

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 27, 2023
6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Scott Ritenour opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Other commissioners in attendance included Vice Chairman Kenneth Hamner, Mitzi Johnston, Andrew Kriz, Felicia Reeves, and Alternate Ray Liotta. Also present were Planning Director Robin Cailloux, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialists Steven Shelton and Jadyn Tallman.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

Cailloux updated the Commission on two items for which they had made recommendations. The City Council had decided to not adopt a short term rental ordinance at this time. Instead, they were looking to regroup in the new year with committees and workshops and craft a new “light touch” ordinance. Cailloux also said Council approved the annexation for 21 homes at the rear of the Shiloh Mobile Home Park with a 3-2 vote, the same margin with which the Planning Commission recommended denial.

Approval of Minutes

1. Planning Commission Meeting October 23, 2023

Kriz noted his name was left off the list of Commissioners in attendance. Cailloux said she would correct it. Kriz moved to approve the October 23, 2023, Planning Commission meeting minutes with the correction. Johnston seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

1. PH-23-10 Rezoning of about 11 acres at 1102 MacDuff Parkway from AR to LUR

The applicant was requesting rezoning to build up to 43 townhomes on a triangular piece of property adjacent to the Tyrone town limits, Cailloux said, adding that this property was recently de-annexed from Tyrone and annexed into Peachtree City by an act of the Georgia General Assembly. When that happened, a property automatically came in as Agricultural Reserve (AR), and the applicants were requesting to rezone to Limited Use Residential (LUR).

She presented a map that showed the property in question, and also the property to the south and the connection between them. The area to the south was approved for 30 townhomes. The zoning conditions placed on the south portion would carry over to these 11 acres to the north. That included a 100-foot buffer on

the southern and western property lines and a 50-foot undisturbed buffer along the right-of-way of the railroad. While the buffer was undisturbed along the railroad side, it was not along the other sides, and there was a stormwater pond in the buffer on the west side.

Georgia law had a set of criteria that needed to be considered in a rezoning, Cailloux continued. The first asked if it conformed to the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan, while others asked if the use was suitable in view of adjacent and nearby properties and if it would affect the usability of those properties? Other criteria asked if it had reasonable economic use as currently zoned; would rezoning result in burdensome use of streets, utilities, or schools, and if there were other conditions that gave grounds for support or disapproval of the proposal?

The Comp Plan consisted of policies and a Future Land Use (FLU) map. Because this property was annexed after the Comp Plan was adopted, it did not have a FLU designation. It was surrounded by single-family cluster (SFC) zonings, including Maybeck and Saranac. Cailloux stated that the SFC zoning category was created in the 1995 Comp Plan and, at that time, allowed up to 12 dwelling units per acre. This density was carried forward until the 2017 Comp Plan, which reduced the density down to three to six units per acre. If that were the future land use for this property, the request would meet the density standards.

A policy in the Comp Plan called for offsetting dense residential developments with greenbelts, parks and civic plazas. Cailloux said the buffers would provide that and noted that the 100-foot buffer and the 50-foot buffer that existed on the Cresswind side would provide 150 feet of separation between the rear property lines of the Cresswind lots and these townhomes.

Another policy was to encourage the use of high-quality building materials. Staff recommended that the homes be 100% brick or stone on the front and brick/stone/cementitious siding on the sides and rear. The final policy called for encouraging housing to include aging in place elements such as accessible design, ground floor bedrooms, and caretaker suites. Because townhomes did not normally have bedrooms on the main floor, Staff recommended that just half of them be built with a bedroom or a flex room or an elevator shaft that would allow an elevator to be added later without major construction. Cailloux remarked that the townhomes in the oldest part of Everton had elevators or elevator shafts.

Staff had a number of conditions if the Planning Commission recommended approval. They were:

- The property shall develop in conformance with the proposed plan. Any substantive change to this plan or any of the conditions of the rezoning shall require a new rezoning action.
- The maximum number of dwelling units shall be 43.
- At least 50% of the home designs shall include either a ground-level bedroom, a ground-level flex room, or an elevator.

