



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room
May 18, 2021 ~ 1:30 PM
Minutes

May 18, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M.

Members Present: Joseph Welch, Chairman
Laureen Boles
Travis H. Coles
Elizabeth Epstein
Wayne Noha
Lee Smith
Dwayne Stephens
Malik Watkins
Tom Woiwode

Members Not Present: Karen Jarrett, Secretary
Eula Parker, Treasurer
Michael Brown
Joseph Ervin
Ruel Joyner

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director
Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services
Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner
Jessica Hagan, Administrative Assistant
Julie Yawn, Systems Analyst

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Agenda

[1. Approval of Agenda](#)

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

Notice(s)

[2. June 8, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M., Planning Commission, GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org.](#)

Information Item(s) for Board Members

[3. Development Plans Submitted for Review](#)

[📎 May 12, 2021 Development Review Log.pdf](#)

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

[4. SPECIAL USE REQUEST | 10601 Abercorn; 99,101 & 103 Wilshire Boulevard - Package Store](#)

This petition was removed from the final agenda unanimously.

[5. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 10601 Abercorn St and 99,101,103, 105, 107 & 109 - Rezone from PUD - IS to BN / 16 21-001929](#)

This petition was removed from the final agenda unanimously.

[6. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 527 E 39th Street | Rezone from TN-2 to PD | File No. 21-002411](#)

This petition was removed from the final agenda unanimously.

[7. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 6098 Ogeechee Road | Rezone from R-A to BN & RTF | 21-002357-ZA](#)

This petition was removed from the final agenda unanimously.

[8. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT | East Broad Market PD | Expand Planned Development Boundaries | File No. 21-002377-ZA](#)

This petition was removed from the final agenda unanimously.

VI. Items Requested to be Withdrawn

[9. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 1019, 1025 & 1031 Bryan Woods Loop Road | Rezone from PUD-IS to R3-16 | Z-0421-000120](#)

This petition was withdrawn from the final agenda unanimously.

[10. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 1030 Bryan Woods Loop and 1002 Memorial Lane - Rezone from PUD-IS to R3-16 Z-0421-000121 and Z-0421-000121](#)

This petition was withdrawn from the final agenda unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consists of items for which the applicant is in agreement with the staff recommendation and for which no known objections have been identified nor anticipated by staff. Any objections raised at the meeting will result in the item being moved to the Regular Agenda. At a 12:30 briefing, the staff will brief the Commission on Consent Agenda items and, time permitting, Regular Agenda items. No testimony will be taken from applicants, supporters or opponents, and no votes will be taken at the briefing.

VII. Consent Agenda

[11. Approval of the April 27, 2021 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.](#)

[📎 04.27.2021 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

[📎 04-27-2021 MPC BRIEFING MINUTES.pdf](#)

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Motion

Recommend approval of the Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Wayne Noha

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

VIII. Old Business

IX. Regular Business

[12. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT | ACL Boulevard | Rezone request from RSF-6 to OI-E | File No. 21-001244-ZA](#)

📎 [ACL Blvd visuals.pdf](#)

📎 [ACL Blvd 5.14.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner, stated the petitioner is requesting to rezone a 15-acre parcel on ACL Boulevard from its current zoning classification of Residential Single Family (RSF-6) to the proposed zoning classification Office Institutional-Expanded (OI-E), with previously listed limited uses, for a proposed indoor recreational facility.

The subject property is a residentially zoned parcel in the Liberty City neighborhood. Historically, it has remained undeveloped with the exception of a baseball field and shelter structure near the front of the property. A large percentage of the property, which abuts the rear and side yards of nearby residences, is wooded and consists of wetlands. A stormwater ditch runs through the wooded area, near the rear of the property. The property has approximately 800 feet of frontage on ACL Boulevard, a two lane, 60 ft right of way classified as a collector street, per Appendix A-1 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance. Other than the zoning update of 2019, there have been no recent rezonings in the immediate vicinity.

The property is located on the fringe of an established residential area. No presence of office developments or multi-family housing are in the subject property's immediate area. There are a few institutional uses; two churches (one north and south) and a school near the church to the south. ACL Boulevard runs parallel with Interstate 516, which is less than 200 feet away from the roadway, and has no sound barrier between the interstate and the neighborhood. There are a small number of residences that front ACL Boulevard. The existing trees and wetlands on the subject property serve as a natural sound barrier, to the abutting residential properties, from the noise pollution of the interstate.

