

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 8, 2024
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, Felicia Reeves, and Andrew Kriz. Commissioner Mitzi Johnston and Alternate Ray Liotta were absent. Also present were Planning Director Robin Cailloux, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialists Steven Shelton and Jadyn Tallman.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

None

Approval of Minutes

Approved 4-0

1. Planning Commission Meeting November 27, 2023

Kriz moved to approve the November 27, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting minutes. Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

1. Landscape Plan, Peachtree City Orthodontics, 101 Gates Entry

Hooks said there had been a slight change to the landscape plan a few days ago. The total overall quantities did not change, but there were changes between the species.

This site was in the south part of the city at the entrance to The Gates subdivision and was zoned Office-Institutional (O-I). The zoning had conditions that limited the permitted uses and also dictated the architectural concept, business hours, setbacks, and curb cuts, among other things, so the development would be harmonious with the adjacent neighborhood.

Based on the total amount of impervious surface on the parcel, which was 20,142 square feet, the landscape ordinance required at least 60 caliper inches of canopy trees and 40 caliper inches of understory trees, Hooks reported. The proposal was

for exactly that.

The Land Development Ordinance (LDO) allowed an evergreen tree to be counted as an understory tree as long as it was a minimum of 15 gallons or six feet in height, and this plan incorporated three evergreen trees as part of the understory requirement. Those would screen the mechanical equipment. She presented photos that showed the variety of textures and colors the other plantings would provide.

The applicant, Jason Walls of Highland Land Planning, said everything Hooks said was presented on the plan and pointed out that there was a 50-foot greenspace with a berm and plantings between the development and SR 74 and also between this development and the subdivision's pool house. There was another greenspace to the right. The site was surrounded by berms and greenspace, he remarked, and the landscape plan was designed to complement the building and the architecture.

The report said the perimeter of the parking lot would be landscaped with evergreen shrubs a minimum of 24 inches in height, Reeves commented, adding that it said these evergreens would reach a height of two to three feet at maturity. Hooks said they wouldn't be two to three feet when they were planted. She also noted the parking lot was already screened by the existing berm with trees planted on top of it. The lot was not visible from outside the property.

Hamner said the plan looked good, and Kriz had no comments or questions.

Ritenour said Liotta had submitted some comments. He said he would like to see the location of light poles for lighting the parking lot. Ritenour noted that was not typically included on a landscape plan, but it might be good to include. Cailloux noted that sometimes a separate lighting plan was submitted but often, like here, the parking lot was small and did not require separate light poles. Walls said they were using the lights on the side of the building, plus streetlights.

Liotta also suggested using river rock or something more decorative in an area in the back where the plan called for white gravel. Walls said they could do that.

Ritenour asked if there was an opportunity to plant some azaleas or other foundation plantings on either side of the sky pencils, which were vertical. Walls said he believed there were shrubs designated in those areas. The front windows were within eight inches of the ground, so it would be difficult to plant shrubs and not block them, but Walls said they would see what they could do. Hooks said there were shrubs on the side, but none on the front other than the sky pencils. Walls said they were planning to have a pre-installation conference that would include City Staff after the plants were delivered, but before they were installed.

Reeves moved to approve the landscape plan, Peachtree City Orthodontics, 101 Gates Entry, with the conditions of the rock replacement and a pre-installation

meeting with City Staff. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Ritenour acknowledged that new City Council Members Laura Johnson and Suzanne Brown were in the audience.

2. Conceptual Site Plan and Building Elevations, West Georgia Dermatology, 112 Wilshire Village Drive

Hooks said this property was also in the south end of town, at the intersection of SR 74 and Rockaway Road behind the newly developed gas station/convenience store/Dunkin building. It was zoned General Commercial (GC) with some zoning conditions that restricted the use.

