



# Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Minutes

## February 27, 2024 MPC MEETING

Members Present: Karen Jarrett, Chairwoman  
Travis Cole, Vice Chair  
Laureen Boles  
Jay Melder  
Wayne Noha  
Jeff Notrica  
Coren Ross  
Joseph Welch  
Traci Amick  
Michael Kaigler  
Joseph Ervin

Members Absent Dwayne Stephens  
Tom Woiwode

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director  
Edward Morrow, Director of Development Services  
Brad Clements, Planner Development Services  
Sally Helm, Administrative Assistant II, Development Services

### 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. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment| 4801 Meding St | 24-000287-ZA](#)

#### **Motion**

Item removed from the final agenda.

#### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

Joseph Ervin

- Aye

Tom Woiwode

- Not Present

Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Not Present
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye

## [2. Recombination Subdivision | Warren Ward | 301 E. Bay Street | File No. 23-006231-SUBP](#)

### **Motion**

Item removed from the final agenda.

### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

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

## [3. Hotel Development Overlay Text Amendment | New ZO Section 7.13 | 24-000558-ZA-TEXT](#)

📎 [TEXT AMENDMENT\\_FIGURE 7.13-1\\_24-000558-ZA\\_APPLICATION\\_.pdf](#)

📎 [Mailed Notice Map](#)

### **Motion**

Item removed from the final agenda.

### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Travis Coles	
Second: Wayne Noha	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Not Present
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye

#### [4. Historic District Height Text Amendment | New ZO Section 7.8-4 | 24-000559-ZA-TEXT](#)

[☞ TEXT AMENDMENT\\_SEC. 7.8.10\(B\)\\_FIGURE 7.8-4\\_24-000559-ZA\\_APPLICATION\\_.pdf](#)

[☞ Choctaw Ward Contributing Resources.pdf](#)

#### **Motion**

Item removed from the final agenda.

#### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Travis Coles	
Second: Wayne Noha	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Not Present
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
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**

[5. Approval of the February 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 02-6-2024-mpc-meeting-minutes.pdf](#)

**Motion**

Approval of the meeting minutes.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

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

**VIII. Old Business**

**IX. Regular Business**

[6. Text Amendment | Zoning Ordinance -Section 5.4 Use Schedule for I-L \(Light Industrial\)](#)

[📎 Application for TEXT amendment.pdf](#)

[📎 Indoor Amusement Definition.pdf](#)

[📎 Indoor Sports Facility Definition.pdf](#)

[📎 24-000624-ZA Staff Report \(Final\).pdf](#)

**Mr. Edward Morrow, Director of Development Services** presented the Staff report. Mr. Morrow stated this is a petition to amend *Article 5, Section 5.4, Principal Use Table*, to permit 'indoor amusement uses as a 'limited use in the I-L (Light Industrial) zoning district. Savannah's Zoning Ordinance defines an indoor amusement as inclusive of such activities as pool halls, bowling lanes, game arcades, escape rooms, haunted houses, skating rinks and similar uses." The Ordinance specifies that the term does not include adult entertainment.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

1. Per Section 5.17.1 of the Zoning Ordinance, "The Industrial ("I-") districts are established to allow industrial and industrial-like uses with limited non-industrial uses. The intensity of uses allowed is indicated by the suffix following the district name, with the Light Industrial- Restricted (I-L-R) district being the most limited and the Heavy Industrial (I-H) district the most intense.
2. The I-L district is established to provide for a wide range of research and development, light manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, and wholesaling activities as well as some support services. These uses are subject to standards intended to ensure such development is compatible with adjacent and nearby non-industrial areas. Development must be operated in a clean and quiet manner, with most activities occurring indoors, and should not be a nuisance to nearby non-industrial uses.
3. Accessory structures and uses in this District are governed by *Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses*.
4. The Ordinance distinguishes between 'indoor amusements' and 'indoor sports facilities,' which include "athletic, racquet, swim or health club, gymnastic facility or similar uses. The term excludes firearm and archery ranges. These terms are also distinct from sports arenas, which place greater emphasis on assembly of spectators.
5. Per Section 9.3-1 of New ZO, indoor amusements require one (1) off-street parking space per 250 sf. Indoor sports facilities require one (1) space per 225 sf of gross floor area. Arenas require 1 off-street parking space per 5 seats.
6. Neither indoor sports facilities nor arenas are currently permitted in the I-L zoning district.
7. Bars, taverns, restaurants, food truck parks, and retail alcohol sales (on premise consumption of alcohol) are all presently limited (L) uses in the I-L zoning district.
8. Nightclub use requires the grant of a Special Use permit in the I-L zoning district.

