Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Abbreviated Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 27, 2025
6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Scott Ritenour opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:30 p.m.. Vice Chairman Kenneth Hamner, Andrew Kriz, Ray Liotta, Felicia Reeves and alternate Brett Hanes were also in attendance. Also present were City Manager Justin Strickland, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialist Elijah Brewer.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

City Manager Strickland announced the new Planning and Development Director will be Shayla Reed.

1. **Development Status Report**

   Strickland announced that Shayla Reed, currently Community Development Director for the City of Douglasville, had been hired as Planning Director and would start work the following Monday.

   Hooks presented progress reports on ongoing projects. She said the Aberdeen mixed-use redevelopment had seen no activity since it was approved for site construction plans in October. Aventure Aviation was progressing, and Bridgepark Medical was mostly complete. The Center for Innovation at the former Booth Middle School was updating some exterior features. Updates on CertainTeed were continuing. The City was building a new fire station on the former animal shelter site, and a demo permit had been issued, but construction plans had not been reviewed.

   Gerber Collision and Gerresheimer were both wrapping up their projects, Hooks reported, except that Gerresheimer was having issues with getting grass to grow. There had been no movement on the project near Smokerise on Sumner Road since the conceptual plan was approved in February of the previous year. Hoshizaki had planted a portion of their landscape plan, and 1001 Moba Drive had site work in progress. Integrity Fusion also was wrapping up, and Kopper's was nearing the end of its project. The Laurel Brooke condos were in progress. Moon Valley Nursery was almost complete as well but also had issues with grass.

   Trees had been removed on the corner lot at 455 Northlake Drive, which had its conceptual plan approved in 2006 and its construction plans in 2008. The City Engineer requested the site construction plans be resubmitted when they came back in 2023, Hooks explained, and those were approved. Elevations were approved in 2017, but the building had been changed, and they would need to come back to the Planning Commission when they were ready to build. Right now they were building the parking area and grading the pad site for the building.

This site was granted several variances by City Council in the early 2000s, Strickland pointed out. Hooks said one allowed them to put stormwater in the buffer area, which was necessary because the site was so small. The City Attorney had said the variances still applied, even though they were granted nearly 20 years ago, Strickland commented. He said he was writing a memo to Council advising them of this project.

Rapid progress on the Primrose day care center in Wilshire meant landscape plans should be submitted soon, Hooks remarked. The pool permit was being finalized for the Residence Inn on World Drive. Work seemed stalled on the self-storage facility going up next to Gerber. Construction was well underway on the Silon project, and the Naeco Way site across from the Gerresheimer expansion site had been stalled for awhile. Take 5 Oil Change was almost complete. Site construction plans were waiting for review on the "toy box" project at the airport. No work had been done at the bank on SR 54 since the Planning Commission had approved their conceptual site plan in October. The medical office next to the day care center was making progress.

Moving on to residential projects, Hooks noted that Everton was still on the list but was about 99% complete. About 11 of the 18 single-family lots at Laurel Brooke were complete; one townhome lot was finished, and two others were in progress.

Hooks asked Strickland what he knew about the townhome project on MacDuff Parkway past Cresswind. One parcel there had been approved for townhomes. Strickland recalled there was a landlocked second parcel annexed by the State Legislature into Peachtree City from Tyrone because the only access was through Peachtree City. The owners had requested to build townhomes on that parcel, but Council denied the request, and that land was still zoned Agricultural as it was annexed. Hooks said they hadn't heard from them since that time.

At Mill Farms, five spec homes were under construction, and permits had been submitted for other lots. Construction site plans were being reviewed for Peachtree Court townhomes, part of the Governors Square development. Another townhome development, at 201 Rockaway Road, had been idle since August, awaiting revisions to some comments made on their modified construction plan. One property was left to finalize at Smokerise Corners, and it was under construction, Hooks remarked. Towson's phase I, consisting of 37 properties, was about 24% complete. There had been no movement on phase II, and site construction plans were under review for phase III (Towson Place). Strickland said he believed clearing had started for phase II, and Hooks said she would check.

Hooks assigned Hanes as the Commission's liaison to the projects previously assigned to Mitzi Johnston, but there were other spots to fill. Kriz offered to take on the Kopper's project, while Liotta said he could handle the Northlake project and Peachtree Court Townhomes. Ritenour volunteered to look after the Vystar Bank project.

