

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 28, 2024
6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Scott Ritenour opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chairman Kenneth Hamner, Andrew Kriz, Felicia Reeves, Ray Liotta, and Alternate Brett Hanes were also in attendance. Also present were Planning Director Robin Cailloux, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialists Katelyn Daws and Jameson Collins.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

None

Approval of Minutes

1. Planning Commission Meeting October 14, 2024

Liotta moved to approve the October 14, 2024, meeting minutes. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

1. Special Use Permit request for 400 Crosstown Drive

Cailloux explained that a special use permit (SUP) was an additional permission granted to a property, and the underlying zoning district did not change. Here, the applicant was requesting to subdivide the existing building for tenants that were larger than 32,000 square feet. Per the City's "big box ordinance" an SUP was required because the building had been vacant for at least two years.

This was the old Kmart building in the Braelinn Shopping Center, and the applicants wanted to subdivide it into a 40,000 square foot space for Ace Pickleball Club, with the remaining 47,000-plus square feet used for retail tenants.

The review criteria were different for an SUP than for a rezoning. Cailloux summarized them by saying the Commission should consider if what was proposed was compatible with the Comprehensive Plan policies, if it was compatible with the adjacent properties, if there were adequate public services, if there was safe vehicular and pedestrian transportation, if the proposed use met the intent and function of the General Commercial (GC) zoning district, and if it met the performance standards in the land development ordinance (LDO). Because this was an existing building that would not be enlarged and the layout of the parking lot would be unchanged, staff was of the opinion that this met the intended function of the GC category and all of the review criteria.

She referred the Commissioners to a traffic study prepared by the applicant that showed the future buildout of this project would not change the intersections to the extent that they were failing. Those that already were graded as failing would continue to do so.

Cailloux said staff was of the opinion that this request met the criteria and did not have any recommended conditions for approval.

The civil engineer for this project showed the plan for the building and mentioned there should be no negative impact to public safety or traffic. A representative of Ace Pickleball Club's corporate team explained they were headquartered in Roswell. She said the idea was to provide a "third place" of belonging in addition to home and work. The franchisee noted the explosive growth of pickleball among players of all ages but noted the lack of indoor courts in the Peachtree City area, and this facility would provide 14. He said players could join as members or pay a one-time fee.

Ritenour opened the public hearing to speakers who supported this request. Claudia Eisenberg said she was glad to see this type of development proposed for the long-vacant building. Ralph Hail also said he welcomed this use here. No one wished to speak in opposition. Ritenour asked if anyone had questions, and Cary Cook asked how much a membership would cost? The franchisee said costs would vary, but an unlimited membership was \$129 a month. Kevin Brady asked if the SUP was a one-time permit for this use? Cailloux said the SUP carried with the land; it was permanent. No one else wished to speak, and Ritenour closed the public hearing.

Kriz noted that Cailloux's report said staff was of the opinion that this request met "most if not all of the evaluation criteria," and wondered which ones caused hesitation. She replied that was just faulty language. He then asked if they could add a condition to make this subdivision applicable only to this use, and Cailloux said they could not restrict it by use. The request was not based on the tenant, and this use was permitted in the GC zoning district. She said she believed they would be seeing more of these in the future as existing sites were redeveloped.

Hamner asked if there would be anything besides pickleball courts, and the franchisee said there would be a small store for equipment sales and a snack bar.

Liotta complimented the thoroughness of the traffic report and wondered how the traffic generated by pickleball would compare to retail space. Cailloux said retail space had a much higher trip generation rate than an indoor sports club.

Reeves and Hanes both agreed this was a good use of this property. Hamner concurred, saying he liked the "third space" concept. Kriz said he was excited to see what happened with the retail space next door. Ritenour said he, too, thought

they would be seeing more of this as big box stores went away. He also stated that this would bring a community sporting focus to an area that really didn't have anything similar.

Reeves moved to recommend approval for a special use permit for 400 Crosstown Drive. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

1. Rezoning request for a portion of 201 Aberdeen Parkway from GC to GR

Ritenour noted that they had a good discussion of this proposal during a public hearing at their September 23 meeting that led to an off-site meeting between the applicants and citizens. However, he continued, they could not re-open the public hearing for further citizen comments. He told the citizens present that they would be able to speak during the public hearing at the November 21 City Council meeting. He reminded them that the Planning Commission only made recommendations that Council could agree with or disregard.

