



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Minutes

SPECIAL CALLED MPC Meeting July 25, 2023

This Agenda and supporting material will be available prior to the meeting date at <https://www.thempc.org/Board/Tpc>.

This is for information only. These items have been received by the deadline to be heard at this meeting. Items are subject to change.

All persons in attendance are requested to sign-in on the "Sign-In Sheet" located on the table outside the entrance of the meeting room. Persons wishing to speak on an agenda item should indicate their intent on a blue speaker card, noting the agenda item by number. Please give speaker cards to a MPC staff member.

It is the intent of the Planning Commission to allow all interested parties to comment on a particular item. To ensure that those present have the opportunity to comment, the Chairman shall reserve the right to set time limits on the debate as per the MPC Procedure Manual and By Laws. Both sides of the issue shall be afforded a total of at least ten [10] minutes but not more than thirty [30] minutes for testimony. Groups are encouraged to designate a spokesperson who should identify him/herself on the speaker card and when coming to the podium. Regardless, the Chairman has the discretion to limit or extend time limits.

The Georgia Conflict of Interest in Zoning Actions Statute (OCGA Title 36 Chapter 67A) requires disclosure of certain campaign contributions (totaling \$250.00 or more) made by applicants or opponents for rezoning actions. Failure to comply is a misdemeanor. More information is available on the internet at www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode/default.asp. Forms are available from MPC staff for individuals subject to this disclosure.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

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

[1. MAP AMENDMENT | The property identification numbers are: 20043 07001; -004; -005; -006; 013; -015; -018; -019 & -020 | Rezone from TC-2 to S-PD | 23-001408-ZA](#)

[📎 Combined Maps.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve request for item to be removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Tom Woiwode

Joseph Ervin

- Aye

Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present
Traci Amick	- Aye

VI. Items Requested to be Withdrawn

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

[2. Approval of the June 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 06-13-2023-meeting-minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

approval of the minutes

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Tom Woiwode

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present
Traci Amick	- Aye

VIII. Old Business

IX. Regular Business

[3. SPECIAL USE | 1220 Barnard Street | Request to allow accessory alcohol sales within a restaurant | 23-002961-ZA](#)

- 📎 [Application.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Combined Maps.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Streamliner layout.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Staff Decision - 23-003004-COA 1220 Barnard St.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Site Visit.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Staff Report.pdf](#)

Ms. Melissa Leto: stated the 1220 Barnard Street is requesting approval of a special use pursuant to Section 3.10 of the Savannah zoning ordinance to establish an accessory alcohol sales use within a restaurant. 1220 Barnard Street is a non-contributing resource. It is located within a residential and commercial area surrounded by houses and the SCAD Eckburg Hall at the intersection of Barnard and Henry Streets. A Certificate of Appropriateness was approved on June 26th, 2023 for two new single nonilluminated signs to be installed at the Streamliner Diner. The Streamliner was used as a diner known as Sandfly Barbecue but has since changed ownership. The Savannah College of Art and Design has renovated the interior and will be changing the signage to reflect their new restaurant, the name of Strange Bird.

The subject parcel is square in shape consisting of 0.29 acres or 12,632 square feet in lot area and contains approximately 105 feet of frontage along Barnard Street and approximately 120 feet along both West Duffy Street and West Henry Street. The property abuts residential housing. The property is also zoned TC 1. The petitioner intends to open a small restaurant within the Streamliner, serving smoked meats, tacos, burritos, and veggie sides, as well as beer and wine.

The restaurant will also have outdoor café seating with 12 seats. The petitioner is requesting a special use permit to allow for accessory alcohol sales within the restaurant use specifically beer and wine only. The properties surrounding the subject parcel are a mix of commercial and residential uses. They are leased to dedicate 10 parking spaces on site. They also have shared parking on this side through SCAD. There is a walk-in cooler, a smoker that's covered within the walls, and then there is an area that's enclosed for the dumpster as well.

The comprehensive plan future land use map designates the subject property as traditional commercial. The traditional commercial classification allows for business areas near downtown Savannah or an outlying historically settled area. This category includes commercial uses that should be compatible with the character and scale of adjacent neighborhoods. Characteristics include walkability, limited or on-street parking, and multi-tenant retail. Staff finds the proposed restaurant with accessory alcohol sales is compatible with the parcel's future land use designation. The city regulates operational hours for businesses selling alcohol from 7:00 AM until 3:00 AM.

The petitioner is proposing operational hours be the following, Monday through Thursday from 11:00 AM until 9:00 PM as well as providing 10 off-street parking spaces. The applicant is proposing two shifts with four to six employees per shift in the building at one time. The estimated total number of employees, including full-time and part-time would be 10.

The structure has enough interior square footage to accommodate a restaurant with accessory alcohol

sales use. The interior space is approximately 950 square feet in size. The petitioner is proposing 33 indoor seats, and the property has over 10 off-street parking spaces dedicated in their lease.

Based upon the compatibility with the comprehensive plan and the ability to meet the criteria for a special use permit. Staff recommends approval with conditions. One, that the special use permit shall be non-transferable. Two, accessory alcohol sales for beer and wine only, and the operational hours shall be from 11:00 AM until 9:00 PM.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: asked I just wanted to know where the 10 seating spaces are.

Ms. Melissa Leto: stated I assume would be facing Barnard Street.

Mr. Patrick Connell: stated This was the Streamliner Sandfly Barbecue, which previously had an alcohol license, so this isn't really a change in use. Staff recommended approval but I'm here to answer any questions.

[There was no public comment]

Motion

Approval with conditions:

1. The Special Use permit shall be nontransferable.
2. Accessory alcohol sales for beer and wine only.
3. Operational hours shall be from 11:00 till 9:00 p.m.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Tom Woiwode

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present
Traci Amick	- Aye

[4. Amendment to a General Development Plan 23-002714-PLAN | 703 Louisville Rd](#)

📎 [Site Plan.pdf](#)

📎 [703 Louisville Ord_2019.pdf](#)

📎 [703 Louisville FLUM Ord_2019.pdf](#)

📎 [HSF_PublicComment_703LouisvilleRd.pdf](#)

📎 [703 Louisville Staff Report.pdf](#)

Mr. Edward Morrow: stated the present request is for the purpose of revising a general development master plan that was previously approved for development at 703 Louisville Road. This is a property that was previously rezoned in March 2019, under a new legacy zoning district, the PRIPD. There were several conditions to zoning that were placed by the Savannah City Council at that time.