Approval of Minutes

1. **Planning Commission Meeting December 9, 2024**
   Kriz moved to approve the December 9, 2024, Planning Commission meeting minutes. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

1. **Landscape Plan, Aventure Aviation, 108 International Drive**
   Aventure Aviation was at the end of Dividend Drive, surrounded by the Planterra Golf Course on two sides, and zoned General Industrial (GI). The new impervious surface area was 179,032 square feet, requiring at least 537 caliper inches of overstory trees and 358 inches of understory trees. They had identified two tree save areas with a total of 8,603 square feet, which, per Section 1110(e) of the Land Development Ordinance (LDO), allowed the Planning Commission to permit up to a 25% reduction in the total number of trees. This would reduce the total required caliper inches to 526 overstory inches and 350 understory inches. The proposal, Hooks reported, was for 85% of the canopy trees, or 447 inches, and 67% of understory trees, or 233 inches, and they had requested to use the tree fund alternative compliance method to compensate for the shortfall. She said staff was of the opinion they had done everything they reasonably could to meet the planting requirements.

   Some new plant material would be added on the side of the property where the existing building was located. Hooks pointed out understory fruit trees throughout the site, along with several types of evergreens. The entire back side was planted with evergreens, including hollies and magnolias. Elms, oaks, and maples were included in the hardwoods to add fall color. Hooks showed areas with existing vegetation.

   Staff was of the opinion that they had met the ordinance requirement and recommended approval.

   The project manager from the Forza Group represented the applicant.

   Kriz said it appeared they were adding some new trees around the existing building, and the applicant said that was correct. Were the plants native to Georgia? Hamner asked, and the applicant said he did not know, but would check and advise Hooks.

Liotta said it was a good mix of plant material, and most were native or at least adaptable to the area. He was not a fan of using the tree fund and would like to see trees increased in caliper size to reduce the overstory deficit. He suggested upsizing the caliper of the trees in the screen planting on the golf course side from three inches to four. He also mentioned a typo in the tree replacement calculations but said it did not effect the total.

Reeves agreed with Liotta that more tree coverage would be good. Hanes concurred that extra screening was needed. Ritenour was concerned that the steep slope between this property and the golf course might preclude planting larger trees, but he said he would like to see them upsized, if possible. Kriz also agreed, proposing approval with the condition that the applicant work with staff to see what could be done.

There might be three trees that weren't native to Georgia, Hamner reported—the Chinese Pistache, the Green Giant Arborvitae, and the Emerald Green Arborvitae. He said he would like to see those replaced with native plants. No other Commissioners had comments.

Ritenour said the motion needed to incorporate the upsizing of the caliper of the trees and also regarding the native plants. He noted they had approved plans in the past that included the Emerald Green Arborvitae, but he was not sure about the Green Giant. The Chinese Pistache was new to him. Liotta noted that he also supported planting native species, but sometimes there was no native plant that would do what you wanted it to do, such as provide screening. It would be acceptable to him if the plants were adaptable to the zone. Hanes suggested they direct the applicant to work with staff.

Kriz moved to approve the landscape plan for Aventure Aviation at 108 International Drive with two conditions: (1) that the trees abutting the golf course be increased in caliper inches from three to four, if possible, and (2) applicant work with staff to replace the Green Giant Arborvitae, Chinese Pistache, and Emerald Green Arborvitae with species native to this area of Georgia. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Building Elevations, Blue Roof Center, 300 Willowbend Road**

This development, commonly known as the Blue Roof Center, was on Willowbend, around the corner from City Hall, and was zoned General Commercial (GC). There were several ongoing maintenance issues due to deterioration of the existing materials, and the owner decided to do an exterior upgrade.

Currently, the buildings had vinyl siding that had faded to gray and blue metal roofs, plus a limited amount of ribbed concrete block. They were proposing to replace the vinyl with Hardie siding, a fiber-cement product that staff felt met the requirement for durable materials that were low-maintenance. That change would bring the property into conformance with the ordinance regarding materials.

The ordinance called for colors in a neutral or earth-toned palette, and a warm white was proposed for the primary color, with dark blue accents. Parapets were proposed for the façade of the longest building, alternating between tall and short. The upgrades also included black metal roofs, dark bronze-colored storefronts, new lighting, and new signage. Black and white striped awnings were proposed, and Hooks stated that striped awnings were permitted by the ordinance if colors complemented the character of the structure or group of buildings, which staff felt that they did. She showed photos of the buildings as they appeared now and renderings of how they would appear when renovated.

Staff was of the opinion the proposed building improvements for 300 Willowbend Road met the requirements of the City's ordinances and design standards and recommended approval.

The applicant was H. Builtwell Development, and the spokesman said this center had been in his wife's family since the 1990s, and it was time for an upgrade. The process started out as a maintenance rehab that morphed into a renovation.

Hanes said he thought the renderings looked great. Reeves asked to see the color samples that the applicant had provided.