Cailloux reminded them that this property was a 38-acre tract zoned GC. The applicant was asking to carve off 14.6 acres for rezoning to General Residential (GR), where up to 12 dwelling units per acre were allowed, coming to a maximum of 175 in this case. She showed renderings of the site plan, indicating the Crown Plaza and saying it would not be affected.

The public hearing was held on September 23. The applicant then asked the Planning Commission to table the item to allow for an informational meeting with the public. Tonight, Cailloux said, the Planning Commission needed to make a recommendation so this could move forward to a public hearing with City Council at its November 21 meeting.

Liotta said he asked Cailloux at the previous meeting to find out if the Fire Department foresaw any difficulties in fighting a fire at a complex such as this. Cailloux told him they did a call analysis of this compared to Hearthside and determined that the call rate would not significantly impact their level of service. Liotta said his question was about the layout and the interior courtyard. It would have to meet fire access codes, Cailloux said, and that would be reviewed at all stages of the development process.

Reeves wanted to know what happened at the meeting with citizens. Connie Engel of Strada Communities said it took place on October 16 at the Crown Plaza. Her takeaways were that the main concerns were traffic, trees, and taxes. They had submitted a trip generation report with the zoning application, she said, and met again last week with their traffic engineer, who said the traffic generated from this development would be inconsequential because it was for older people who didn't drive as much. There was a lot of discussion about buffers, and Engel said they were trying to provide an appealing option for people to downsize to, so

landscaping and appearance were important. As far as taxes, Engel noted this was a commercial development, even though it would be zoned residential, and would be taxed as commercial.

She said they had a lot of good questions from the public, and some people were in favor of what they wanted to do, while others said they would never move there. She said the fitness program they were planning with Kennesaw State University got a lot of positive attention. Only about 20 people attended, Engel remarked, even though the meeting was publicized.

Hanes was skeptical that 531 daily estimated trips should be termed "negligible." The architect pointed out that traffic at peak times was lower and that the trip generator did not take into account a diminishing number if someone took a golf cart, which he expected many residents would do.

What about the total impervious surface? Hanes asked. The architect said he did not have that information but noted they would have to meet all the City's criteria.

Hanes remarked that this would remove an access point from the hotel, so why did the Fire Department have no concerns? Cailloux said it would not remove an access point and also said the Fire Department would review the site plan later in the development process.

Hanes then asked about a minimum age for residents, and Jeremy Ragsdale of Thrive Communities said they were willing to have a deed restriction saying at least one resident had be at least 62 and that there could be no residents younger than 18, except for two weeks per year to allow for visitors.

What about ADA accessibility? The architect told Hanes that all of the units were designed for aging in place.

He then presented a rendering of how Aberdeen would look, pointing out that it showed a minimal disturbance of trees. Cailloux said a larger buffer would be one of staff's conditions if approval was recommended.

Liotta mentioned the difficult left turn from Aberdeen Parkway onto SR 74. What would be the impact of people choosing to go up Wisdom Road past the school to get to the traffic light? The architect said he didn't know.

Kriz asked Engel if anything had changed in the proposal other than the willingness to restrict age? Engel replied that they had always been willing to have an age restriction and that there had been no changes from what was initially proposed.

Kriz expressed concerns over why this was for 14.6 acres and why the tract was shaped as it was. He stated he felt it was that way because the developers wanted to wedge in as many units as possible. He said he would rather see the property

subdivided so the residents could get maximum use and enjoyment out of the space.

He said this development did not fit into the character of the community, and he, like Hanes, did not feel 531 daily trips were negligible. He shared Liotta's concerns about westbound traffic towards 74 and its impact on the area. Kriz said this development was the wrong fit for this area and called it "disingenuous."

Hamner stated that he expressed his views at the September meeting and was still against this because he could not support rezoning scarce commercial property to residential.

The Comprehensive Plan, Liotta remarked, talked about the step-down land use model in village centers, radiating from a commercial core. This proposal talked about introducing a residential use at the commercial core. He also did not want to lose a commercial property. Liotta said he looked at the criteria they used for rezonings and did not feel this met those criteria regarding compatibility with the adjacent uses. This property had a reasonable economic use as currently zoned, he stated, and also there were concerns about traffic. Liotta said he realized the Comp Plan called for more senior housing, but this was not the right place.

Reeves said she hadn't heard anything that would make her change her mind about supporting this. She noted that the Future Land Use map called for commercial use of this property. Traffic was a concern, and she felt there were far too many units planned.