- The minimum front building setback is 25 feet from the back of sidewalk or back of pavement. There shall be at least a 20-foot separation between buildings.
- Each unit shall have provided at least two paved parking spaces, at least one of these shall be within a fully enclosed garage.
- Each housing unit front façade shall be faced with brick or stone. Side and rear elevations shall consist of brick, stone, or cementitious siding. Each side elevation shall include windows and shall include similar architectural detailing as the front elevation.
- A minimum 50-foot undisturbed buffer shall be provided along the railroad right-of-way. A privacy fence shall be constructed along the edge of the railroad right-of-way, and evergreen plantings shall be added to the buffer where existing trees are sparse.
- A 100-foot landscaping buffer shall be provided along the western property line. This buffer shall be enhanced with various evergreen plantings to create a visual buffer.
- At least two canopy trees shall be provided for each unit meeting the standards of the city's land development ordinance. In the case where no yard is incorporated in the lot, the required trees shall be planted on an adjacent or nearby open space that is not included in the required buffers.
- Internal streets shall be built to city standards with regards to compaction, subgrade, pavement, and other requirements as deemed by the city engineer.
- All internal streets, sidewalks, parks, amenities, and landscaping shall be the responsibility of the home owner's association.
- A statement addressing the proximity of the development to the CSX railroad shall be placed on the final plat for the overall development.

Attorney Steven Jones represented the applicant. He said the first portion of this development was called Collier Hills, and this would be Collier Hills Phase II. He pointed out that the railroad blocked access to the property, so the only viable access was through Phase I. Phase I was rezoned in 2022 as LUR-20. The Phase II property was now zoned AR, which was automatic in cases where the State did the annexation, but it had been zoned Commercial when in Tyrone.

Jones said the property did not have reasonable economic use as currently zoned. They couldn't market it or develop it if it was zoned AR because someone would have to travel through a townhome development to get to it.

The townhomes in the LUR-20 area were permitted to have siding of brick, stone, or cementitious fiberboard (Hardie Plank). Jones asked that they be allowed to continue the use of differing mixtures of materials on each building in order to be consistent with Phase I.

He pointed out the lift station and the tot lot on the concept plan, along with the stormwater pond. Jones explained that the 150-foot buffer between this and Cresswind was consistent with what was done when Phase I was rezoned. However, there was a utility easement in Phase I, which there was not along the

edge of Phase II. They were proposing an evergreen planting row in addition to the natural buffer that already existed.

As for the price point, Jones said they envisioned these selling in the mid-\$400s, but that was driven by the market.

The Chairman opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak in support, and he opened the floor to those in opposition.

Teresa Smith of Cresswind said there were many large hardwoods in the buffer areas that provided a natural noise barrier from the railroad and traffic on Senioa Road. She hoped the Commission would not allow any disturbance of this barrier. Smith expressed concern about this development's exit onto MacDuff, saying there were two other subdivisions exiting nearby that would create a hazard. She said the developers had mentioned 70 additional residences at a July meeting. Smith also told the Commissioners they should take the proposed fire station across from Cresswind into account.

Smith noted that power lines bisected each of the two parcels. She said the developer had decreased the number of townhomes planned for Phase I because of difficulties with the topography. Smith commented that she was concerned that the height of the townhomes could impact privacy in Cresswind. Also, there were already some water runoff issues in Cresswind, and this new development could worsen those conditions. She reminded the Commissioners that they had expressed concern about emergency vehicle access, along with greenspace and recreation amenities.

She also noted they had said that high-density housing should be within walking distance of village centers, which this was not and that the property never should have been rezoned in the first place. She said they stated it did not comply with the Comp Plan and was not in the spirit of Peachtree City. While there were townhomes in Everton, they were embedded in a larger neighborhood.

Smith asked them to deny the rezoning, and, if they did not, delay a vote until a comprehensive traffic study was completed.

Suzanne Brown said there was always a danger of train derailments with hazardous chemical spills, and there should be no residential development this near to railroad tracks. She questioned why there was a 150-foot buffer between this development and Cresswind, but only a 100-foot buffer between it and the center of the CSX Railroad tracks.