It was also rezoned in conjunction with a general development plan under a particular clause of the ordinance that required some additional assurance that the proposed development would be consistent with the area. Those conditions were a 20% green space requirement that the development complied with the city's current stormwater ordinance, and relocate the head house of the Freight Depot building that was constructed in 1929. These conditions remained on the site. In June 2020, the original petitioner at that time brought the case back for consideration by this board. At that time, they sought to amend the parking count and the unit mixture.

They eliminated three-bedroom units in order to concentrate on studios, one, and two-bedroom units. No changes were proposed to the building in terms of footprint, height, or any amendments to the conditions that were placed by the council. That brings us to the current petition. Savannah College of Art and Design has brought forth an amended general development site plan for the purpose of constructing 220 student housing units on the property. The site plan would develop something that is similar in heightened scale to the previously proposed development.

However, it would be in two buildings, a six-story building and a seven-story building with the two buildings containing a mixture of studio suites and two and four-bedroom units. Each building would also feature above-ground parking and a garage. The site for development is just outside the downtown historic overlay district. It is adjoining DX zoning all around on each side and several of the parcels are currently developed as SCAD student housing. Signs were posted on the subject property in order to notify the public that there was to be a meeting today and that under consideration would be the revised general development plan.

The applicant informed staff that they had met with several relevant community groups in order to notify them and get their input on the proposed development. It does anticipate a mixture of travel modes including bicycle, and motorcycle, and also connectivity with local transit options, which SCAD has very robust student transportation. The plan is going to place a 26-foot central drive in the middle of the site.

The pavement that traverses the rear of the two buildings would be for the purpose of hiding things like your garbage dumpster pad. It does run against the canal just like the previous development plan. The improved frontage on the site, however, would feature the stops for local transit options in order to prevent and shelter students from the high volume of traffic on Louisville Road coming into town. The site would be served by city water and sewer, and it is in compliance with the comprehensive land use plan, which was amended back in March 2019.

Staff found in its analysis that the site plan submitted is likely to be more compatible with the surrounding land uses than that previously approved, and for that reason, in addition to the fact that they have also agreed to comply with all of the requirements placed on the rezoning by Savannah City Council in 2019, staff recommends approval.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: Is the parking adequate for the facility?

Mr. Edward Morrow: The proposed parking does meet the requirements for the proposal itself.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: If I recall correctly, in the original plan there was a boardwalk that was open for a continuous greenway back and forth along the canal as part of the Canal District plan. Is that going to be available to the public or is it just going to be available for SCAD students?

Mr. Edward Morrow: I do not believe that any of these features are going to be open to the public.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: It's taken out of the tax base? The property will no longer be taxable for property tax, correct?

Ms. Pamela Everett: That is correct, Ms. Jarrett.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: There is no access for the public along the canal for walking?

Mr. Edward Morrow: That is not something that was discussed with staff.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: The bus access is on the street?

Mr. Edward Morrow: Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Lauren Boles: You mentioned that there were meetings with the community. What was the outcome?

Mr. Edward Morrow: I'm unsure of the specific outcome. Mr. Grant can speak to the nature of their conversations.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: I just want to clarify, this is a private development prior to that provided access to the canal and walking. Now it's going to be student housing tax exempt funded by the taxpayers, but no taxpayer access?

Mr. Edward Morrow: There are some differences between the previously proposed development and this.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: Is my statement accurate?

Mr. Edward Morrow: Yes, sir.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: The canal was actually intended to be a walkway for the public that would. You could actually get to the new Civic Center by walkway, and now that is no longer there. I just want to make sure.

Mr. Michael Roach: I'm a civil engineer with Thomas & Hutton. I have with me a team, Brad Grant from SCAD, Josh Yellen, and Patrick Philips from Hanson Architects. As indicated in the staff report, this project's been around for several years, seen several changes in the area, namely the progression of the Canal District, as well as the construction of the new arena. A big part of that Canal District initiative, there are improvements to the Springfield Canal, which you'll see on the revised plan. That's something that we've worked with the city to accommodate. We've also worked closely with staff to ensure all previous zoning conditions are being met or exceeded.

One of those being including moving materials in a northeasterly direction in order to close up the head house and preserve that. That was a bit definitely in all the progression of the project. We've also significantly increased the amount of green space as shown on previous plans. Another aspect of the plan we approved upon the previous versions are impact to traffic.

They're going to provide parking for the 20% of students that they know are going to bring their cars, and for the remainder of students, they're going to provide the beeline. We agree with staff that the proposed development is more compatible with the surrounding area.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: There are planned improvements to the canal. Is that part of what you're going to be doing is making some improvements to the canal, at least a part of your project?

Mr. Michael Roach: Those canal improvements are part of the city's plan for improving drainage for the entire basin.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: You're not really participating in the canal improvements?

Mr. Michael Roach: We are working with the city together on that.

Ms. Lauren Boles: The question I raised earlier was what was the outcome of the meetings that you

had?

Mr. Brad Grant: I'm SCAD's Senior Vice President for development. We've reached out to the Coastal Heritage Society to various aldermen and alderwomen in addition to the Historic Savannah Foundation and the Ogeechee Savannah Canal Society. I'm not aware of any issues that anybody that I met with expressed to me that we did not resolve.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I'm just trying to get an understanding of where they were generally supportive.

Mr. Brad Grant: Absolutely, to my knowledge, everyone that we met with was supportive of our plan. We're looking to revive this section of town and invest quite a bit of money. One of the things that I would note is that we expect to invest over \$3 million in environmental remediation on the land, which will have health benefits to everyone in the surrounding area, including the nearby Brickyard communities in Brownsville, and everyone even downstream of the canal. We're proud of this development. We know that it's going to be the best thing for the community, and we look forward to continuing.

Ms. Lauren Boles: How many students will be living on the site?

Mr. Brad Grant: The facility will accommodate up to 800 students.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: How many residential units does your petition?