During both neighborhood meetings, residents raised concerns and expressed desires to the applicant to retain the wooded portion of the subject property and to include passive recreation, such as horseback riding, in the wooded area. Preserving the wetland/wooded area would also provide for the required amount of space that would be appropriate for a large nonresidential development, adjacent to existing residences. Residents also brought up the concern that rezoning the subject property may increase vehicular traffic on residential streets, particularly Mitchell Street and Tuskegee Street, two residential streets north of the subject property that connect ACL Boulevard and Liberty Parkway. Placing signs that

route traffic directly towards ACL Boulevard could help lessen the potential for increased traffic on these roads. Exploring the possibility of placing speed bumps on these roadways may deter an uptick in potential drivers or at least, discourage speeding. Additionally, this rezoning could support the Community Health goal set forth in the Comprehensive Plan to “Organize, promote, and ensure access to community health services, recreational opportunities and fitness programs to accommodate the special needs of families, the obese, the elderly, and disabled citizens to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors.”

Mr. Vincent J. Del Monte, petitioner, stated we have been working on this project for a few years and it's been an excellent process. Thanks to the MPC and City Staff. The neighborhood residents seem to be a little tense, but, after the discussion and everything was put out in the open, there seemed to be a better understanding.

Public Comment:

Mr. Harry Frazier, neighborhood resident, spoke in support. He stated this will be a wonderful thing for a lot of people.

Mr. Clinton Edminster, spoke in favor. He stated he believes this is a great project and suggests that the petitioner reach out to Chatham Area Transit to make sure they are aware of this project for any future planning.

Motion

Approve the request to rezone the property on ACL Boulevard from RSF-6 to OI-E with the following limited uses: 1. Single Family detached 2. General Park 3. Library 4. Community Center 5. Indoor recreation 6. General office use

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Travis Coles

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[13. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 5651 Ogeechee Road | Rezone from R-A, AT & PB to R-3 | File No. Z-1120 - 000095](#)

[📎 Maps Combined.pdf](#)

[📎 Aerial Map.pdf](#)

[📎 Staff Report-00116.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the petitioner is requesting to rezone property at 5651 Ogeechee Rd. in unincorporated Chatham County from R-A (Residential Agriculture), P-B (Planned Business) and A-T (Agriculture – Tourism) to R-3-15 (Multifamily Residential – 15 units per net acre).

The subject property consists of two parcels, approximately 18 gross acres in total area, on the east side of Ogeechee Rd. between Derrick Inn Road and Cottonvale Road. The subject parcels have direct frontage access to Ogeechee Road. The parcels would be required to be combined prior to development taking place. Based on the concept plan provided with the petitioner's application and the requested rezoning, their intent is to develop the property with a multifamily residential development. **However, the concept plan does not represent a formal General Development Plan (GDP) submittal.**

Of the two parcels, one was developed with a single-family residence and the other is vacant. The properties abut a church and a landscape nursery, and are across Ogeechee Road from a storage facility.

In unincorporated Chatham, the maximum density for multifamily residential is 40 dwelling units per acre, which is established at the time of rezoning. Density is also limited by a number of development standards including height, greenspace requirements and the ability to provide required parking. The Ogeechee Road corridor is a transitioning area, where former rural residential properties are converting to non-residential uses and multifamily development. It is one of the growth areas in the western part of the County. The proposed rezoning is at the very low end of multifamily residential density and, at this density, over 50% of the subject property would remain open space. Multifamily residential continues to be a successful housing type and the tracts of land needed to accommodate this type of development are typically in the outlying areas. The proposed density is less than the density found in similar complexes along Ogeechee Road. Ogeechee Road is capable of handling additional vehicular traffic.

Mr. Josh Yellin, agent for the petitioner, stated the applicant is in agreement with staff's recommendation.

No Public Comments

Motion

Approve the petitioner's request to rezone the subject site from an R-A, A-T and P-B zoning classification to an R-3-15 zoning classification with the following conditions:

The subject parcels shall be combined prior to the approval of a development plan.