Liotta asked about a rendering that showed a landscape island in the parking lot, and the applicant said he had been working with engineer Jason Walls to improve traffic flow in the parking lot, and there was the potential to add an island. Liotta asked about the open air structure he saw, and the applicant said it would provide outdoor seating for a restaurant. He confirmed that all four sides of the buildings would get the same treatment as the fronts. Liotta then asked if the names on the signs in the rendering were those of potential tenants, and the applicant said they were just examples. Liotta stated his approval for the appearance.

Kriz wanted to know if the Planning Commission had to approve any changes in the landscaping. Hooks said they would not; that was required only if there were changes in the amount of impervious surface. Even if they added the drive, it would depend on how much new impervious surface there was. It had to be more than 5,000 square feet. Kriz confirmed that staff would have to approve signage.

Kriz asked the applicant if the mural would be on Hardie plank, and he said it would. Kriz said he thought the plans looked great but would ask them to add some shade trees if they re-did the parking lot. The applicant said they were outside the 5,000 square feet right now.

Ritenour noted that this did not fall within any of the overlay districts but did face a major road. Were there requirements for brick or stone? Hooks said in the past, the Planning Commission had said fiber-cement siding met the requirement for a durable material. Ritenour said he was thinking more of a brick or stone wrap at the bottom to break up the façade. Hooks said this really wasn't a redevelopment, so she didn't think they could require the water table. This was something the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) could include, Ritenour noted.

All the Commissioners said they thought this looked good, and they were excited to see it. Hanes mentioned that if they removed some of the impervious surface for trees, they could use that towards credits.

Liotta moved to approve the elevations as presented. Reeves seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Items

1. Unified Development Ordinance next steps

There were no items on the agenda for the February 10 Planning Commission meeting, Hooks said, but suggested that might be a good date for the first meeting of the UDO Steering Committee. Ritenour agreed, saying it would be good opportunity to talk with the new Planning Director.

Next, they moved into the kickoff meeting for the UDO, which Council voted to support in December. Ritenour said it would require cooperation between Council, the Planning Commission, staff, and possibly outside consultants. The Steering Committee would be made up of the Planning Commission members. Council's approval gave them access to City staff, but contracting with outside services with costs would have to be approved separately by Council. Strickland had set up access to Microsoft Teams for all committee members, which Ritenour said was a powerful tool for sharing documents.

Hamner reviewed the UDO presentation he and Ritenour delivered at the November 21 Council meeting. He covered the current state of development regulations, pointing out that there were many duplications, discrepancies, and contradictions in both the Zoning Ordinance and the Land Development Ordinance that a UDO could correct. Opportunities for improvement were presented, as well as methods for implementation. Hamner outlined a proposal to create overlay districts in parts of the city that did not have them, explaining why they would be beneficial while emphasizing that they did not intend for all areas to look the same. He said they assured Council that they were looking to restructure the ordinances, not create or develop new ones.

The goals for the cleaned-up UDO and new overlays, he concluded, would be to support the Comprehensive Plan, be clear and objective, boost economic development in the city, and support the community so it could flourish with respect to the things that made it unique. They stressed the need for organization and to bring in experts for guidance. Hamner also emphasized the importance of encouraging citizen involvement and keeping Council updated on their progress.

The next discussion was on who would lead the UDO project, and Ritenour said it did not have to be the Planning Commission Chair. He wanted the best person in that job. Ritenour said he would like to see individual Commissioners take on sections of the ordinance, with the leader managing the project as a whole. Kriz said that would be a good idea. Hamner offered to lead the committee, and the committee assented. He said the section leaders would have autonomy. Liotta said Hamner was a good choice.

Defining goals and objectives should be one of their first tasks, Ritenour said, and that should include a mission statement. The team would have to decide on work breakdown and prioritization. He suggested they look first at projects that would be low effort to fix but have high impact. However, there might be issues because so many topics were entangled, and changes in one section could lead to issues with another. The committee also needed to decide what software to use to track their work.

Ritenour proposed they give Council an update in six months and said they needed to decide on other milestones. Collaboration between the committee, staff, and experts would be key.

February 10 seemed like the best date for the next meeting. Hooks mentioned that was the date of the Council retreat, and the new director would be participating in that. The next Planning Commission meeting would be February 24, but Hamner said they needed to meet before then in order to set priorities. Could they meet in Teams? Ritenour asked, and Strickland said he would have to ask the City Clerk about Georgia's Open Meetings laws, but he didn't think they could all participate on Teams. They decided to hold the meeting in the Community Room downstairs. Strickland said they could cancel the Planning Commission meeting for the 10th and hold a special called meeting on that date, also at 6:30 p.m.

Kriz moved to cancel the February 10 Planning Commission meeting. Hamner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Hamner asked everyone to sign up with Teams by Wednesday, and they would start conversations on Thursday regarding collaboration software, goals, and so on.

There being no further business, Reeves moved to adjourn at 8:04 p.m. Kriz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Martha Barksdale

Scott Ritenour