Mr. Brad Grant: 220.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: That's four residents unit?

Mr. Brad Grant: There's a mixture, some of them are studios, some of them are three bedrooms and there's a four-bedroom mix. The standard suite that we have is two bedrooms, and then two students in each bedroom. That configuration would be four students at a maximum.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: In the presentation that staff gave, or perhaps it was the engineer, 20% of students would have cars. How are you certain about that number?

Mr. Brad Grant: What we do is we look at all of our properties, and we look at the number of parking stickers that we issue to students. What we find is that in a community of this type, there's about a 20% utilization of parking stickers.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: I think that the concern would be students that don't have a SCAD's parking sticker, but still have a car.

Mr. Brad Grant: For this, they would park on-site, so that number works. In addition to that you know we also have the Hive, and then we have a surplus of parking at the Hive both functionally and by ordinance.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Can you describe what the development agreement is.

Mr. Brad Grant: Certainly. There's a development agreement that exists between the previous developer in the city that outlines how this property will be developed. Certain conditions that were put on the previous developer were put into this development agreement. As it existed previously, the developer was to contribute about a million and a half dollars towards the city's work that would be completed around the canal. To partially fund those improvements that were happening. Then, of course, SCAD expects to work with the city in the same regard and contribute to those improvements as well.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: In fact, a development agreement would have to be executed.

Mr. Brad Grant: A development agreement will have to be executed. That's correct.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Can you describe any plans for connectivity along the canal?

Mr. Brad Grant: The connectivity would be the sidewalk in front of the property to the north of this property.

Mr. Edward Morrow: I was thinking about the connectivity question as well. I know the city has plans and as part of the overall canal district revitalization is to improve the viaduct that goes over the boundary. Where that viaduct comes across really comes down and would lend a more centralized exit or for pedestrians coming and hitting that part of Louisville Road. Obviously, with the number of students that SCAD has proposed for this area, pedestrian connectivity is very important to them, as much important to them as it is to the community.

Making sure that that connectivity does exist will be part of the plan. We've had some discussions with the city about it. Obviously, safety and security of the facility and students is also going to have to be part of that coordination. I think just where the viaduct comes across, providing that pedestrian connectivity point to the canal district really hits more about the middle of the property. Which then lends the connectivity ties in well with running around to the sidewalk. Then the development.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: Are you saying that the public will have access to it or not?

Mr. Brad Grant: On the canal side, no, sir. That would be a secure entry for our students.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: We were assured that the public would have access there. That was part of it. The second thing I'll ask you about, and I heard your concern about pedestrian safety.

I'm equally concerned about the citizenry's safety. A lot of cars travel up and down that roadway, and that's a very narrow passage at the boundary street. What are we doing? How are we ensuring that increased traffic is not going to impact adversely on the citizens that use that roadway regularly?

Mr. Brad Grant: We understand that the city plans a roundabout in that area. We've seen plans and we've discussed it with the city. That would be the city's development. That would be the city's re-engineering event that interchange. Just as far as this development is concerned, based on the mass transit, the transportation network that SCAD does have in place. A, you're going to see fewer cars on the road as a result of this development.

I think B, what this development can do to help pedestrian safety and connectivity is, we are proposing on-street parking on Louisville as well as a bus pull-off, which is going to pull that sidewalk and that connectivity off the road and the travel and provide some buffer. I think this development does improve that, pedestrian connectivity and safety along Louisville Road.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: With respect to traffic, are you saying the roundabout is going to prevent or slow down traffic from being in that area or curtail it?

Mr. Brad Grant: As far as just focusing on what SCAD currently has proposed with this development plan is actually going to put fewer cars on the road than what the previous development included.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: Your cars from SCAD, but not from the citizens that travel that area.

That will stand in the SCAD students. I'm concerned about what are we going to do with the roadway there because the previous time we voted on this, the discussion was about how we're going to do curb cuts, et cetera to make sure that, I think it was the road was widened if I'm not mistaken. Is that part of this plan as well?

Mr. Brad Grant: Yes. It is. All the same, Louisville Road improvements, and the curb cuts in the same location should remain unchanged.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: I think Ms. Jarrett is far more involved with that aspect than I am, but I do recall that being a part of what we talked about. That will be a part of this?

Mr. Brad Grant: Yes, absolutely. We haven't changed any of that, all of that as it was.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: You met with an awful lot of group leaders. Did you meet with the public at all to discuss this project?

Mr. Brad Grant: We haven't had a public meeting, no, ma'am.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I see that our notes say that because of the college use and local transit options, et cetera, you're entitled to a 50% parking reduction, but you're asking for an 80% parking reduction. Is that correct?

Mr. Brad Grant: No.

Mr. Josh Yellin: They are not asking for an 80% parking reduction. The parking space is provided on-site or in accordance with the 50% that's permitted. The 80% reduction was SCAD talking about the practical considerations and the actual on the ground operations of the site that they see at their other properties, where typically students being only 20% of students try and park their cars.

The prior GDP that was approved by city council, what we're talking about on the side of the canal by way of access and walkways was on the city side of the property. The private developer side of the property was an emergency access easement for fire and for service. Any of the canal beautification and walkways was going to be on the city side of that. The proposal today is not eliminating any sort of public benefit walkway along the canal.

The prior GDP during this hearing, the easement that was going to run the length of the canal on WEDP's property was for service, storm water maintenance, and fire suppression. It was not an easement to the public for use as a walkway.

Ms. Laureen Boles: In my understanding from the canal district plan there should also be a meeting with the neighborhood advisory council, Correct?

Mr. Josh Yellin: No, ma'am, I'm not aware of any such requirement.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: The buses have created quite a congestion problem.

Mr. Josh Yellin: Ma'am, I would be happy to reach out to you and work through any issues that you're having with that.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I'm not concerned so much about that, as I am about this new facility, and the fact that we're likely to have issues there. Is there anything that is controlling these buses so that you don't have four or five or six buses trying to pull into the same four or five-bus space?

Mr. Michael Roach: They're on a time schedule, and that's tracks throughout the day.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: My hope would, there would not be an opportunity for them to stack.

Mr. Michael Roach: Yes, ma'am.

