

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 12, 2024
6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Scott Ritenour opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Vice Chairman Kenneth Hamner, Andrew Kriz, Mitzi Johnston, Felicia Reeves, and Alternate Ray Liotta. Also present were Planning Director Robin Cailloux, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialists Elijah Brewer and Steven Shelton.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

Ritenour welcomed City Council Members Suzanne Brown and Clinton Holland.

Approval of Minutes

1. Planning Commission Meeting July 22, 2024

Kriz moved to approve the July 22, 2024, Planning Commission meeting minutes. Johnston seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

1. Conceptual Site Plan and Building Elevations, Take 5 Oil & Coffee Shop, 2714 HWY 54 W

Teresa Curry represented Take 5 Oil Change with a request to modify the previously approved site plan for a four-bay oil change facility. The owner was asking to reduce that to three bays and put a drive-thru coffee shop in place of the fourth bay.

Hooks said this property was zoned General Commercial (GC) and was in the SR 54 West Corridor Overlay District. She displayed the approved conceptual site plan and the site plan with the requested modifications. The changes included an extended entry drive, a reduction in the number of bays with the coffee shop in the last bay, which changed the shape of the building. Another change Hooks pointed out was the addition of a drive-thru lane for the coffee shop. Coffee traffic would enter from SR 54, swing around the back beyond the oil change lanes and get in line for the coffee shop.

No changes were proposed for the placement of the building or the general location of the parking. There was an increase in the requirement for the parking total from nine to 11 spaces, which met the minimum requirement in the overlay district. The minimum landscape buffer requirement was 30 feet, and no changes were proposed. Hooks noted the parking had changed from the approved site plan, but it was not much of a change from the approved construction drawings.

Moving on to the elevations, Hooks said there was no significant change to materials. The primary brick color will remain the same, but the accent brick will now be a buff color, which staff said was acceptable. The roofing material has changed from metal to shingles, but the color would remain gray as originally approved.

Hooks said staff was of the opinion that the modifications met the ordinance and recommended approval.

Liotta asked about the bays, and Hooks said it would still be three service bays, with the fourth bay of the building turned over to the coffee shop.

Reeves asked about the number of parking spaces, and Hooks said they were going from nine to 11. Curry explained the coffee shop was drive-thru only. There would be walk-up service, but 11 parking spaces would be sufficient.

Reeves asked how many employees there would be in the coffee shop, and Curry said eight to 10 total in addition to the Take 5 staff. Take 5 and the coffee shop were two different entities. The coffee shop would have four to five employees at a peak shift, and the oil change business would have five or six. Liotta said that sounded like more employees than parking spaces, and Curry said they would account for the 10 parking stalls, plus the one handicap space.

Johnston asked her to point out all the parking. Curry clarified that both businesses were exclusively drive-thru and said customers might not visit both businesses. Kriz noted there would not be seating but remarked that there was a door. Curry said a Take 5 employee might want to go over and grab a coffee via that door.

He asked staff if there was a requirement that this land connect to the path network? The ordinance said a connection was required only if a path was identified in the master plan, which was not the case here. However, inter-parcel connectivity to adjacent properties was required. The Commissioners all agreed it would be impossible to get to this property from the paths.

Ritenour asked if there were similar setups anywhere else? Curry mentioned a Take 5/Dunkin in Fayetteville, but said they were separated by a drive-thru.

Kriz said he was glad to see this, but he was concerned about the number of crossings, saying it could be dangerous to walk-up customers. He suggested it be

drive-thru only. Curry said they did not foresee many walk-up customers. The parking was anticipated for staff, who would be arriving before the business opened. Cailloux noted that a door was required whether there was walk-up service or not.

Hamner was concerned about parking, and he said it looked as though they were squeezing in spots where they could. Curry replied that parking was a concern when they originally appeared before them in 2023. That was why they went with the larger parking area in the rear. Cailloux added they were losing about three spaces due to the inter-parcel connectivity requirement.

Parking was also Johnston's concern. She said she liked the concept, though.

Reeves said she supported this concept, but wondered if there would be traffic backups during busy times. Had they done a flow analysis or traffic analysis? Curry explained the oil change facility could accommodate 12 vehicles before it would impede the coffee shop traffic. The coffee shop could accommodate seven without interfering with the oil change lines. The shape of the parcel allowed for a lot of stacking. Curry said they had done numerous Take 5s so they knew how many vehicles could go through. She also remarked that Take 5's peak time was after work, while the coffee shop's would be in the morning.