Vehicular access shall be via a shared drive with adjacent property and shall be approved by the Chatham County Department of Engineering.

A secondary emergency vehicular access point shall be approved by the Chatham County Department of Engineering.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

[14. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | Diamond Causeway & Ferguson Ave | Rezone from R-A/EO to PUD-BN / EO | File No. Z-0421-000122](#)

- 🔗 [19-548 Concept Plan Render 04-14-2021.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [19-548 Conceptual Landscape Plan 2021.04.14.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Street Views.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Context Aerial.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Retail shops only_012320.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [cstore only_012320.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [2020.02.20 19-548 Enmarket GDP to CES - Current.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Quit Claim Report.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Maps combined.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Staff Report - 000122.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Bethesda Site Rezoning - DOE Comments.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Public Comments.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the petitioner is requesting to rezone the subject property from the R-A/EO (Residential Agriculture / Environmental Overlay) zoning district to the PUD-BN (Planned Unit Development – Neighborhood Business) classification in conjunction with a site development plan. The attached site development plan, if approved by the County Commission, will represent the approved use of the property. Although the petitioner, under this proposal, would serve as the developer, ownership of the property will be retained by Bethesda consistent with their property deeds.

Bethesda Academy was founded in 1740 as Bethesda Orphan House and Academy and became Bethesda Home for Boys in 1900. In 1992, it became a full time school for boys and rebranded itself in 2011 to reflect the college preparatory curriculum. The 600 plus acres that make up the school's property exists on both sides of Ferguson Avenue, as well as portions that are south of Diamond Causeway. However, the active portion of the campus, including classrooms, dormitories and athletic facilities, are all east of Ferguson Avenue and north of Diamond Causeway.

The subject property is a +/- 7 acre portion of an approximately 315 acre parent tract of undeveloped land. Portions of the property have been cleared and timbered at different times over the years. In addition, a 50 acre lake exists in the northwest portion of the parent tract. The portion which is the subject of the rezoning request is bounded by Diamond Causeway, Ferguson Avenue and the former Old Bethesda Road, an unopened right of way which has been quit claimed and is now fee simple property owned by Bethesda.

The property and the remaining parent tracts of land were zoned R-A (Residential Agriculture) in 1962, with the adoption of the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance. This was true of most of the undeveloped portions of the unincorporated area. In 2003 Section 4-12, the Environmental Overlay, was adopted into the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance which provides for additional development standards in designated areas that include the Islands Community and the Southeast Chatham Community. The subject property is within the overlay.

The petitioner is requesting to rezone the subject property to the PUD-BN zoning classification. The zoning request is in conjunction with the attached site plan which, if approved, would constitute the approved use for the property.

The subject site has always been undeveloped. Agriculture, in the form of timber harvesting, is the only use that has taken place on this property. The portion of the property that is the subject of the request

abuts arterial and collector classified roadways. The petitioner is requesting that the property be rezoned in conjunction with a site plan, which includes building façade details. In addition, the applicant has proffered to eliminate certain uses from the list of approved uses for this site. These additional conditions are being recommended in order to create predictability, as it relates to the development.

The location of the subject property on an arterial roadway, and the lack of abutting or nearby residential uses, make it a likely site for development. Due to the mostly undeveloped nature of the immediate area, in terms of commercial uses, any development should be designed to match the character of others in the vicinity. The nearby commercial development and the Bethesda School both exhibit landscaping and building materials which the proposed development is attempting to simulate.

If rezoned as requested, the attached development plan with the conditions noted therein would constitute the approved development plan for this property. Deviation from that plan would require reconsideration by the MPC and County Commission through the rezoning process.

Mr. Robert McCorkle, agent for the petitioner, stated the Bethesda Board adopted a plan to ground lease a portion of this property for commercial development, in order to work towards securing Bethesda's future and to fund its mission. Bethesda is not a publicly funded entity. The use of this land will produce critical revenue for the future of Bethesda. They cannot sell this property, all of Bethesda's land is protected in a trust, but it can be ground leased. We have complied with every request. The County conveyed the road to Bethesda for the right of way. In order to protect the trees, we recorded a perpetual restrictive covenant of record that states we cannot cut any trees over 16 inches without having approval from the County Arborist. More importantly, we are not allowed to construct any above ground improvements within the right of way. We have tied a site plan in with the rezoning. We have everything listed on the Site Plan, so everything will be recorded when that is approved.