MPC Staff recommends denial of the requested text amendment to permit indoor amusement uses in the I-L zoning district as a limited (L) use.

Alternatively, Staff recommends approval of the following text amendments:

1. To permit 'indoor amusement' and 'indoor sports facility' uses as a Limited Use (L) in the I-L zoning district in *Section 5.4, Principal Use table*, with the following use-specific standards to be included in *Article 8, Section 8.5, Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses*:

**Section 8.5.14 Indoor Amusements and Indoor Sports Facilities**

When such use is located in a light industrial (I-L) zoning district:

1. Such use shall be permitted only on a property sharing at least one zoning boundary line with property having a zoning classification other than I-L or I-H. Such use shall occur in a standalone building not shared by an industrial use. Where an indoor amusement or indoor sports facility is proposed within the same facility or parcel as an industrial use, a Special Exception shall be required from the Planning Commission. The proposed use shall maintain I-L buffers with adjoining uses in accordance with the requirements of the zoning district; however, where the proposed use adjoins a residence or residential-zoned property, an 80' buffer with double-staggered plantings or a berm shall be maintained adjoining the existing residential use or residential-zoned parcel. A reduction of this standard shall only be permitted through approval of a Special Exception by the Planning Commission in accordance with *Sec. 3.12.2.a.iii*. All activities shall be conducted indoors.

1. To amend *Section 3.12.2.a* of the Zoning Ordinance regarding *Special Exceptions*, to include consideration of “colocation of an ‘*indoor amusement*’ or ‘*indoor sports facility*’ use in the same facility or on the same parcel as an industrial use.”

**Mr. Robert McCorkle, representing the Petitioner**, stated we support Staff’s recommendation. The text amendment adds a viable option for large format properties to be reused. This will become an issue, if it’s not already, in warehousing areas in this City. In 2021 there were approximately 84 million square feet of warehouse in the area. In the end of 2021 approximately 124 million square feet, an increase of 40 million square feet. By mid-year of this year, it will be 137 million square feet, a total of 53 million square feet increases. Currently there is another 40 million square feet under development in the region. We will reach a 10% vacancy rate by 3rd quarter of 2024. A lot of the properties that are going to be affected are older warehouses because there are so many new modern warehouses being constructed and available. We will have older warehouses that do not have tenants or a good use. Macy’s just announced closing 150 stores nationwide. We have seen that here in this area with the old K-Mart, Savannah Mall, and other areas.

These uses tend to be allowed in commercially zoned areas. They are allowed in several other zones but not in the Industrial Zone. When we proposed this, we originally spoke with City Staff. They suggested the addition that it needed to be next to a property that was a lesser zone. The other conditions were added by MPC Staff as mentioned. The particular property we are trying to address is 100 Old West Lathrop Avenue, which is approximately 2.6 acres.

**Mr. Travis Coles, Board Member**, if there any reason why theatre, cinema, and performing arts would not be included in this change.

**Mr. Morrow** stated it would be appropriate.

#### **Motion**

Denial of the requested text amendment to permit ‘indoor amusement’ uses in the I-L zoning district as a limited (L) use.

Alternatively, Approval of the following text amendments:

1)To permit ‘indoor amusement’ and ‘indoor sports facility’ uses as a Limited Use (L) in the I-L zoning district in Section 5.4, Principal Use table, with the following use-specific standards to be included in Article 8, Section 8.5, Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses:

Section 8.5.14 Indoor Amusements and Indoor Sports Facilities

When such use is located in a light industrial (I-L) zoning district:

- a. Such use shall be permitted only on a property sharing at least one zoning boundary line with property having a zoning classification other than I-L or I-H.
- b. Such use shall occur in a standalone building not shared by an industrial use. Where an indoor amusement or indoor sports facility is proposed within the same facility or parcel as an industrial use, a Special Exception shall be required from the Planning Commission.
- c. The proposed use shall maintain I-L buffers with adjoining uses in accordance with the requirements of the zoning district; however, where the proposed use adjoins a residence or residential-zoned property, an 80’ buffer with double-staggered plantings or a berm shall be maintained adjoining the existing residential use or residential-zoned parcel. A reduction of this standard shall only be permitted through approval of a Special Exception by the Planning Commission in accordance with Sec. 3.12.2.a.iii.
- d. All activities shall be conducted indoors.

2) To amend Section 3.12.2.a of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Special Exceptions, to include consideration of “colocation of an ‘indoor amusement’ or ‘indoor sports facility’ use in the same facility or on the same parcel as an industrial use.”

3) To include Theatre, Cinema, and Performing Arts.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Not Present
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
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.***