The density would be much higher than this appeared because much of the land was not usable, Hanes said. He said he couldn't support this because of traffic concerns.

Ritenour thanked the developers for being willing to talk with the neighbors, but felt they should have done that from the very beginning. He mentioned the shortage of senior housing in the community and said something such as this was needed.

However, he continued, the city was basically out of developable commercial space, and he could not support rezoning this to residential. Once that commercial land is gone, we can't get it back. He cautioned opponents that this property probably would not remain undeveloped. The owner had the right to develop it for any of the GC uses, which included car washes, convenience stores, drive-in restaurants, office buildings, or a post-secondary school, among others.

Hamner moved to recommend disapproval of the rezoning request for a portion of 201 Aberdeen Parkway from GC to GR. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

1. Conceptual Site Plan/Building Elevations, Vystar Credit Union, 705 HWY 54 W

Hooks said this was in the front of the Peachtree Crossing Shopping Center at the site of the BB&T Bank. The lot was 1.1 acres, and the proposal was to demolish the building and construct a 2,800 square foot building with 24 parking spaces.

The property was currently legally non-conforming because it had 31 parking spaces, which was more the number than permitted by today's standards, and the existing landscape buffer was 25 feet, not the 60 feet now required. Due to the proposed redevelopment, the property must come into compliance with all current development standards.

She pointed out two existing access points from the shopping center and said those would be left unchanged. The site layout met building and parking setbacks.

The parking requirements for banks were one space per 250 square feet, which meant 11 parking spaces, with a maximum of 14. This proposal was for 24 spaces, with 12 on an impervious surface and 12 pervious. City Council approved this increase by granting a variance at their August 15 meeting. A 60-foot landscape buffer was proposed, which satisfied the requirement.

Moving on to the elevations, Hooks showed a rendering of the proposed building. Brick and stone veneer were proposed for the primary materials with stucco as a secondary material, along with some metal accents. Sections 728 through 730 of the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) stated that predominant colors should be neutral or earth tones. The proposed palette included neutral grays with hints of warmer browns in the brick and blue accents. Section 725 said the building should be compatible with nearby development, and Hooks presented photos of adjacent structures, pointing out the neutral colors on them. Staff was of the opinion that the palette was neutral and would be compatible with the surrounding buildings.

She presented renderings showing the building from different views. The LDO stated front facades should be 80% primary materials and side facades at least 50% primary materials. Excluding the window area, the front facade would be approximately 60% primary materials and the sides approximately 64% primary materials. There was no requirement for the rear, but it showed about 80%. The drive-thru would be in the rear, Hooks noted.

Staff was of the opinion that both the site plan and the elevations met the requirements of the ordinances and recommended approval.

Bob Corley represented VyStar. He explained that VyStar was a credit union, not a bank, and did business on a more personal level, hence the need for more parking spaces.

Hamner and Kriz had no questions. Liotta said it looked to him like the pervious surface would increase. Hooks said the enlargement of the buffer increased the

pervious surface by 7,000 square feet. Liotta said he was glad to be able to get that landscape buffer back.

He suggested using the darker gray color that was used on the parapet in other areas, too, because he felt the building presented as too light. Corley said he could do that.

Reeves agreed that the darker gray would tone it down. She commented on the shade of blue, and Corley said it was the VyStar brand blue.

Hamner said he thought this would be a great redevelopment for the area. Kriz agreed and said he agreed with Liotta's suggestion about the color, as did Ritenour. Ritenour said he was glad to see the redevelopment.

Liotta moved to approve the conceptual site plan and building elevations, VyStar Credit Union, 705 Hwy 54 W with colors adjusted based on the Commission's comments. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

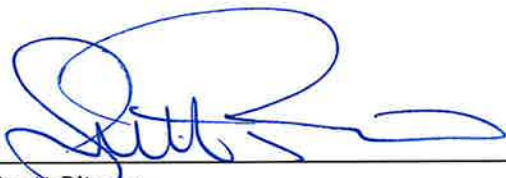
2. ~~Building Elevations, Magnolia Dental, 100 Gates Entry~~ Postponed

Workshop Items

Ritenour canceled the November 11 meeting due to the City offices being closed for Veterans Day. Cailloux pointed out the November 25 meeting was during Thanksgiving week and recommended canceling that meeting as well. There was a need for a meeting in November to hear several items and a special called meeting was set for November 18 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further business, Reeves moved to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.


Martha Barksdale


Scott Ritenour