Mr. Maliak Watkins, Board Member, stated that he wanted to make sure Sandfly and Pin Point communities were notified and involved with this project.

Mr. McCorkle, stated that Bethesda held public meetings, ran some ads and responded to emails that were received.

Public Comments

Ms. Madeleine Pelli, spoke in opposition. She stated it mocks the historic heritage of Bethesda and what the original orphanage stood for. This Enmark is unwanted and unneeded by the community.

Ms. Jessica Perry, County Arborist, stated we will be working with them to preserve the trees.

Motion

Approve the request to rezone the subject property in conjunction with the attached site plan which shall include the following conditions noted on the plan:

Visible building elevations will be finished in brick. Any concrete block used in rear service areas will be painted to match brick used on visible elevations.

All dumpsters on the site will be screened with brick on three sides to match the buildings.

Monument style signs will be used for principal use free standing signs and shall be designed with brick to match buildings.

Curb cut locations shall be approved by the Chatham County Department of Engineering.

The following uses shall be prohibited: Use (61c) Cocktail Lounges, Night Clubs, Taverns and Package Stores. Use (84a) Marine Engine and Boat Repair Shops - Minor

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Wayne Noha

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Nay
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Nay

[15. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 815 Wheaton Street | Rezone request from I-L to IL-T | File No. 21-002124-ZA](#)

[☞ Staff Report 5.14.pdf](#)

[☞ Wheaton St visuals.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner, stated the petitioner is requesting to rezone a 3.1 acre lot on 815 Wheaton Street from its current zoning classification of Light Industrial (I-L) to the proposed zoning classification Light Industrial-Transition (IL-T).

The subject property is located in the Eastside neighborhood, on the southwest corner of the intersection where Wheaton Street and the railroad tracks cross. The property was subdivided from its larger lot configuration in December of 2020 (20-002773-SUB) which resulted in the creation of two lots from a single lot. The subject property was formerly owned by CSX railroad company and has remained undeveloped property, consisting of wooded land, for over the past two decades. The subject property had been zoned I-L, prior to the City-wide zoning in 2019.

Per the City's current Comprehensive Plan, the subject property's Future Land Use category is labeled as Transportation/Communication/Utility. The definition of this Future Land Use category presumes that the land use of the subject property will be developed with uses that are solely supportive of railroad and airport facilities. There is a rail line that runs north of the subject property. Prior to being subdivided, the subject property was part of a larger parcel that was bound to the west by over 2,000 feet of rail line. The subject property has remained undeveloped for decades. The vacancy of the property shows that, although the property was near the rail line, it had not been developed to support the rail line other than serving as a natural barrier between other properties. Given its previous configuration and proximity to rail line, it is understandable why the property was given the Future Land Use classification of Transportation/Communication/Utility. Now that the subject property is under new ownership and updates are being made to the Future Use Land Map with the update of the Comprehensive Plan, it is probable that the Future Land Use category will change to a more relevant category.

Both I-L and IL-T permit uses that provide support to rail and air transportation and are consistent with the Transportation/Communication/Utility Future Land Use category. Overall, the IL-T zoning district is a less intense district and offers more uses that are geared towards commercial, office, and personal services. I-L, however, permits more intense industrial uses such as railyards, general manufacturing, solid waste transfer stations, and container storage yards. Downzoning to IL-T from I-L would stop the development of these more intense industrial uses at the subject property's location, which have the potential to adversely affect the residential communities surrounding the subject property.

Petitioner was not present.

No Public Comments

Motion

Motion to continue to the June 8th MPC meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Wayne Noha

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[16. MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT | Berwick PUD | Land Use Amendment from Commercial to Multifamily | SP-0421-000124](#)

📎 [Maps Combined.pdf](#)

📎 [Application.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Report 000124.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the petitioner is requesting MPC approval of an amendment to the Berwick Plantation Master Plan to change the land use designation of a portion of an undeveloped parcel from Commercial to Multifamily. Berwick Plantation is a planned community located on the west side of U.S. Highway 17 South, within a PUD-C (Planned Unit Development Community) zoning district south of Elk Road.