The parcel was within 500 feet of a major thoroughfare and also a community collector road so an architectural review was required. They would look at those elevations, but talk about the plan first, Hooks commented. The setbacks were 40 feet in the front, with a 20-foot parking setback, a 10-foot side setback, and a 20-foot rear setback. The zoning conditions called for a 25-foot buffer along the border with the Somerby property.

There was a 50-foot landscape buffer requirement along Rockaway Road, but the applicant was asking to reduce it to 30 feet, which was permissible per Section 723 of the LDO if the developer agreed to install additional landscaping of 20% of the caliper inches required.

The proposed building was 10,310 square feet with 50 parking spaces, which met the City's requirement for parking in office zonings. Another requirement was inter-parcel connection. There was connection with the adjacent parcel and a shared driveway and another connection to Wilshire Village Drive at the far end of the adjacent parcel, which would provide access to parcels on the east side of the road. A cart path accessed the property and led to a tunnel under SR 74.

Moving on to the building elevations, Hooks noted the materials were very similar to what was used for the gas station/store. Brick and a fiber cement product that looked like wood cladding would cover most of the facades with pre-finished corrugated metal panels used as accents. The ordinance called for front facades to be at least 80% stone or brick and sides to be at least 50%. Staff felt this met those requirements.

The Wilshire Pavilion design guidelines established a color palette of boral red with an accent color of boral chocolate with an EIFS color of vanilla, but it also had a clause saying colors could be used at the architect's discretion. Here, he was using vanilla as the field color, with chocolate accents. This was the same palette approved for the nearby gas station and was in keeping with the City's ordinance calling for neutrals or earth tones.

Staff was of the opinion that the conceptual site plan and building elevations met

the City's ordinances and standards and recommended approval.

Architect Jefferson Brown said the owners were present and they would be glad to answer any questions.

Kriz asked Staff when the Commissioners should make a recommendation about connecting to the paths. Should it be with the elevations or the site plan? Cailloux noted they were looking at both. She pointed out that this property was connected through the interior Wilshire Village Drive. Did he want more connections? Kriz said he thought this property was well-connected, but he was just curious about when in the process the connections were considered. Cailloux pointed out that the ordinance required connections for all non-industrial properties.

Reeves asked why they needed the buffer reduced to 30 feet? Brown replied that there were foundation constraints and issues because of the way the property graded off. They looked at the owner's requirements and laid out the building first, then tried to place it on the site. He pointed out on a rendering that the sidewalks and the curb were right on the front of the building. There was no opportunity to landscape, plus it was dangerous to have people coming out of a building just a few steps from a lane of traffic. They were also dealing with a big drop-off on the site, so the buffer would give them room to build a better foundation.

Ritenour commended the flow between the properties in terms of design, color, and materials. He also thought it would be good to have a landscaped transition area in the front. Kriz asked if the proposal included the buffer, and Cailloux said if they approved the site plan as shown, they were approving the buffer and the additional trees. Reeves then asked if they were ok with the condition of additional landscaping, and Brown said they were, noting they made a similar request at the gas station property.

Kriz moved to approve Conceptual Site Plan and Building Elevations, West Georgia Dermatology, 112 Wilshire Village Drive. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Conceptual Site Plan, Highway 54 West Development, 1941 W HWY 54

This property was on SR 54 at Sumner Road, adjacent to the Smokerise Corners subdivision and zoned Limited Use Commercial (LUC-33). At one time, Hooks remarked, Smokerise Corners was part of this LUC, but it had been rezoned to Limited Use Residential (LUR-19).

This proposal was for a mixed-use development of seven buildings to contain office and retail space that totaled 90,000 square feet. Most were one story, but Hooks pointed out two office buildings that would be two stories and also the commercial buildings that would be used for retail or restaurants. The lot was 10.9 acres.