The previous plan showed three points of connection to adjacent properties, two on the west side and one on the south, Liotta said, while the new plan showed one that connected to a gated and fenced self-storage facility. Cailloux pointed out that the City owned half of the driveway and could tie into the property if there was a need. Liotta asked if the future access in the back could be removed to make space for more parking? Cailloux said they could stripe it for temporary use, but she wouldn't want to lose that opportunity for future connectivity to Huddleston.

Liotta said he, too, was concerned about coffee shop traffic backing up past the opening to get into the Take 5 slot. Curry said the trip generation software showed that would not happen. If it did, Take 5 would assign an employee to come out and keep traffic flowing. Liotta asked had they considered how the garbage truck could get to the trash enclosure? Curry replied that they had run a truck analysis.

He then noted that the plan did not include a bypass lane that would allow a vehicle to leave the queue, and Curry said they did not have room on the narrow lot for that.

Liotta stated he felt there was too much in this plan with the coffee shop addition, but he wanted to hear from the other Commissioners.

Ritenour asked the Take 5 representative who was present if they often saw three vehicles in bays and nine waiting for service? He said they did not, and Ritenour noted that they had said most of the oil changes happened in the afternoon, while

coffee was a morning event. He thought Liotta's observation about the lack of a bypass lane was interesting but said he didn't think that would be a problem. There was a lot going on here, but Ritenour said he thought the oil change business and the coffee shop could co-exist. Considering the location, there probably wouldn't be many walk-up customers.

Liotta said the one parking space behind the coffee shop was awkward because they couldn't get out if someone was in the queue. Curry again pointed out that it was for staff. She said they could add two more spaces, but they were limited on green space. If needed, though, they could add two more spaces.

Liotta said he was just trying to make this the best space it could be.

Reeves asked what would happen if there was a stacking problem in the future? Cailloux said there was not a requirement for a bypass lane. If traffic began to back up onto the GDOT right-of-way, GDOT would reach out to the property owner and tell them to solve the problem. Curry pointed out there would be a deceleration lane on SR 54 for customers.

Ritenour mentioned there were multiple locations for coffee in that area, so if there was a stacking problem in the line, people would go elsewhere.

Johnston asked Curry to indicate where they could add a couple of parking spaces, and she did.

Liotta said the final plan needed a signed and sealed engineer's certificate. Curry said that was her mistake.

Hamner moved to approve the building elevations and site plan for Take 5 Oil Change and Coffee Shop at 2714 Highway 54 West. There was no second. Johnston said she would like to approve it with the condition that they add two additional parking spaces. Kriz asked when they would return for the landscape plan? Cailloux said it would be after it was mostly constructed. Liotta asked about requirements. Curry said since they were mostly paving the entire area and were meeting the parking requirements, they thought it best to leave an area for landscaping. But if parking was a bigger concern, they could remove it for more spaces.

Was there a minimum landscape area requirement for this site? Liotta asked. Hooks said there was a requirement, and the developer had provided an exhibit showing they were close to providing the required caliper inches. However, there was not an area requirement except for the buffer, Cailloux noted. Liotta commented that adding the parking would not have an impact on the requirements, and Cailloux said it would not unless they could not meet the 50% requirement for landscaping. She and Hooks said they didn't think that would be a problem.

Liotta said he supported a condition saying they should add as many parking spaces as possible while staying in compliance with the landscaping requirements. Curry said that would be about two in the area they were discussing.

Kriz moved to approve the conceptual site plan and building elevations for Take 5 Oil Change and Coffee Shop at 2714 Highway 54 West with the condition that two parking spaces be added immediately behind the coffee shop adjacent to the one space currently there. Hamner seconded. Motion carried 4-1, with Hamner, Johnston, Kriz, and Ritenour voting in favor, Reeves voting against.

2. Landscape Plan, Gerresheimer, 650 HWY 74 S

Gerresheimer, on SR 74 South, was completing its expansion project. It had 182,421 square feet of impervious surface area, therefore the landscape ordinance required at least 546 caliper inches of canopy trees and 364 inches of understory trees. The applicant had requested to use the Tree Fund alternative compliance option, but that option still required planting at least 50% of the required caliper inches of canopy and understory trees. Hooks said they were providing 51% of understory trees and 60% of canopy tree requirements. The Tree Fund contribution would total \$51,050.