Mr. Brad Grant: I think also just in addition to that, we are providing pull-offs off Louisville Road to allow.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I understand, and there are pull-offs on Barnard as well. Thank you.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: If it's not a lot of driving, there's likely to be a lot of bicycles and a lot of foot traffic. That's a major concern for me because there are quite a few blind spots at that intersection. Are there ways to essentially relieve that intersection of some of the foot traffic as well?

Mr. Michael Roach: The city has been considering improvements to the Boundary Street and Louisville Road intersection. Those improvements include things such as basically including a traffic circle, that type of traffic circle shall provide more refuge areas for pedestrians. In addition, it also is going to provide for more laminar flow of traffic through that so you don't have as many backups and concentration of traffic in certain parts of the day. It allows it to flow a little more smoothly.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: With those improvements, I'm just wondering if there would be any type of collaboration with the city to try to run those things concurrently.

Speaker 6: We're working with the city as it relates to the time schedule for our development.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Thank you.

Mr. Jay Melder: You will see that improvement no matter who the developer of the property is because of the ordinance.

Ms. Karen Jarret: Very quickly. As part of the Complete Streets, is bike lanes included? Are bike lanes included?

Mr. Michel Roach: Yes. As far as the Complete Streets, bike lanes are considered as part of that. I'm not sure whether we'll be building it or not, but we believe that's part of the plan.

Mr. Jay Melder: The developer wouldn't have to build a bike lane on Louisville Road. Bike lanes would be in the purview of the city.

Ms. Elizabeth Epstein: I have a question about the on-street parallel parking. Is that included in your parking space count?

Mr. Michael Roach: The on-street parking is not included in that count. Those are public spaces not included in the count.

Ms. Elizabeth Epstein: How do you envision those working with bus traffic and drop-off?

Mr. Michael Roach: I think the plan that is up is maybe an older version. Right now there are two sets of parallel parking spaces on there. The one set of parallel parking spaces that's closer to the bridge, the canal, those would be used for the bus drop-off as opposed to pedestrians.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: The Port Authority and those huge trucks that's on that roadway. I don't know exactly the parameters of the widening of the road, but I am concerned about the safety for all citizens, including SCAD students.

Mr. Josh Yellin: Every aspect of this project we view as an improvement to the area from the currently approved plans. WEDP fund has plans that are approved. If a developer wanted to go out right now by right and act upon those plans, they could go ahead and put in that 300-unit multi-family apartment is going to have impacts on traffic. We believe that the proposal today has the least amount of traffic impact possible to provide housing for residents in the community. It actually improves the conditions from those that exist today.

Mr. Joseph Ervin: While I concede that this is a project and someone else could put it there, my concerns for safety still remains as well as, as I'm hearing from my fellow members of the board, the inability of those people to be able to traverse that area. I don't know whether or not SCAD can remove the fencing or whatever to allow for persons to walk along the canal. We as a board, were quite happy to see that connectivity for citizens as opposed to walking down Louisville Road, because part of the purpose, as I understood the Canal District, was to create that connectivity between downtown. That was part of what we wanted to see. I'll close out with that.

[Public Comment]

Mr. Anthony Maxwell, with Yamacraw Restoration Project, expressed concern about not receiving input about the public meeting and not having an opportunity to express his concerns to the developer.

Mr. Ryan Jarles, Director of Preservation with HSF expressed his support for the project.

Ms. Portia Erwin, expressed her concern about traffic, and how this is solely for SCAD students and not the community, with SCAD being tax-exempt how does that help the revenue of the city and community?

Ms. Ellie Issac, stated that just because something is labeled as an improvement doesn't mean it is one. She had concerns about the roundabout and the diversion of the canal.

Dr Laurie Benton, with First Bryan Baptist Church expressed concerns about the petitioner not following proper procedures given that the Ogeechee Canal is on the federal rights law.

Ms. Gloria Williams, President of the Cuyler-Brownsville Association stated there was no notification of a

public meeting.

[End of Public Comment]

Mr. Josh Yellen: I know that there was a lot to deal with from the roundabout, which is a city project, to the height of our building, which is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, to federal government requirements, which don't, in fact, apply to this development. We are asking for an amendment to a general development plan. We have not gone through the site plan review process. This is the first step of the process. It's an amendment to the GDP. As it relates to the historic review. We just felt like it was important to respond to that because they do not apply to this site.

Mr. Wayne Noah: Looking on the city website, the Savannah Canal District Master Plan dated August 15th of 2020, it shows what appears to be a public walkway along the canal. I just don't know where that got lost over the last couple of years.

Mr. Jay Melder: I'm not looking at the map. I wasn't here in 2020. According to my review of the project, the public access is along the south border of the canal, which is the city-owned right of way. It's just not a part of this project. I do want to be fair to this petitioner or to any other.

Mr. Jeff Notrica: This project is almost equidistance between downtown and the arena. I don't know if any of you have ever walked from MLK to the arena. We need to be able to have people walking and riding their bikes from downtown all the way to the arena.

Ms. Laureen Boles: We are more concerned about the impact on the residents than we are on those who are visiting. Those who are here are only coming for a concert. We're concerned about people who travel Louisville Road every day to get to and from work. That's an important part of what we're discussing here today.

Mr. Jay Melder: Just to clarify, this property was never owned by the city, at least not very recently at all. I think the picture on our screen is from the Gateway Project that did not move forward. The public access portion or the connectivity that would move north to Louisville Road and along the south side of the canal and back down towards the canal district and to western communities south and west lies along what here would be the south bank of the canal.

Motion

Approval of staffs recommendation.

Vote Results (Rejected)

Motion: Jay Melder

Second: Jeff Notrica

Joseph Ervin	- Nay
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Nay
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Nay
Elizabeth Epstein	- Nay
Jay Melder	- Aye

Michael Kaigler	- Not Present
Traci Amick	- Nay

5. Text Amendment | Zoning Ordinance - Article 7, Section 13, 1-6, Hotel Development Overlay District

🔗 [Savannah Historic District Hotel Development Overlay District.png](#)

🔗 [ZONING MAP 23-002729.pdf](#)

🔗 [23-002729 HDO Expansion Boundary Map.pdf](#)

🔗 [23-002724-ZA Staff Report.pdf](#)

🔗 [HDO Survey.pdf](#)

🔗 [MPC Joint letter.pdf](#)

Mr. Edward Morrow: The present request is a to amend Article 7, Section 7.13 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance, which is the Hotel Development Overlay District. The petitioner here is requesting to extend the application of this zoning district to cover the Victorian Historic Overlay District and the Streetcar Historic Overlay District.