The Berwick Plantation Master Plan was initially approved by the MPC in conjunction with the rezoning of the subject site on November 7, 2000 (Z-001009-53586-1). The Master Plan has been amended several times. The current Master Plan was approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission on February 19, 2019, File Number P-181114-00130-1.

Initially, all properties within Berwick Plantation were subject to the restrictive covenants, which were established in conjunction with the creation of Berwick Plantation. Compliance with and changes to the restrictive covenants are under the control of a Master Association, which is also known as the Declarant. One of the members of the Master Association was The Branigar Corporation, a subsidiary of Union Camp. The membership of The Branigar Corporation was transferred to International Paper Realty Corporation when Union Camp was purchased by International Paper Company. The Branigar Corporation, and later the International Paper Corporation, spearheaded the functions of Declarant. When the International Paper Corporation no longer owned any properties within the Berwick Plantation, the administrative duties and functions of the Declarant were basically unfilled. Based on this finding, staff sent notices to the Berwick Plantation Property Owners Association, as well as property owners located within 300 feet of a petitioned site, for all proposed amendments to the Berwick Plantation Master Plan.

The purpose of a Master Plan is to provide orderly development with uses related to each other in a harmonious fashion and to meet the needs of the immediate and surrounding areas. Sometimes, all of the properties within an approved Master Plan are developed in a relatively short period of time and no

changes to the approved uses are needed. However, sometimes because of various factors in marketing trends, needs, and economic constraints, changes to Master Plans are necessary. Such changes are not unusual as Master Plans, for the most part, are never static.

The percentage of the elderly component of the overall population in Savannah and nationwide continues to increase. Because of this increase, the demand for residential facilities continues to increase.

The proposed amendment to change the site from a commercial designation to a multifamily land use designation will not adversely impact the existing uses in the immediate area.

Mr. Jacob Engle, petitioner, stated we are intending to develop this parcel as an age-restrictive, independent living, multi-family community. The intention is to develop as two separate phases. The first phase will be 84 units and the intended second phase will be the same as phase one. Out of the 84 units, we plan to have 32 one bedroom units and 52 two bedroom units. Each phase will include a single, multi-story building. We will have a covered pavilion and walking trails outside.

Public Comments:

Mr. William Laughlin, asked how access will be gained from Berwick Boulevard?

Mr. Lotson, stated that access will be from a unknown road by CVS.

Motion

Approve the petitioner's request to amend the Berwick Plantation Master Plan changing the land use designation of a 7.1-acre portion of a 34-acre parcel from Commercial to Multifamily designation, subject to the following conditions:

Submit a revised Berwick Plantation Master Plan to change the land use designation of the subject site from Commercial to Multifamily.

The subject site shall be subdivided, and final plat recorded prior to a development plan being submitted.

The Chatham County Department of Engineering shall review and approve a Traffic Impact Analysis if deemed necessary based on the submitted development plan.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Dwayne Stephens

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

📎 [Staff Report.pdf](#)

📎 [315 W 38th St visuals.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner, stated the subject property is located on the southern side of West 38th Street, bounded by Jefferson Street, West 39th Street (side), and Montgomery Street, within the Streetcar Historic District. The subject property is the former site of St. Paul's Academy for Boys, which closed in 2014. Prior to St. Paul's, the site had historically operated as a school. The building was constructed in 1900 and is a contributing structure in the Thomas Square-Streetcar National Register Historic District. The applicant recently filed a COA (21-001950-COA) to rehabilitate and develop the building into an apartment building. The Historic Preservation Commission approved the petition to rehabilitate the historic building. The subject property was zoned TN-2, prior to the City-wide zoning in 2019.

Rezoning the subject property would allow for a greater number of uses that are more intense, which have the potential to attract more vehicular traffic and parking to the area. The existing building on the subject property is limited in available off-street parking and its physical structure cannot be altered due to its contributing status. It is likely that there will be an increase of on-street parking, regardless of what is developed. The more intense the use, the more on-street parking will be present.