A portion of the 60-foot landscape buffer along SR 74 had been removed for a construction entrance, but would be replanted with evergreens and hardwoods, and Hooks listed the plantings. This did not count towards the tree requirement.

Staff was of the opinion that the project site was designed to be planted to its fullest capacity and qualified for alternative compliance. Staff recommended approval of the landscape plan, Hooks concluded.

Fred Howery, President and CEO of Gerresheimer Peachtree City, was present. None of the Commissioners had questions, and all said they liked the variety of plantings shown.

Ritenour said he had driven past the site and asked if they needed more evergreens in the buffer. Hooks said she had been concerned about the view in the winter because the buffer was mostly hardwoods. She said she believed they had done a good job of adding in evergreens. Howery pointed out berms and changes in elevation that would block the views from the highway. Ritenour asked them to add evergreens if there was an opportunity. He also suggested they update the plantings at the base of their sign, and Howery said that was a good idea.

Hamner moved to approve the landscape plan for 650 Highway 74 South as submitted. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Items

1. Text Amendment to the Administrative Variance Ordinance

They combed through the ordinance at the previous meeting, Cailloux said, and she had sent out a draft ordinance. Changes included adding "residential use" to all types except parking reduction and removing the requirement of written consent from adjacent property owners and instead having the City mail notices to those owners with information and instructions on how to submit an objection.

They decreased the percentage of reduction for rear setback type from 50% to 10% and added language specifying that there be no other possible location on the property. For setbacks next to publicly owned property, the maximum reduction was reduced from 25% to 10% with language clarified to ensure that rights-of-way were exempted. A 30-day notification requirement was added in order to comply with State law.

Something that did not change was giving the Planning Director authority to approve up to a one-foot variance. Cailloux said she would consult with the City Attorney about where to put this in the ordinance so it could only be done during an active building project. This would not remove the ability to seek an administrative variance for something done by a previous owner.

Liotta's comments included using the word "feasible" instead of "possible" and "minimum" instead of "established" in sections 1B and C. He also recalled that they decided side setback encroachments were not on the table.

Liotta thought section D should specify parking at commercial properties, but Cailloux said it could be multi-family. Liotta asked that the applicant be required to provide documentation to substantiate that fewer parking spaces would be adequate.

If an adjacent property owner submitted an objection, would the request then go back to the regular variance process? Liotta asked, and Cailloux said it would just be passed on to the Administrative Variance Committee. Just because someone objected didn't mean the request shouldn't be approved. Liotta said he wanted the ordinance to say that if the objection was valid, the request should go through the regular process. Kriz disagreed, saying the three people on the committee should have the authority to decide if the objection weighed into the decision. Cailloux said another part of the ordinance dealt with that.

Johnston, Hamner, and Reeves had no comments. Kriz asked if multi-family properties should be able to reduce parking by 25% without a public hearing. Cailloux said a certain amount of trust should be put into the committee, such as recognizing when a request was suitable. Right now, the parking requirement is one space per unit, so it would be surprising if someone wanted to reduce that. The Commissioners said it should say parking reductions were only for non-residential properties.

Kriz asked if the mailings to neighbors would be necessary for parking variances,

but Cailloux said there might be situations where a neighbor had objections.

Ritenour thanked staff for their work, and Cailloux said she liked the process the Planning Commission went through to make these revisions.

Kriz moved to recommend City Council approve the draft revisions to the Administrative Variance Ordinance with the changes they had discussed. Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Planning Commission Presentation to City Council about Ordinance Updates

Last year, Ritenour related, work was started, then halted, on a long-anticipated Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). However, the Planning Commission and Planning staff often encountered situations that led them to believe a UDO was needed or perhaps additional overlay districts for certain areas of the city that were being redeveloped. There might be a need for both, he said.

Over the past few weeks, Ritenour and Hamner, with input from other Commissioners, had been working on development regulation proposals to present to the City Council. Hamner took over to present what they had put together so far, and he said this was preliminary and they welcomed feedback.

Currently, two ordinances managed development in Peachtree City: Appendix A (Zoning Ordinance) and Appendix B (Land Development Ordinance) in the Code of Ordinances. The Zoning Ordinance talked about zoning districts and what was permitted, development standards, parking and signage, landscaping, and special provisions. The LDO covered development procedures, subdivision regulations, environmental protections, infrastructure requirements, and design standards.