In the first petition ending in 2724-ZA, the text that has been provided goes through each of the sections of 7.13 and it adds language that includes both the Victorian Historic District and the Streetcar Historic District, first into the purpose, second into clarifying its relationship to the zoning district which is to add this additional requirement. It goes on to add the specific district boundaries, the boundaries of particular streets, and then finally to make reference to the contributing resources map to ensure that all of the particular buildings within those districts are included.

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Ms. Karen Jarrett: Thank you.

Mr. Jason Combs: Let me say real quick that it's my name on petition, but this was a group project and so I'm going to be letting Ryan Madson speak first.

Mr. Ryan Madson: I'd like to begin by stating that we, the petitioners, are not anti-hotel. We are pro-mixed use and pro-housing. We're not anti-tourist. We are pro-resident and pro-small business. We believe this extension of the hotel overlay is a crucial and timely policy action to prevent unwanted developments that would negatively and irreversibly impact the quality of life that we currently enjoy in our neighborhoods. Eliminating hotels as a use would also have a positive impact and keeping property within an affordable range while encouraging infill on large vacant properties, such as those that we saw in the TC-1 and TC-2 districts.

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Tourists and visitors can easily visit using free DOT transportation, or else take a stroll down Bull Street or any of our north-south streets. Moreover, there are numerous guided tours on foot, on trolley, on bicycle, which bring visitors into our area on a daily basis. Hotels do not exist in a real estate vacuum, of course. They're like apex predators of property and land use. The presence of a hotel has knock-on effects with surrounding properties.

For example, in response to anticipated tourist spending, commercial rents in the area will gradually rise.

Locally owned mom-and-pop businesses can no longer afford the rents and tourist-oriented businesses and corporate chains like Starbucks and Wet Willie's will take their place. Beyond local businesses that cater to locals, as well as tourists, will eventually disappear. Residents who could shop, dine and construct their business locally are pushed further and further from their neighborhoods to do the same.

If a hotel developer believes that they can offer a hospitality product which would benefit the community, there is a fair and public process for rezoning to get a hotel approved with buy-in from residents and existing business owners. Therefore, the power to approve or deny a hotel would lie with citizens, not with hotel developers and lobbyists who otherwise have little or no vested interest in the neighborhood.

The hotel overlay does not expressly forbid hotels in perpetuity. It would merely subject any proposal for a new hotel to rigorous and necessary public scrutiny. Because of the potential for hotels to irreversibly disrupt patterns of life and commerce, we as neighborhood leaders strongly favored this more structured and protective approach to permitting hotels. Alternately promoting residential infill on large parcels will increase the number of residents who live in our neighborhoods, who take care of the place, and who patronize our local businesses.

Housing as opposed to hotels will positively impact the vibrancy and sustainability of our neighborhoods in the City of Savannah as a whole. We urge the commissioners today to disregard MPC staff recommendations and vote on the side of residents and small business owners.

Each Saturday for the last month, Forsyth Farmers' Market, we've met with hundreds of residents and provided information about the hotel overlay. We're not going to reach out to 1,100 property owners and have private meetings. That's not our responsibility. We had meetings open to the public and invited everyone to come to our neighborhood meetings.

In short, residents and small business owners overwhelmingly support this petition to extend the hotel overlay into our neighborhoods. Mr. Jason Combs of Thomas Square would like to share some additional comments.

Mr. Jason Combs: I'm going to give you five reasons to vote on it today, for or against, rather than continuing the issue. I'll start with the MPC report. First, the staff report says that street classifications were not taken into account. This is correct. Street classifications are only taken into account in the existing HDO where hotels are allowed. You'll notice no streets are highlighted in the pink area unless it abuts yellow or green. Since we are only asking for pink area, we have no need to consider street conditions.

Two, the staff report also recommends that the HDO should be amended to consider ends. The simple answer to this is no. This is an unnecessary complication of the issue. If necessary we can address inns later in a separate proposal. The HDO is the hotel development overlay for a reason. It targets hotel development and nothing else.

Number three, we have the opposition letter from the Savannah Chamber, the Downtown Business Association, the Economic Development Authority, and the Tourism Leadership Council. From now on, I'll just call them the hotel boosters. This letter makes the argument that this extension of the Hotel Development Overlay that we are asking for, that it should be treated just like the original creation of the HDO itself, this is very different.

In 2017, they were creating the HDO from scratch for a very complex area of Savannah that already contained over 50 hotels. The creation of the original HDO was like tailoring a three-piece suit. The green area is the jacket, the yellow is the waistcoat, and the pink is the trousers. We do not want to tailor a whole new suit. We just want to lengthen the trousers down to Victory Drive.

Number four, I'd also like to point out that the Victorian and Thomas Square districts actually were included in the original hotel study that led to the Hotel Development Overlay. Though they ended up being left out of it, contrary to staff recommendation at the time. Small hotels were also at that time capped at 54 rooms and that was later raised to 74 rooms.

A few weeks ago, I invited former Alderman, Bill Durrence to come to the July 11th hearing before it was canceled due to lack of quorum. He declined, but he wrote me back a fairly long email detailing his part in

crafting the Hotel Development Overlay in 2017. I'll read you a bit of it and I quote, "I was involved in the hotel overlay work, and as I remember it, Harold Yellen, Michael Owens, and I were the ones who hashed out the final language and boundaries."

"It was a two-parter, defining small hotels, 16 to 75 rooms, and large hotels, 75-plus rooms, and then defining the boundaries where each would be allowed. At that final stage, the three of us were trying to get something done right then for the most important area, the Landmark District. I don't remember if any of the Victorian is included in the current overlay, but if we had any discussion about Thomas Square, it would have just been to acknowledge that the issue would eventually have to be addressed there."

I just want to point out that it was a small working group of three men that really created the downtown Hotel Development Overlay. That's it. A complex process of collaboration and inclusion as described in this letter, that is a farce.