Office and commercial were permitted uses in this district, Hooks stated, except for

gas stations, car washes, and auto maintenance facilities. A zoning condition said no more than 4.1 acres could be covered with office uses and no more than 4.8 acres could be used for commercial. This was stipulated because the original developer intended to subdivide the property. Since this property would not be subdivided, a different formula with the same outcome was applied. The total building square footage proposed would be 90,000 square feet with 55% dedicated to commercial uses (50,000 square feet) and 45% dedicated to office uses (40,000 square feet). Along with the 1.9 acres of open space, the proposed conceptual site plan satisfied the zoning requirements, she concluded.

Another zoning requirement was that a minimum 50-foot wide area abutting SR 54 be reserved as a potential landing location of a multi-use path bridge or tunnel across the highway. Typically, there was a 60-foot landscape buffer requirement along a major thoroughfare, Hooks noted, but this LUC was approved with a 50-foot buffer, although she noted it would be closer to 60 feet in actuality.

Parking required was 327 spaces, and they were proposing 363. The building was located along a major thoroughfare and would require an architectural review. The applicant was not requesting a review of elevations at this meeting but had brought some renderings to give the Commissioners an idea of what was planned.

Hooks also remarked that in a development such as this there would probably be some unique branding and signage that was not typical and did not fit into the City's sign ordinance. Staff was asking that they submit a master sign program with the building elevations for the Planning Commission's review and approval. Cailloux pointed out that the developer's sign program could not exceed the basic tenets of City's sign ordinance; it would just add some sign types that were not normal in the ordinance.

Staff was of the opinion that the conceptual site plan met the ordinances and recommended approval. Hooks then moved on to the elevations, and Cailloux and Ritenour both cautioned architect Brown that they would not be making any decisions on the elevations at this meeting.

Brown noted that the architecture would be influenced by how the approvals of the site plan went. They were aiming for a clean industrial-modern look that was softened with wood materials. He cited the Bus Barn in Fayetteville as an example of what they were trying to create: a spot where people could sit outside and have a meal with space for the kids to run around and play. The conceptual site plan looked like it had a lot of asphalt, Brown remarked, and that was needed for circulation, but they wanted to activate areas for activity within that. They would be using dark colors seen in nature. As people drove by, they could see into the structures. Brown pointed out all the green spaces and the roundabout.

They went with flat-roofed architecture with higher parapets to hide the mechanicals and get them away from the people who would be enjoying the space,

Brown explained. He pointed out an area in the back that had potential for a two-story building, saying he was thinking about putting one of his Alo Farms there on the lower level and expanding their offices on the upper level. He indicated the renderings showing the site at night, saying it would be captivating to drive by and see people enjoying the restaurants and outdoor space. It was not another strip mall, he concluded.

Hamner noted that this was an important property because it was one of the first things people saw when coming into Peachtree City. He said he appreciated the thought that had been put into it and everything made sense. Brown added that when they were laying this out, they did it in such a way as to preserve several large old oaks on the property.

Reeves said tree preservation was her concern and she hoped they would keep as many as possible. She added that she couldn't wait to see the elevations.

Kriz commented that the paths were always his concern and he saw a 50-foot preserved area for a connection to the paths. Was a connection anticipated at the onset? Brown said they definitely wanted access. They hoped to connect to a bridge over the highway if that plan came to fruition. There was a path that crossed Sumner Road, Kriz said, asking why it didn't connect here? Brown pointed out where the subdivision's path would connect.

Kriz asked what the process was to obtain the connection? Cailloux replied that they would need to include the plan for connection in their civil site plan and Staff would review it.

Kriz noted there was no designated golf cart parking. Brown said they were open to it, but a lot of the requirements made them go to full size parking spaces. Engineer Jason Walls noted that when they put in a few golf cart spaces, people used them for full-size vehicles so he had been told to just show them as full-size spaces.

Cailloux said she liked the idea and believed they could identify an area for golf cart parking. They could add it as a condition for approval, and Staff could make it happen. Kriz suggested requiring five to 10 spaces per building. Cailloux said she would discourage them from converting regular spaces to cart spaces. Hooks noted that restaurants required more parking than retail. Cailloux said she was looking at some green spaces where carts could be parked. Ritenour said the offices wouldn't need as much as a restaurant.