She called this a free-for-all for the developers and said the City shouldn't sacrifice the desires of the citizens. Brown also mentioned that the FLU called for lower-density development near the City limits. She stated that the planners of the City wanted the area near the railroad tracks reserved for commercial and industrial

use, but in recent years, there had been residential development there. She said the zoning of Phase I was a mistake by Council, but they had no obligation to grant a rezoning to this property just for the purpose of access. The owner of the front property was required to provide access to the rear parcel regardless, Brown went on, adding that the City did not owe the owner the right to develop this property and profit from it.

Dennis Sandretto said he had not been previously aware that there was development in this area, but he was concerned about the loss of trees and the wildlife corridor. He thought the high-voltage power lines would be a concern. Traffic and the impact on Cresswind were also concerns he mentioned.

David Freeman voiced opposition to the project, but said if it was approved, he hoped they would forbid the planting of pine trees in the evergreen buffer. His choice would be arborvitae.

Dave Mathis commented that he opposed this for all the reasons stated previously. He added that the Federal Railroad Association had tracked 742 derailments through October 2023, and said he felt this development would be difficult to evacuate in an emergency.

Nancy Steptoe said she lived in Cresswind and experienced vibrations from the trains passing by. She believed that this development, which was much closer to the tracks, would need to be built to higher standards to withstand the vibrations. The height of the buildings was also one of her concerns.

No one else wished to speak, and the Chairman asked if any citizens had questions for Staff or the developer.

Mathis returned to ask about an easement for the power line, and Cailloux pointed it out.

Smith asked about the height of the buildings. Jones said it was governed by the City zoning ordinance and the International Building Code, which was 35 feet for this type of residence. This would be less than that, about two or three stories.

Jones went back to the comments about the evergreen buffer, saying they had found that a staggered row did provide an effective sound barrier, more so than a natural undisturbed area. They also planted varied species as a way to combat disease. The evergreen buffer should provide an improvement to block sound over what was there now, he commented.

Staff stated in its report that this was consistent with the Comp Plan, Jones continued, and it was on the low end of the permitted density for the surrounding area.

Mathis asked how many trees they could put around the retention pond and if the gaps between the trees and the buildings would create a channel of sound?

The intent, Jones answered, was to put the evergreen row along the back side of the retention pond to provide a sound wall and a visual wall between this development and Cresswind, consistent with what they were doing on Phase I. He pointed to the connection to Phase I and again said this parcel did not have an economically viable use without rezoning.

Smith stated that one row of trees did not inspire confidence as a buffer. She also said the developer told the Commission in July that there would be 70 homes in Phase II. It was also mentioned that 100 homes was the number that triggered the requirement for amenities. Now the number was 43 homes, and she wanted to know what approvals would be required if that changed.

Cailloux explained that they were asking for an LUR zoning and the number of homes they requested was what would be granted. It could not be increased. Added with the 30 to the south, there would be 73, and Cailloux said she wanted to reassure Smith that there would not be more than that. It might be a lesser number, but there could not be any more than 43 homes in this new portion.

Freeman asked what would happen to the 50- to 100-year-old trees that bordered Silverbell Court? Jones said the only portion of the buffer that would be disturbed was where the pond was, and the majority of the existing trees would remain. The sound buffer would be on the back side of the townhomes and around the pond.

Freeman said he would like to see a traffic study at the intersection with MacDuff because the intersection with Wilksmoor and Cresswind was nearby and traffic was often congested. He went on to say that inflation had lessened the value of a home in the mid-400s.

Jones said the conditions regarding the building materials would ensure a high-end home. He noted that this was below the City's required threshold for a traffic study.

Smith asked about the square footage of the homes, and Jones said they would be about 2,200 square feet or more.

No one else had questions, and the Chairman closed the public hearing. He asked if the Commissioners had questions.

Reeves wondered why Phase I was zoned LUR-20 and this request was for LUR? Cailloux explained that the number was for administrative purposes and would be assigned if it was approved. It was just to help Staff find the conditions specific to that property.

What was the status of Phase I? Reeves continued, and Cailloux replied that they had submitted a preliminary plat, but it needed revisions before it could be approved.

