be allowed on any single parcel.
- h. Ice vending units shall not be allowed within the boundaries of the Savannah National Historic Landmark District.