He asked if they were looking at new signals at this entrance. Cailloux said no, that would require Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) approval. The previous owner had approval from GDOT, but she didn't know if that carried over. Walls said it did. That was at Genevieve Court and it would not be signalized as of now.

People turning left into and out of that property was a concern, Ritenour noted, considering the speed through that area. Cailloux said Council had just passed an item that got all of SR 54 to the same speed limit up to this point. Ritenour said he believed the speed limit in this area was 55 mph, and that was a concern of his, but of course it was between the City and GDOT. There had been many crashes in this area of SR 54, he commented. He thought the City needed to go to GDOT and tell them about this development, and his opinion was the speed limit should be no more than 45. He asked the Council Members present to discuss this with the local GDOT representative.

Cailloux said a corridor study was done in 2017 or 2018 and it included this area's projected growth. That was where the R-cuts came from. That study could be updated, and Ritenour said it should, considering the growth in Fayetteville and at Trilith. Lots of people would be turning eastbound out of this property. Walls added that the previous owner had told him GDOT would require a traffic study.

Another concern of Ritenour's and Liotta's were the three dead-end parking areas. He said he ran into one recently where someone caused a backup because there were no spaces. It was also concerning from an emergency standpoint. Ritenour asked if they could reevaluate where building seven and five were. Brown pointed out a pocket park created to preserve the trees and said they could remove the trees. Ritenour said he hated to do that, and Walls said it was only around the office spaces, and they might be able to simplify it with way-finding signs or by striping off some spaces on the ends to allow for three-point turns to back up.

Cailloux said emergency services would require that they be able to get to the farthest point of the building and run line to it. Brown added there was something called an open area formula that determined if an area was accessible and if these buildings met that requirement. Walls said the parking lots could be restricted by gates. Cailloux asked if there could be more area at the ends so there was room to turn around. Walls said that was possible, and he would talk to the Fire Marshal. Cailloux noted it was not just a Fire Marshal issue; it was a user issue. Maybe they could brainstorm over the next two weeks.

Ritenour did not like the idea of restricting the parking lots. Reeves agreed and said the Planning Commission would like to hear the results of the traffic study. Ritenour said this was an opportunity to take a look at golf cart parking. Maybe they could look at this again in a few weeks? Adding golf cart spaces might save space and give them some room to play around, Walls remarked, saying he had a couple of ideas.

Kriz said he agreed with Staff that golf cart parking should not supplant regular parking spaces. Walls confirmed with Cailloux that golf cart spaces did not count toward the parking total. Walls noted that traffic studies did not consider trips generated by golf carts, which would be a high percentage.

It would be best to table this until the next meeting, Ritenour said. Reeves asked what the next step was? Cailloux said that would be part of the presentation on the Planning Commission's role at the end of the meeting. After the Planning Commission had approved the conceptual site plan, the developers went to civil design, which included stormwater, foundations and so on. Staff reviewed it, and it went to the Fire Marshal, Engineering and all the different departments for review per the codes and ordinances. It did not come back to the Planning Commission until the landscaping plan or building elevation, if applicable.

Ritenour made sure the path coming off Sumner wouldn't route all carts through the neighborhood. Cailloux said it would not. Reeves asked if they could see the path when they reviewed this again.

Kriz moved to table Conceptual Site Plan, Highway 54 West Development, 1941 W Hwy 54 until the next meeting. Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Items

1. Planning Commission 101

Ritenour asked if they should wait for Liotta to be present, but they decided to go ahead with the first section, which dealt with the land development process. Cailloux noted that Liotta had a land development background, so he was familiar with this information.

Cailloux said the land development process was basically similar everywhere, but Peachtree City did have a few quirks. She noted that the process often started with zoning and went all the way to building, but there were a few properties that had been previously zoned and subdivided, so they could skip steps and jump in at the middle.