Reeves then asked about the new fire station someone from the public had mentioned. When this corridor was rezoned in 2007, Cailloux explained, one of the many conditions was that the developer dedicate space for a fire station. The City had building plans for it but needed to find the money.

Were there different standards for houses built close to a railroad? Reeves asked. Not in the State of Georgia, Cailloux told her.

What about the trees in the buffer? Cailloux said the front facing Cresswind would remain undisturbed. The Commission could require a tree survey to identify specimen trees if they desired. It would be part of the site plan, and Staff would be aware of it when they reviewed it.

There would be two vehicles at each of these 73 homes, Reeves noted, and she understood there was a threshold for a traffic study, but could they request one as a condition? Cailloux said they could, but it was unlikely to be ready by the December 7 City Council meeting when this was on the agenda.

Cailloux explained there was a traffic study for the entire MacDuff Parkway that included this undeveloped portion. It was calculated at an industrial rate, which was much higher traffic generation rate and had a much bigger impact than residential, and it showed there was excess capacity. Cailloux acknowledged that didn't seem like it could be correct when you were sitting in the four-way stop at Cresswind at rush hour, but road design was based on the needs for a long period of time. The trip generation numbers for this property if it was developed as residential instead of industrial would be lower than what it was planned for.

Johnston asked Jones if any homes had been sold in Phase I? He said they were still in design, so there had been no pre-sales. She wanted to know how high the power lines were, and Cailloux said she did not know.

Hamner said he recalled the developers had talked with the Cresswind homeowners association (HOA) about Phase I and wondered if they had discussed Phase II with the homeowners whose property bordered this site. Jones said they had and the impetus for the evergreen row was from that conversation.

The applicant had said this plan was in line with the Comp Plan's recommended density, and Hamner asked Cailloux her opinion. She pointed out there was no FLU for this property in the Comp Plan, but it was surrounded by SFC and if that was considered an appropriate use by the Planning Commission, it would satisfy that category. If they thought single-family medium density (SFM) was appropriate, it would not satisfy that.

Kriz asked if the current zoning of AR restricted removal of vegetation and trees? Cailloux responded that it did not; timbering rights on agriculturally zoned properties were protected by the State of Georgia.

He asked Cailloux what the City required of the developers once they crossed the 100-home threshold? Cailloux said it would trigger the parks requirement and the potential for a traffic study by the City Engineer. Other conditions applied regardless of the number of homes, such as connection to the path network and landscaping of two trees for every unit in addition to the buffers.

Kriz asked if the City got involved when the developer added a park to the property? Cailloux said the playground was on the plans, so they would require that it be constructed. The Recreation Department would look at the specs and make sure the equipment met national safety standards. Kriz asked if they could create a condition requiring Recreation Department approval, but Cailloux said it would not be necessary since it was already part of the process.

Could they require a cart path in the buffer? Kriz asked. They could, Cailloux stated, but trees would have to be removed for that. She said if they did that, they should make it a condition that the HOA would maintain it. The City looked for opportunities to use low-volume internal roads such as this to supplement the city-maintained paths.

Liotta, reflecting on the discussion about heights, wanted to know more about the topographic change from Cresswind to this site. Jones said he believed the topography was about even, so people in Cresswind would be looking at the 100-foot buffer with the evergreen screen. The height of the homes would put them below the tree line. Liotta asked about the appearance of the units, and Jones said they had not selected a builder, but would follow the International Building Code, which set a maximum height.

Would the garages be a one- or two-car? Jones said the market demand was for two-car, but the units with master suites on the main level would probably have to be one-car. The driveways would all be two cars wide. Liotta asked about visitor parking, saying many people used their garages for storage and the driveways for parking. Jones stated he was sure they would provide some off-street parking spaces for visitors.

Liotta asked Cailloux about the required parking for townhomes. She said they had to have two parking spaces per dwelling unit so a driveway large enough for two cars would satisfy the requirement. She said she thought four to seven extra spaces would be sufficient for 70 units and pointed out areas where they could go. Liotta said he believed there should be some kind of visitor parking and Cailloux's proposed 1:10 ratio would be reasonable. Jones said they would be amenable to providing off-street parking.