A section of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan highlighted four things: the village concept, village centers, land use, and zoning. Hamner went on to say there were four design guidelines for specific areas of the city. The first was broad and set standards for property along major thoroughfares. Four overlay districts covered SR 54 West, the Lexington Village, and Wilshire Pavilion.

While there were a lot of ordinances to follow, Hamner said they brought a lot of benefits. He said the village concept provided a sense of community, while the zoning districts promoted orderly development. Other benefits included signage control, environmental protections, landscaping requirements, and infrastructure requirements.

Next, he listed some opportunities for improvement, some of which came out during the UDO process that was cut short. Hamner explained that the idea was to streamline that laundry list of opportunities into specific detailed items to present to City Council. One item called out an “unfocused approach”, which Hamner said could mean something like using different terms for the same thing across several documents. Another item was a lack of requirements for all village centers. There

were issues with contradictory language, outdated requirements, and lack of modernization. He acknowledged this list was not complete and input from other Commissioners and staff was needed.

Liotta asked Cailloux if she had a list of things that she felt needed changing. Cailloux said she no longer did the plan reviews, but she had kept a running tally of such things over the first three years she was here.

Hamner said they intended to propose two things to Council. One was adopting a UDO, and the other was creating additional overlay districts for village centers. In response to a question from Kriz, Hamner said these were set up to be separate. Cailloux explained they could do both or just one. The UDO was an umbrella, Ritenour continued, and could contain things that needed to happen across the entire city, such as electric vehicle charging stations and bike racks. What that looked like could be detailed in each overlay district.

Liotta said the UDO would be putting the zoning and development ordinances into one document, and Ritenour replied that was correct. Cailloux said it also would include the sign ordinance and the building construction ordinance.

The UDO was the umbrella, then they could get specific with the overlays, Hamner remarked. The UDO would consolidate things, as well as make some of the improvements they had identified, such as a focused approach to land use and development, fixing contradictory standards, and eliminating obsolete language and requirements. Overall, it should approve administrative efficiency. Liotta said a UDO should also be a help to the development community.

Hamner noted that a steering committee was formed in May 2023, but it did not move forward for whatever reason. Hamner and Ritenour thought they could recommend to Council that the Planning Commission serve as a steering committee now for a UDO. However, Hamner cautioned, they should be clear that there are a lot of things that they don't know they don't know. Experts would have to be brought in to educate them and guide them. Could the consultant they previously used be an option?

Kriz asked about citizen involvement. Hamner said the request for proposal (RFP) response from last year mentioned opportunities for citizens to attend meetings. He imagined it would be part of the process.

Cailloux commented that they must accept the reality that Peachtree City's cancellation of the UDO contract in 2023 might make it more difficult to find a local consultant within their budget. She pointed out that wasn't the first contract they had canceled: the Livable Centers Initiative was another. She recommended retaining a consultant, but cautioned they would have to be flexible.

Public outreach was always necessary, she said, whether through a survey, public

meetings, or pop-ups. They should be prepared for a range of inputs, but the consultant would take those citizen inputs, the committee's input, along with interview information from the development community and information from staff, and come up with a list of issues and ideas on how best to tackle them. The consultant would then come back to the Planning Commission with those findings.

Liotta recalled the differences of opinion from Council regarding the previous attempt at a UDO and said Council's support might make it easier to secure a consultant. Ritenour said they would be making a presentation at the September 19 Council meeting. That would include items they wanted to address, and Council could express their opinions. Cailloux again said they should emphasize that creating a UDO did not change anything that was already on the ground today.

Ritenour noted that Peachtree City was at the point where future development would all be redevelopment and Cailloux told him she thought they should emphasize that to Council. There is a faction that is interested in expanding city borders, she remarked, but Ritenour said he was thinking only of what was currently in the city limits.

He went on to say he had been thinking about what they could do to ensure that each village center had its own character while still related to each other as a whole. Redevelopment would be an opportunity to do this, maybe through architectural details or signage. He said the goal was to make Peachtree City the best it could be.

Liotta asked if the 2022 Comp Plan covered some of these recommendations. Cailloux said it was just a guide. Hamner said once the UDO established the overarching principles, such as bike racks and EV charging stations, then they could get specific with regulations for each village center, similar to what they did on SR 54 West. Ritenour said there were gaps because they thought the UDO would cover them, but that UDO process didn't move forward.