The immediate area of the subject property is developed with a mix of uses and zoning districts. Towards the west of the subject property is Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and Montgomery Street, both minor arterial roadways, that consist of commercial zoning and uses. There is a pattern of properties fronting Montgomery Street zoned as TC-1 and TC-2, and there is a pattern of properties fronting Jefferson Street zoned as TN-2. The subject property expands the width of the block of West 38th Street between Montgomery Street and Jefferson Street.

Many of the residences in the immediate area, south and east of the subject property, do not have off-street parking and park on their respective or nearby streets. The TC-1 zoning district allows for commercial uses that generally attract more vehicular traffic. This increase in vehicular traffic has the possibility to create a larger issue of parking for residents in the area. Also, TC-1 allows for greater densities within residential uses that also has the potential to increase the number of cars in the area.

The definition for the Future Land Use category Traditional Commercial explicitly states "the category includes residential uses that are compatible with the character of adjacent neighborhoods". At this particular location, TC-1 would allow for residential uses that are much higher in density than the surrounding residences in the TN-2 zoning district. This is not compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Michael Garcia, agent for the petitioner, stated my client is attempting to provide workforce housing units within this building while revitalizing a contributing structure that has sat vacant for over 6 years. We were approved by the HPC Board for the proposed work and have overwhelming support from Historic Savannah Foundation. We held a virtual neighborhood meeting with about 12-15 residents participating. We selected to rezone to the TC-1 zoning district because of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. Based off the Comprehensive Plan, it was always intended to be a Commercial zoning district. We are requesting rezoning because, under our current zoning district, we are unable to request a variance for the minimum lot area per unit requirement of TN-2, which is 1,750 sq. ft. That requirement is suitable for a Streetcar lot size. In TN-2, we are required to have one parking space per unit, so we are at a deficit of 23 parking spaces. In TC-1, we have 27 units and are required to provide 27 parking spaces. Under TC-1 zoning, we would have adequate parking.

Mr. Brent Watts, petitioner, stated this is not affordable housing but it is workforce housing. If we can get the rezoning request approved, we can have smaller units that will allow us lower price points. The construction will be similar to other developments in the area. As part of the purchase, I am purchasing the lots and two vacant houses across the street. Those lots are very long and are accessed by a lane. So, what I am later going to propose to go back with a traditional neighborhood use, that will have parking off the lane.

Mr. Josh Yellin, stated with the parking issue stated in the staff report I want to reference Section 9.3.4 of NewZO which does allow the grandfathering in of spaces based upon prior uses. This was built as a school in 1900; therefore, the applicant will be receiving credit for all of the spaces that were not provided

when that school was built. I believe under NewZO that we would receive a credit for one parking space for every classroom that existed and an additional parking space for every employee that was employed by the school. When those are factored into the additional off-street parking being provided to this site, we are well in compliance with the City's parking requirements. I do not believe that should be a factor in this rezoning request.

Public Comments:

Ms. Sue Adler, CEO and President of Savannah Historic Foundation, stated she and Savannah Historic Foundation are in support of this project. This is a chance to save a building that has been vacant for the past 6 years. Mr. Watts does a fantastic job preserving historic buildings.

Mr. Jason Combs, Vice President of the Thomas Square Neighborhood Association, spoke in support. He asked if this was conforming with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map? It also seems to fit in the Savannah 2033 Master Plan.

Ms. Melanie Wilson, Executive Director of MPC, stated the 2033 plan is not an approved document, so we would not have made reference to that. We did look at parking and we are still concerned with making sure that it is consistent with all the plans. I did receive a few calls from people that had concerns with the parking.

Motion

Motion to continue to the June 8th MPC meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Wayne Noha

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[18. SPECIAL PERMITTED USE | 211 East Gaston Street | Special Use for Restaurant | File No. 21-002160-ZA](#)

📎 [Staff Report 5.13rev.pdf](#)

📎 [211 E Gaston visuals.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner, stated Restaurant usage is a special permitted use in the D-R, Downtown Residential, zoning district. The petitioner is requesting a special use permit to operate a restaurant in the D-R district.

According to the applicant, the restaurant is being proposed in conjunction with the use of an Inn, which will also serve as an event space for weddings. Inns are a permitted use in the D-R district given that:

1. The inn has frontage on a street classified as an arterial or collector in the City's Code of Ordinance Appendix A-1 (Gaston Street is identified as a residential collector).
2. The number of occupants does not exceed the Fire Code as determined by the City Manager.