Liotta asked if sidewalks were being proposed. Jones said they did not propose sidewalks or a multi-use path. They anticipated the connection to the path system would be through the internal road. Liotta was concerned about children getting to the playground.

He noted they were requesting a road of 1200 feet and wondered what the total length was in both phases. Jones said it was 2100 linear feet. Liotta said it was a public safety hazard for emergency vehicles on an extremely long dead end. Jones said they would let the Public Works Department tell them what they needed to do. It would go through the Fire Marshal, Cailloux added. In neighborhoods like Cresswind there were bump-outs at certain points for this reason. Here, the cul-de-sac could be specifically designed to meet the needs of the Fire Department for equipment turnaround.

Liotta asked Jones if they were opposed to planting trees along the side slopes of the retention pond to replace trees that had been removed? Cailloux stepped in to say the City Engineer would not allow that; he wanted trees at least 15 feet away from the sloped walls. However, the developers could plant further away from the basin, which Jones agreed was reasonable.

Ritenour asked about structure height and size for Phase I. Jones said it would be about the same in Phase II, and Cailloux noted there was no minimum size stipulated as a condition, but the Commission could add one saying that units had to be at least 2,200 square feet or whatever they felt was appropriate. Ritenour said he was concerned about consistency between the two phases; Jones said consistency was important to the developers, too.

Ritenour asked the Commissioners for their final comments. Liotta said his concerns were the layout of the development, noting the lack of visitor parking and difficulty for emergency service access. The plans for buffering bothered him because his experience had shown him that landscaping was not an effective sound barrier.

Kriz said he disagreed with the rezoning of the property to the south, so in that spirit, he disagreed with this. It did not follow the step-down policy. It required the removal of a significant number of trees, and he said it did not look like a neighborhood in Peachtree City. There was no access to the path system.

He said he understood the issue of economic viability, and they were stuck with the townhome development to the south. He also pointed out there was nothing stopping the owners from removing all the trees on this property. He remarked that having 12 conditions meant they were trying to squeeze this in. Kriz said it needed fewer units, more parking, a better sound barrier, a larger park area, more preservation of trees, and a cart path connection. Kriz said this development was not in the spirit of Peachtree City, and he could not support it.

Hamner said Kriz had expressed his views. He cited policy 7 of the Comp Plan, which talked about utilizing the step-down model for residential development so higher density was located next to village centers. He said page 48 of the Plan showed that this area was not within a 15-minute walk of the nearest village center. He also said this violated a section in the zoning code that said a development should not adversely impact adjacent property. For those reasons he said he could not support this rezoning.

Johnston agreed, remarking that there were 12 Staff recommendations and the Commission had come up with more. If that many changes were needed, she said, this was not the right way to go.

Reeves said there was not much she could add to what had already been said. This just did not fit and feel like Peachtree City, she concluded.

Ritenour acknowledged that these tracts were two bad pieces of property and he could not think of another use for the property that was annexed by the Legislature. He mentioned the many conditions imposed on Phase I and said he agreed with the points his fellow Commissioners had already made.

Kriz moved to recommend denial of PH-23-10, Rezoning of about 11 acres at 1102 MacDuff Parkway from AR to LUR. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

1. 23-11-01 Conceptual Site Plan, Warehouse/Office, 1301 Moba Drive

Cailloux said the applicant had submitted a conceptual site plan for a warehouse/office of 60,000 square feet. On a zoning map, she indicated three lots in the Mobacorp Industrial Park and reminded the Commissioners of a recent conceptual site plan for a plant nursery on one of the three.

This plan met all the zoning conditions, and she pointed out that a variance was approved a few years ago for the middle lot to reduce the zoning setback from 50 to 30 feet. It was within 500 feet of a major thoroughfare, so at some point, Cailloux remarked, the Planning Commission would review an elevation plan.

Truck traffic would enter and exit from the side and rear, completely separate from vehicle traffic in the parking lot at the front. They were meeting all parking requirements, Cailloux continued, with 77 parking spaces where 69 were required.

One thing they were asking, she stated, and only the Planning Commission could grant was to reduce the required 60-foot landscape buffer to 50 feet along SR 74.

For every 10 feet it was reduced, the developer was required to plant 10% more trees.