This letter is really just a well-worded temper tantrum from the hotel boosters upset they we're not invited to participate in our process. We want no hotels, so we need no hotel boosters involved in our process. We are like a homeowner trying to secure their home against intruders.

Number five. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you should vote on this proposal today because continuation will have no practical purpose.

We are representing our residents in three of the most densely populated residential neighborhoods of Savannah and our small business owners of these three neighborhoods, we initiated this process and the proposal before you is exactly a proposal we want to see considered and voted on.

I have two extra notes because of comments earlier. First of all, it was called on to continue this for extra notification of absentee landlords. We met the proper legal notification that we're considering absentee landlords. I don't think that's fair. They were given proper notification. If they wanted to be here or submit a letter, they could do so. I've seen plenty of people at public meetings told they missed their chance and they were notified and things moved on. Saying this should be no different for these owners of these properties.

Mr. Morrow was asked if this was studied there's a planning process and again, I think there was because our neighborhoods were considered in 2017 though they were left out. It was considered, you can go back and look at that staff recommendation that actually wanted our neighborhoods included in the hotel development overlay. In a way, we are correcting, not an error, but an omission. Thank you.

[Public Comment]

Mr. Hundsrucker, Forsyth Park Community Alliance, Supports passing the Petition.

Mr. Ryan Jarles, Director of Preservation with Historic Savannah Foundation, would like the petition to be continued.

Ms. Ellie Isaacs, Is in support of the petition passing.

Dr. Amir Jamal Touré, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Gary Guthrie, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Barry Atwood, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Jennifer Sheer, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Gloria Williams, president of Cuyler-Brownsville Neighborhood Association, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Nancy Maya, president of the VNA, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Earline Davis, executive director of the Housing Authority of Savannah, is in support of continuing the petition

Ms. Patricia Jenkins Spadey, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Portia Arwin, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Jennifer Davenport, Vice President of Community Affairs for the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, is in support of continuing the petition

Mr. Benton, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Anthony Maxwell, Yamacraw Restoration Project, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Jason Combs: Real quick, I just like to say that perhaps there's more future in citizen-initiated measures like this.

Mr. Ryan Madson: Just to clarify, we have been in many conversations with Cuyler-Brownsville. Just through the timing of their own survey and petition, we are petitioning separately, but the goal would be going forward to city council that we all petition as one and we share some of the same issues and concerns with Cuyler-Brownsville, and our neighborhood association leadership has been in close contact throughout this.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Thank you. All right, so that closes the floor. We'll enter the board discussion. What's that motion here? Is there a motion on the floor, I should say?

Mr. Jay Melder: I think it's really important to recognize that our neighborhood associations who represent our neighborhoods and our residents who live in the city are here petitioning their governments and the portions of their governments to make some important changes that they feel are warranted. I think that the fact that there are there here today are really important. The fact that we've heard from others who want to similarly understand and get involved and understand what the best approaches are to protecting neighborhoods and the value of the neighborhoods that they have currently is really important. I think from my position as city manager, when this petition gets to city council, it will be as a three-neighborhood petition, if not more.

Matters that deal with private property, are complicated issues, and have to have all the stakeholders around the table to be able to effectively put forward a policy and a proposal to be considered by city council and to be effectuated by staff. I tend to support the MPC staff recommendation to continue this item so that more coordination can be done to expand this overlay district.

I'll say from my position as city manager that I'll be doing that too before it gets to city council. I just want to be upfront with that, that we do need to be able to make sure that we have a process that's inclusive, even if that process is inclusive of industries and entities that we want to in some ways restrict or contain. I just want to be upfront with my comments there, but I am supportive of expanding the hotel district overlay and finding the places where certain developments should be protected and identifying places where we want to be able to steer and shape development.

We're seeing a lot of activity with land use in the city. This is because there's a tremendous amount of development pressure and a tremendous amount of growth. We have an opportunity as a community to shape the development that we want to see, shape the development that's going to support our economic opportunity and shape the development that's going to support our quality of life.

More intentionality around our planning. The more information that we can give property owners or potential people who want to be investing in the city, and investing in that development to shape them towards the things that we want to see is going to be more beneficial for everybody in the room. I will be supporting more coordination around this effort, but I'll also be supporting an eventual expansion of the overlay as well.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: Thank you, Mr. Melder. The motion to approve staff's recommendation, I will say that on the basis of while I am in complete support of the overlay, because of the amount of disinformation and misinformation that has been given to the community. I believe it is an opportunity for us to educate our community as to what we're doing. That way they will know exactly how this affects their land and how this affects their land values.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Any discussion on the motion? Ms. Jarrett?

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I'm not sure if it's discussion on the motion per se. Part of this whole thing is the concern about hotels coming in. I was just wondering whether there was a possibility of a moratorium for a short period of time in the area that's being designated as the new overlay area to give time for the meeting.

Mr. Jay Melder: Is that a question for me?

Ms. Karen Jarrett: Yes.

Mr. Jay Melder: The state would not like moratoriums from a private property matter point of view. I think that would be up to city council. In my review of that, because I did explore that question, was that there were no current properties within either three of the neighborhoods that could develop a hotel by right now currently. There would have to be some specific process that comes through MPC and the council for any type of development like that to happen in these three neighborhoods. In some ways, a stay on that type of development would be redundant. However, I think there is some need to move with urgency around making sure that we have the right kind of plans in place.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I agree.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: I'm very appreciative and applaud the turnout and the grassroots efforts to be proactive, and I'm fully in support of an overlay, but in the vein of due process I do support the continuance primarily for the fact that there is a ton of misinformation that needs to be dispelled.

Ms. Lauren Boles: I agree that there should be an extension of the Overlay District. I also support a continuous vote for different reasons. Yes, because of the misinformation, but in addition to that, we need to address what the impact might be on existing residents in terms of their insurance, as well as the impact on affordable housing and our mandate to improve affordable housing in the City of Savannah.