3. Meals shall only be provided to registered guests.

The City's Zoning Ordinance defines an Inn as "a lodging establishment for transient guests for six (6) to 15 guest rooms. Must be owner-occupied or provide 24-hour, 7 days a week onsite staff. Any on-premises use that is accessible by the general public, such as a restaurant, bar or event/assembly space, is a separate principal use and must be an allowed use in the base zoning district. Any on-premise use that is accessible only by inn guests is an accessory use."

The subject property previously operated as a bed and breakfast, but did not sell food to the public. The proposed restaurant will be accessible to the public and is considered a separate principal use; which, in this case, requires a special use permit. According to the applicant, the total area of the restaurant space, including the outdoor seating area is 3,525 square feet.

Normally, this would require 35 off street parking spaces for the restaurant use; however, since the subject property is in the Downtown Parking Reduction Area, the requirement is 14 spaces. This number accounts for the restaurant use alone, not including the parking count for the inn.

According to the Character Areas Technical Report of the City's Parking Matters Study, the subject property is in a character area identified by the study as the Victorian -Streetcar Neighborhood. This area is primarily residential with a diverse housing stock. Commercial uses in this area are clustered on heavily driven streets, such as Bull Street and Montgomery Street, and are located in corner spaces.

To accommodate a restaurant of the proposed size, the City Ordinance requires the provision of 35 off-street parking spaces. The subject property only provides for a small number of off-street parking spaces, which it has to share for its other principal use as an Inn. The subject property is exempt from several of the required spaces because it is in the Downtown Parking Reduction Area. This does not reduce the number of patrons who may come to the restaurant and park their vehicles. There are two off-street surface parking lots immediately west and south of the subject property. However, they are not for public use and the applicant has no agreement with the parking lot owner (SCAD).

Although Gaston Street is a collector roadway, the type of street required for the special use, in this area it is not typical for commercial uses to be located on streets that are predominantly developed with residences. Another component of the City's Character Area Report revealed that parking utilization is high in the vicinity of the subject property due to its proximity to Forsyth Park. With a combination of residents and park visitors, the parking situation is strained. Although it may seem ideal, establishing a restaurant in this area will worsen the existing parking dilemma.

Mr. Robert Evangelista, petitioner, stated we are seeking to open this restaurant to the public in a limited and reservation only capacity, so our hope is primarily concerned with the guests of our bed and breakfast. Our idea and hope is to add this option to the community as a space where they could mingle with guests. The concerns we heard today primarily revolve around the parking situation. We have a 5 year lease with a 24 space parking lot with 3 ADA spots one street over on Huntington. That should be enough parking for what we need. We believe brunch time will be the time we would be taking most of our reservations.

Public Comments:

Ms. Monica Mastrianni, spoke in opposition. She presented a presentation from the community that stated their concerns with the Special Use being requested. She stated that they agree with the staff report.

Ms. Ellen Harris, speaking on behalf of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, stated they strongly oppose this petition and ask that you deny the request.

Motion

Motion to deny the petitioner's request.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Dwayne Stephens

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[19. MINOR SUBDIVISION VARIANCE | South Gardens Lots 456-467 and 517-526 | 21-002111-SUBP](#)

📎 [Maps Combined.pdf](#)

📎 [FINAL PLAT - 21-002111-SUBP - 1216 E. Derenne Avenue.pdf](#)

📎 [05-18-21 - Staff Report - 21-002111-SUBP - South Gardens- 2-Lot Minor Recomb. SD-1216 East DeRenne.pdf](#)

📎 [North side of 72nd.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the petitioner is requesting MPC approval of a Final Plat for a 2-lot Minor Subdivision (recombination) located on the west side of Ranger Street between East DeRenne Avenue and East 72nd Street within a B-N (Neighborhood Business) zoning district.

The petitioner is also requesting a variance to create two double frontage lots.

The petitioner is requesting approval of a variance to create two double frontage lots fronting on East DeRenne Avenue and East 72nd Street. The City of Savannah Subdivision Regulations, Section 8-2023 (a) (4) prohibits the creation of double frontage lots. However, the Metropolitan Planning Commission shall be authorized to vary such requirements provided, however, that in so doing the intent and purposes of this Ordinance are not violated.