Jason Walls of Highland Land Planning represented the applicant. He said this was a local business looking to improve their facilities and add an outdoor training area, stating this was a low impact use for the Industrial Park.

Liotta said the layout made sense, but he wondered why they didn't shift the building left and up to get the 60 feet along 74. Cailloux noted the Ordinance required a 10-foot landscaping strip between the building and the parking lot. Liotta asked again why the building couldn't be shifted east, but Walls replied there wouldn't be room for large trucks to move around. Cailloux noted that they would be encroaching on the front setback along Moba Drive. Walls added there would be ample landscape screening on all sides.

Kriz had no questions, but Hamner, concerned about consistency, wanted to know the distance between the drive at the MOBA Soccer Complex and SR 74.

Johnston and Reeves had no questions or comments. Ritenour said he had no questions, but he was interested in comparing this lot to the soccer complex's, which Cailloux said had a 60-foot buffer.

Kriz moved to approve New Agenda item 23-11-01 Conceptual Site Plan, Warehouse/Office, 1301 Moba Drive. Johnston seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. 23-11-02 Building Elevations, Azul Tequila Taqueria & Cantina, 100 Lexington Circle

This was a request from Azul Tequila Taqueria & Cantina and was subject to the design guidelines required when the Lexington Circle area was rezoned to LUC, which included very specified details on color. The applicant had requested to change the color of the façade from a dark tan color with lighter accents and a gray roof to a brighter whitish color. The design guidelines did allow for a white color, and the request was for White Dove, which Cailloux said was a very bright white. The trim around the windows and door would be Black Magic. The color along the roofline would be Cedar Bark. All these colors were comparable to those in the guidelines except for Cedar Bark, Cailloux remarked.

They also were asking to do a dark paint wash over the natural stone. The ordinance did not prohibit this, but it had not been seen in the city, Cailloux remarked. The applicant had material samples for them to consider.

They were asking for a dark charcoal roof and most of the requirements in the ordinance were no longer available, except for Slate, and Cailloux said it had more of a bluish look rather than Charcoal. It was at the Commission's discretion to decide if that looked good.

She asked the applicant to come forward and show the paint and materials samples. She said Staff believed this request met the available design guidelines.

Kriz asked Cailloux if they should be looking at an update of these design guidelines like they had done for SR 54 West? She said it was not that simple because these were zoning conditions, not an overlay. They could recommend an update to City Council, who would then tell the Planning Commission if that was something they should look into. Kriz suggested saying something about comparable colors if the material was not available. Cailloux said that was what they had done here, but she noted that one of the roof colors was available but might not fit in well with the color scheme, and the applicant wanted to use Charcoal. Kriz verified that, even if the guidelines were updated, future requests would still have to come before the Planning Commission, and Cailloux said that was correct.

Hamner said he liked the design, as did Johnston and Reeves. Ritenour thanked the owner for seeking approval before doing the work, unlike two other property owners recently. He wondered if this color might not be too white. The owner said he was open to suggestions. Cailloux suggested a color called Eider White that looks gray on the color sample but actually was a low-glare white and could be seen on Super Chix in The Avenue.

Ritenour mentioned that the white color, along with the darker timber, gave the building something of an Alpine look. The owner said the White Dove did not look as white in person as it did in the renderings. He added that they had repainted twice with the same colors and now wanted a change. Ritenour said everyone was in favor of the refresh but were concerned about the color. Liotta said he thought the white should be a few shades softer, but he liked the palette overall.

The applicant said they intended to enclose the patio and create a storage area and add some greenery, probably artificial. Cailloux said there were other places where guide wires were installed on the exterior of the building for live plants to grow. The owner said they couldn't care for live plants. Ritenour said there were low-care plants and advised a consultation with a nursery. The owner agreed to do that.

Johnston moved to approve New Agenda item 23-11-02, building Elevations, Azul Tequila Taqueria & Cantina, 100 Lexington Circle with the condition that they work with Staff to identify an appropriate color and that live plants be used on the exterior. Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Items

No workshop items

Cailloux said there were agenda items for a December 11 meeting.

There being no further business, Kriz moved to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Reeves seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Scott Ritenour, Chairman