Motion

Approval of continuance of the request to amend Section 7.13, Hotel Development Overlay District, to allow additional public notice and review.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Tom Woiwode

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Nay
Shedrick Coleman	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Nay
Jeff Notrica	- Nay
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present

[6. Map Amendment | Zoning Ordinance - Article 7, Section 13, Hotel Development Overlay District](#)

- 📎 [ZONING MAP 23-002729.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Savannah Historic District Hotel Development Overlay District.png](#)
- 📎 [23-002729 HDO Expansion Boundary Map.pdf](#)
- 📎 [23-002729-ZA Staff Report.pdf](#)
- 📎 [HDO Survey.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Opposition to Hotel Overlay proposal..pdf](#)
- 📎 [Letters of Support Hotel Overlay.pdf](#)
- 📎 [HDO.Forsyth.Sig.Sheets.pdf](#)
- 📎 [FW_ Hotel development overlay opposition.pdf](#)

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The city had an opportunity 10 years ago to rezone large parcels in the downtown historic district to favor mixed-use infill and multifamily housing. Instead, we built hotels on those parcels. We allowed hotels on almost all of those large parcels. Today, we have reached a tipping point of over-tourism, alongside a housing affordability crisis. Let us not repeat the same mistakes in our neighborhoods further south.

Unlike housing which brings new residents, hotels attract a steady stream of temporary visitors who do not feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for taking care of the neighborhood. Visitors are always welcome to explore our streetscapes and parks to admire our historic buildings and to shop in local businesses. However, visitors do not need lodgings in the neighborhood to enjoy these experiences.

Tourists and visitors can easily visit using free DOT transportation, or else take a stroll down Bull Street or any of our north-south streets. Moreover, there are numerous guided tours on foot, on trolley, on bicycle, which bring visitors into our area on a daily basis. Hotels do not exist in a real estate vacuum, of course. They're like apex predators of property and land use. The presence of a hotel has knock-on effects with surrounding properties.

For example, in response to anticipated tourist spending, commercial rents in the area will gradually rise. Locally owned mom-and-pop businesses can no longer afford the rents and tourist-oriented businesses and corporate chains like Starbucks and Wet Willie's will take their place. Beyond local businesses that cater to locals, as well as tourists, will eventually disappear. Residents who could shop, dine and construct their business locally are pushed further and further from their neighborhoods to do the same.

If a hotel developer believes that they can offer a hospitality product which would benefit the community, there is a fair and public process for rezoning to get a hotel approved with buy-in from residents and existing business owners. Therefore, the power to approve or deny a hotel would lie with citizens, not with hotel developers and lobbyists who otherwise have little or no vested interest in the neighborhood.

The hotel overlay does not expressly forbid hotels in perpetuity. It would merely subject any proposal for a new hotel to rigorous and necessary public scrutiny. Because of the potential for hotels to irreversibly disrupt patterns of life and commerce, we as neighborhood leaders strongly favored this more structured and protective approach to permitting hotels. Alternately promoting residential infill on large parcels will increase the number of residents who live in our neighborhoods, who take care of the place, and who patronize our local businesses.

Housing as opposed to hotels will positively impact the vibrancy and sustainability of our neighborhoods in the City of Savannah as a whole. We urge the commissioners today to disregard MPC staff recommendations and vote on the side of residents and small business owners.

Each Saturday for the last month, Forsyth Farmers' Market, we've met with hundreds of residents and provided information about the hotel overlay. We're not going to reach out to 1,100 property owners and have private meetings. That's not our responsibility. We had meetings open to the public and invited everyone to come to our neighborhood meetings.

In short, residents and small business owners overwhelmingly support this petition to extend the hotel overlay into our neighborhoods. Mr. Jason Combs of Thomas Square would like to share some additional comments.

Mr. Jason Combs: I'm going to give you five reasons to vote on it today, for or against, rather than continuing the issue. I'll start with the MPC report. First, the staff report says that street classifications were not taken into account. This is correct. Street classifications are only taken into account in the existing HDO where hotels are allowed. You'll notice no streets are highlighted in the pink area unless it abuts yellow or green. Since we are only asking for pink area, we have no need to consider street conditions.

Two, the staff report also recommends that the HDO should be amended to consider ends. The simple answer to this is no. This is an unnecessary complication of the issue. If necessary we can address inns later in a separate proposal. The HDO is the hotel development overlay for a reason. It targets hotel development and nothing else.

Number three, we have the opposition letter from the Savannah Chamber, the Downtown Business Association, the Economic Development Authority, and the Tourism Leadership Council. From now on, I'll just call them the hotel boosters. This letter makes the argument that this extension of the Hotel Development Overlay that we are asking for, that it should be treated just like the original creation of the HDO itself, this is very different.

In 2017, they were creating the HDO from scratch for a very complex area of Savannah that already contained over 50 hotels. The creation of the original HDO was like tailoring a three-piece suit. The green area is the jacket, the yellow is the waistcoat, and the pink is the trousers. We do not want to tailor a whole new suit. We just want to lengthen the trousers down to Victory Drive.

Number four, I'd also like to point out that the Victorian and Thomas Square districts actually were included in the original hotel study that led to the Hotel Development Overlay. Though they ended up being left out of it, contrary to staff recommendation at the time. Small hotels were also at that time capped at 54 rooms and that was later raised to 74 rooms.

A few weeks ago, I invited former Alderman, Bill Durrence to come to the July 11th hearing before it was canceled due to lack of quorum. He declined, but he wrote me back a fairly long email detailing his part in crafting the Hotel Development Overlay in 2017. I'll read you a bit of it and I quote, "I was involved in the hotel overlay work, and as I remember it, Harold Yellen, Michael Owens, and I were the ones who hashed out the final language and boundaries."

"It was a two-parter, defining small hotels, 16 to 75 rooms, and large hotels, 75-plus rooms, and then defining the boundaries where each would be allowed. At that final stage, the three of us were trying to get something done right then for the most important area, the Landmark District. I don't remember if any of the Victorian is included in the current overlay, but if we had any discussion about Thomas Square, it would have just been to acknowledge that the issue would eventually have to be addressed there."

I just want to point out that it was a small working group of three men that really created the downtown Hotel Development Overlay. That's it. A complex process of collaboration and inclusion as described in this letter, that is a farce.

This letter is really just a well-worded temper tantrum from the hotel boosters upset they we're not invited to

participate in our process. We want no hotels, so we need no hotel boosters involved in our process. We are like a homeowner trying to secure their home against intruders.