Providing access on more than one road would provide better ingress/egress and better distribution of the vehicular traffic created by the proposed development. However, East 72nd Street is a residential street with existing single-family residential structures on the subject site and, more importantly, on the northern side of East 72nd Street. Although the existing residential houses are somewhat marginal, including some in disrepair, the creation of double frontage commercial lots with curb cuts on East 72nd Street would adversely impact the single-family properties that will remain. The Future Land Use Map identifies the properties on the north side of East 72nd Street as Suburban Single Family. It is conceivable that future development pressures could result in the properties along the north side of East 72nd Street, across from the proposed development, being rezoned to a transitional zoning district. However, the existing zoning classification of these residential properties is RSF-6. Based on these findings, creating two double frontage commercial lots should only be approved in conjunction with no access on East 72nd Street and the creation of a suitable buffer on both lots along East 72nd Street.

Mr. Michael Fell, petitioner, stated, in 2019, we had construction plans that were approved by the MPC and City of Savannah that allowed access to 72nd Street and there was a dumpster access allowed off 72nd Street Through the Site Plan review with the City, they stated that Project DeRenne would have a median that would go the length of our property and would only allow this proposed development to have a right in and a right out. That's the plan they had us to design to in 2019. I would think we would still face

that same criteria today.

Mr. Woiwode, Board Member, asked what has changed since the previously approved plan and now?

Mr. Fell, stated the only thing that has changed is that previously approved development didn't happen and we were asking for a recombination. Now we are asking to subdivide the property.

Mr. Lotson, stated a few things are different. One being what the petitioner is requesting. They were not requesting a recombination to create new lots in the 2019 plan. I'm not sure if they have spoken again with City Engineering regarding the effects that Project DeRenne will have on this property now since that plan is different.

Public Comments:

Mr. Brad Street, asked if his property will be affected?

Mr. Joseph Welch, Chairman, stated you will not be affected.

Motion

Approval of a variance to create two double frontage lots and the proposed Minor Recombination Subdivision and Final Plat subject to the following conditions:

1. Show the signature of a Georgia Registered Land Surveyor and the owner of all properties on the Final Plat.

2. Revise the Final Plat to show the address of the proposed lot as follows:

Parcel A 1216 East DeRenne Avenue

Parcel B 1212 East DeRenne Avenue

3. Revise the Final Plat to show a 7.5-foot dedication for additional right-of-way on both lots along East 72nd Street and a 15-foot dedication for additional right-of-way on Parcel A along Ranger Street. This condition may be omitted upon a finding by the City Engineer that the additional right-of-way is not needed. However, because sidewalks will be required on East 72nd Street and Ranger Street, it is recommended that a minimum dedication for additional right-of-way sufficient to construct sidewalks on both streets be required.

4. If a dedication for additional right-of-way is required by the City Engineer, the following note shall be added to the Final Plat:

"The building permit applicant for both lots shall install a sidewalk along East 72nd Street and the building permit applicant for Parcel A shall install a sidewalk along Ranger Street in accordance with the minimum standards as required by the City Engineer prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy permit."

5. Revise the Final Plat to show the following:

- 15-foot building setback line on both lots along East 72nd Street
- 10-foot parking setback line on both lots along East 72nd Street
- 15-foot building setback line on Parcel A along Ranger Street
- 10-foot parking setback line on Parcel A along Ranger Street

The building setbacks may be reduced by the same distance as that of the dedication for additional right-of-way if applicable. Also, the required development setback along East DeRenne Avenue is 15 feet.

6.Revise the Final Plat to eliminate the existing curb cuts. Curb cuts for each lot will be approved in conjunction with the General and/or Specific Development Plan for both lots.

7.Approval by the Chatham County Health Department and the City review departments and the City Engineer.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Laureen Boles

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Nay

X. Presentations

XI. Other Business

Recess to Executive Session - motion required

XII. Executive Session

The Planning Commission may adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes that may include litigation, personnel, or any other matter allowed by the Georgia Open Meetings Act.

Motion to recess to Executive Session.

XIII. Adjournment

[20. Adjourn](#)

There being no further business to present before the Board, the May 18, 2021 Regular Metropolitan Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

MW/jh

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