Benefits of creating additional overlay districts would give each village center its own identity, reduce uniformity, and define consequences for rogue developers who ignored the guidelines. Hamner again said he and Ritenour wanted feedback.

Step one, he continued, would be to ask Council to create a UDO committee. This was a big project and expertise was needed to do the job right. Planning Commission members could serve on the committee, but they needed to engage with City staff and also access professionals. The next step would be for the City to finalize and adopt the UDO, then they could start on production of new overlay districts for village centers. Hamner suggested they might want to revisit some of the existing overlay districts and update them, as well. There had been suggestions that they do another overlay district first, but Ritenour said the UDO should come first. He noted they could look at UDOs from other cities to broaden their thinking.

Creating a full UDO would take 18 to 24 months, Cailloux stated, and she pointed out that it took them two meetings to update just the administrative variance section of the ordinance. The UDO would have a couple of hundred sections. Hamner agreed that what they were recommending was hard and would take more than a year.

Liotta noted that both the UDO and the overlay districts would require Council approval, so he thought they should do them all together. But everyone agreed that would be daunting, timewise. Ritenour said he felt they would discover things while working on the UDO that they could use for the overlay districts. Once they started working on a specific village center, Cailloux remarked, they would be able to address opportunities and challenges of that center. The UDO was generic, and the districts were specific.

Kriz said this was a great idea, and he was happy to be involved, but he worried about Council approval, noting that the Planning Commission had unanimously approved things that Council then rejected. Could they include Council members in this process? Cailloux said Council members could not be voting members of committees but could be useful as a sounding board. That's why public involvement was important. Hamner and Ritenour said they wanted Council to voice their opinions, especially when they started talking about the village centers.

Cailloux noted there was no reason why they couldn't talk with Council members about what was going on. Ritenour said he wanted the Commissioners to have a good understanding of what Council would support and why.

Cailloux said it sounded to her like they wanted Council's approval to move ahead with a UDO. She noted that the fiscal year 2025 budget had been adopted and did not include money for a UDO. It did include money for a growth boundary/annexation study. They would need to make a strong case for reallocating money, she stated. Ritenour asked if there were grants, but Cailloux said they were specific to energy consumption. Other grants went to identified areas.

Liotta asked if there was a limit as to how many Planning Commissioners could serve. The meetings would have to be ADA accessible; only two Council members could serve as ex officio members, and the meetings would be advertised with the disclaimer that a quorum might be present, Cailloux stated.

Reeves asked if members could attend meetings remotely? Cailloux said she didn't think they could vote through a remote meeting, but discussions would be fine. Reeves said she would like to participate but had to travel for her work. Ritenour noted that everyone had other things going on, but he was excited to see the community come together to work on this.

The City Council had changed their meeting organization, and Cailloux suggested

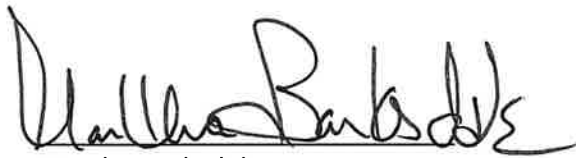
the Planning Commission consider that, too. One meeting could be a business meeting, and the second meeting of the month could be devoted to the UDO.

The presentation to Council was on the September 19 agenda. Kriz asked if they would talk about budget, saying he thought they should bring it up as early as possible. The previous UDO was \$80,000, which Cailloux said she thought was low. She would expect at least \$120,000 now. If they didn't get the money, Cailloux said they had identified some problems, and they could work on those problems individually.

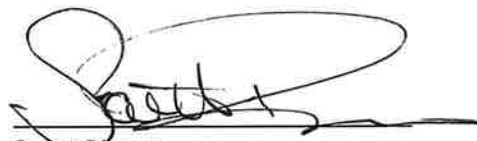
Reeves asked if there was anything the Planning Commission could do to prepare for the Council presentation? Cailloux said to think about what they thought was needed, such as the bypass lanes that came up earlier in the Take 5 discussion. Hamner said he would be sending them updated versions of his presentation.

The public hearing for the short-term rental ordinance was on the agenda for their next meeting, and then discussions of creating an ordinance for backyard chickens, starting with looking at what other communities are doing.

There being no further business, Kriz moved to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Martha Barksdale



Scott Ritenour