Zoning was strictly regulated by the Supreme Court and had to be the least amount of regulation possible to achieve the community's stated goals. Peachtree City's zoning ordinance established land uses, density, and regulates other physical attributes, such as lot size and building setbacks. After the zoning process, if you wanted to sell off parts of the property, you would have to go through a subdivision process that was regulated by the Land Development Ordinance (LDO). Public roads, for instance, have to be built to certain standards and are subdivided out and dedicated to the local government to maintain. She explained that platting is another word for subdividing property.

If you, like the applicants that night, bought a piece of land that was already zoned and platted, you were ready to start developing the property. The development stage is when you evaluate the physical constraints of the land and apply environmental protections, looking at things such as wetlands and flood plains. The development stage is also as when infrastructure standards are applied, such as sewer and water pipe requirements. Development standards are contained in the

LDO.

Once the dirt had been moved, the sewers and water lines run, the process moved on to building a structure. That's when building inspections began to take place. Georgia had a set of minimum building standards, but many jurisdictions, including Peachtree City, had adopted additional standards, Cailloux stated.

Next, she described how the Planning Commission fit into each step of these processes. Staff often held a pre-application meeting with zoning applicants. Then they meet the State's requirements for public hearing advertisements. The next step was holding a public hearing with the Planning Commission. State law required one public hearing, but Peachtree City had decided to hold two, one with the Planning Commission, followed by another with the City Council.

Cailloux said many times people had the idea that once it got to the public hearing stage, the decision had already been made and the hearing was just for show. But, she stated, in a healthy process like what they tried to foster in Peachtree City, the decisions had not been made. The public hearing should provide information needed to make those decisions.

Another thing to remember was that the Planning Commission made recommendations on approval or denial to the City Council. They did not make the final decisions; that was a legislative action that had to be done by the elected officials. It was important that they make their motions by phrasing it as a recommendation.

Applicants then returned to the Planning Commission with conceptual plats or plans. The Planning Commission and the Planning Director were the platting authority for the City. It did not have to go to the City Council. Cailloux pointed out they hadn't seen a conceptual plat in awhile, but they were common during the City's boom years in the '80s through early 2000s. Mill Farms was probably the last one they had seen, and that was a couple of years ago. The Planning Commission would assign a representative to the project at that time to make sure all conditions and requirements were carried out.

The next step was construction plans, which was when roads and sewers were designed, then there was the final plat process. In Georgia, property that was not final platted could not be sold.

The Development phase for non-residential was a similar process. It started with a conceptual site plan coming to the Planning Commission with a representative assigned to sign off before the Land Disturbance Permit (LDP) was issued. Once the LDP was issued, the developers would come back with elevations for review. This, also, did not go before Council unless the Planning Commission's decision was appealed.

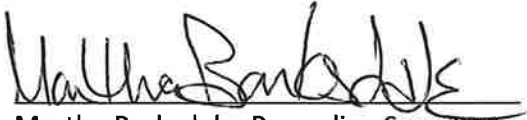
Peachtree City was unique in requiring the landscape plan be reviewed as a separate step. Cailloux said it should not be done until the building permit was issued, and construction had begun. Kriz noted that the conceptual site plan and the elevation reviews were often combined, and Cailloux agreed that was common, but it was also sometimes separated for industrial sites because they were doing a spec building and didn't want to do the elevations until a buyer had been identified.

Construction was the final step. The Building Department did architectural plan reviews, issued permits, and did inspections. Before a certificate of occupancy could be issued, a landscape inspection was required to make sure they followed the plan or, in the case of residential, the ordinance.

This Power Point was on the Planning Commission's website and available to the public, Cailloux stated. Ritenour thanked her for the presentation.

There were no agenda items for the January 22 meeting, so it was cancelled.

There being no further business, Hamner moved to adjourn at 7:56 p.m. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary



Scott Ritenour, Chairman