Number five. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you should vote on this proposal today because continuation will have no practical purpose.

We are representing our residents in three of the most densely populated residential neighborhoods of Savannah and our small business owners of these three neighborhoods, we initiated this process and the proposal before you is exactly a proposal we want to see considered and voted on.

I have two extra notes because of comments earlier. First of all, it was called on to continue this for extra notification of absentee landlords. We met the proper legal notification that we're considering absentee landlords. I don't think that's fair. They were given proper notification. If they wanted to be here or submit a letter, they could do so. I've seen plenty of people at public meetings told they missed their chance and they were notified and things moved on. Saying this should be no different for these owners of these properties.

Mr. Morrow was asked if this was studied there's a planning process and again, I think there was because our neighborhoods were considered in 2017 though they were left out. It was considered, you can go back and look at that staff recommendation that actually wanted our neighborhoods included in the hotel development overlay. In a way, we are correcting, not an error, but an omission. Thank you.

[Public Comment]

Mr. Hundsrucker, Forsyth Park Community Alliance, Supports passing the Petition.

Mr. Ryan Jarles, Director of Preservation with Historic Savannah Foundation, would like the petition to be continued.

Ms. Ellie Isaacs, Is in support of the petition passing.

Dr. Amir Jamal Touré, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Gary Guthrie, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Barry Atwood, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Jennifer Sheer, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Gloria Williams, president of Cuyler-Brownsville Neighborhood Association, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Nancy Maya, president of the VNA, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Earline Davis, executive director of the Housing Authority of Savannah, is in support of continuing the petition

Ms. Patricia Jenkins Spadey, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Portia Arwin, Is in support of the petition passing.

Ms. Jennifer Davenport, Vice President of Community Affairs for the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, is in support of continuing the petition

Mr. Benton, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Anthony Maxwell, Yamacraw Restoration Project, Is in support of the petition passing.

Mr. Jason Combs: Real quick, I just like to say that perhaps there's more future in citizen-initiated measures like this.

Mr. Ryan Madson: Just to clarify, we have been in many conversations with Cuyler-Brownsville. Just through the timing of their own survey and petition, we are petitioning separately, but the goal would be going forward to city council that we all petition as one and we share some of the same issues and concerns with Cuyler-Brownsville, and our neighborhood association leadership has been in close contact throughout this.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Thank you. All right, so that closes the floor. We'll enter the board discussion. What's that motion here? Is there a motion on the floor, I should say?

Mr. Jay Melder: I think it's really important to recognize that our neighborhood associations who represent our neighborhoods and our residents who live in the city are here petitioning their governments and the portions of their governments to make some important changes that they feel are warranted. I think that the fact that there are there here today are really important. The fact that we've heard from others who want to similarly understand and get involved and understand what the best approaches are to protecting neighborhoods and the value of the neighborhoods that they have currently is really important. I think from my position as city manager, when this petition gets to city council, it will be as a three-neighborhood petition, if not more.

Matters that deal with private property, are complicated issues, and have to have all the stakeholders around the table to be able to effectively put forward a policy and a proposal to be considered by city council and to be effectuated by staff. I tend to support the MPC staff recommendation to continue this item so that more coordination can be done to expand this overlay district.

I'll say from my position as city manager that I'll be doing that too before it gets to city council. I just want to be upfront with that, that we do need to be able to make sure that we have a process that's inclusive, even if that process is inclusive of industries and entities that we want to in some ways restrict or contain. I just want to be upfront with my comments there, but I am supportive of expanding the hotel district overlay and finding the places where certain developments should be protected and identifying places where we want to be able to steer and shape development.

We're seeing a lot of activity with land use in the city. This is because there's a tremendous amount of development pressure and a tremendous amount of growth. We have an opportunity as a community to shape the development that we want to see, shape the development that's going to support our economic opportunity and shape the development that's going to support our quality of life.

More intentionality around our planning. The more information that we can give property owners or potential people who want to be investing in the city, and investing in that development to shape them towards the things that we want to see is going to be more beneficial for everybody in the room. I will be supporting more coordination around this effort, but I'll also be supporting an eventual expansion of the overlay as well.

Mr. Tom Woiwode: Thank you, Mr. Melder. The motion to approve staff's recommendation, I will say that on the basis of while I am in complete support of the overlay, because of the amount of disinformation and misinformation that has been given to the community. I believe it is an opportunity for us to educate our community as to what we're doing. That way they will know exactly how this affects their land and how this affects their land values.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: Any discussion on the motion? Ms. Jarrett?

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I'm not sure if it's discussion on the motion per se. Part of this whole thing is the concern about hotels coming in. I was just wondering whether there was a possibility of a moratorium for a short period of time in the area that's being designated as the new overlay area to give time for the meeting.

Mr. Jay Melder: Is that a question for me?

Ms. Karen Jarrett: Yes.

Mr. Jay Melder: The state would not like moratoriums from a private property matter point of view. I think that would be up to city council. In my review of that, because I did explore that question, was that there were no current properties within either three of the neighborhoods that could develop a hotel by right now currently. There would have to be some specific process that comes through MPC and the council for any type of development like that to happen in these three neighborhoods. In some ways, a stay on that type of development would be redundant. However, I think there is some need to move with urgency around making sure that we have the right kind of plans in place.

Ms. Karen Jarrett: I agree.

Mr. Dwayne Stephens: I'm very appreciative and applaud the turnout and the grassroots efforts to be proactive, and I'm fully in support of an overlay, but in the vein of due process I do support the continuance primarily for the fact that there is a ton of misinformation that needs to be dispelled.

Ms. Lauren Boles: I agree that there should be an extension of the Overlay District. I also support a continuous vote for different reasons. Yes, because of the misinformation, but in addition to that, we need to address what the impact might be on existing residents in terms of their insurance, as well as the impact on affordable housing and our mandate to improve affordable housing in the City of Savannah.

Motion

Approval of continuance of the request to amend Section 7.13, Hotel Development Overlay District, to allow additional public notice and review.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Wayne Noha

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present
Traci Amick	- Aye

X. Presentations

XI. Other Business

XII. Executive Session

XIII. Adjournment

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.