

Planning Commission of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 11, 2025
6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

The Peachtree City Planning Commission met Monday, August 11, 2025, in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Chairman Scott Ritenour called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioners Andrew Kriz, Robert Halverson, new member Christopher Jenkins, and Alternate Jack Allen were also present. Vice Chairman Kenneth Hamner was absent. Planning and Development Director Shayla Reed, Senior Planner Lora Hooks, Recording Secretary Martha Barksdale, and IT Specialist Elijah Brewer were also in attendance. Ritenour welcomed Mayor Kim Learnard who was in the audience.

Additions or Deletions

None

Announcements and Reports

None

Approval of Minutes

1. Planning Commission Meeting June 28, 2025

Halverson moved to approve the July 28, 2025, meeting minutes. Allen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

1. Consider a Zoning Text Amendment to revise land use regulations to permit Cosmetic Tattooing and Microblading

Planning Director Shayla Reed said City Council had requested staff to draft an ordinance to address cosmetic tattooing/microblading services. There were already businesses operating in the city that offered these services. Also, the Fayette County Commission had adopted regulations for these services, and the Chamber of Commerce had requested all municipalities look into it, as well. Council discussed this a few months ago and decided to ask that the Planning Commission recommend language that could be either for or against allowing these services.

Tonight, she said, she wanted a conversation on what position the Planning Commission wanted to take on the matter. She needed suggestions so staff could create a draft ordinance that would come back to them at the next meeting. They would talk more at that meeting, then send the draft over to Council.

Currently, Reed stated, the Zoning Ordinance specifically regulated only tattoo parlors, with language that prohibited them in the section on General Commercial (GC). Reed had provided definitions of tattoos, cosmetic tattoos, microblading, and body art that should be adopted.

Also, she wanted them to consider what zonings should permit businesses offering

these services, if they wanted to allow them. If they did want to allow these services, staff's proposal called for them to be limited to areas zoned Light Industrial (LI) and to be no closer than 5,000 feet from another such establishment. Staff would verify the distance when issuing a business license. This requirement was to prohibit saturation. If they favored not permitting them, staff had drafted language saying these services were not permitted in GC zoning districts.

Ritenour opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition, and he closed the hearing. He asked if any of the Commissioners had questions or comments.

Kriz asked why 5,000 feet was selected as the minimum distance between similar businesses. Reed said the goal was to avoid saturation, but this distance was just a suggestion. However, she had seen that other municipalities used that distance. Kriz thought it would be helpful to let Council see what other comparable cities had done.

He then asked what kind of motion she was looking for from the Planning Commission. Reed said they would be making a motion to either permit or not permit this use. That recommendation would then be sent on to the City Council, along with the suggested language.

Halverson asked what would happen to existing business owners who were already offering these services. Reed noted that they would educate the public about any ordinance changes and when it was time for a business license renewal, the license would not be renewed. Several spas offered these services, she noted, but it was never the intent of the City to allow spas to offer microblading or cosmetic tattooing. The City would inform them they could not continue, and if they did, Code Enforcement would take action. Microblading and cosmetic tattooing services could not be grandfathered in, because they were never permitted in the first place.

Allen asked what would happen to two hypothetical businesses, one in operation for 15 years and one for five years. Reed stepped in, it was not a matter of how many years they had been operating. If a business was licensed as a spa, it could continue operating as a spa, but it could not offer microblading or cosmetic tattooing.

Was a traditional tattoo parlor the same as cosmetic tattooing for the purpose of this ordinance? Allen inquired, and Reed said they were different. That's why the suggested language had them in the same section but listed separately.

Ritenour asked for examples of businesses in LI. They included offices, Reed said. Also, a car wash could be in LI, as could a restaurant or a business that sold its own products, such as sinks. The Huddleston Road area was a good example of what could be in LI. Ritenour said he wanted to make it clear that it wouldn't be in a

retail area. Hooks asked if they were also considering the LUI zone, such as the development at the intersection of Kelly and Dividend, as suitable for tattooing and microblading, and Reed said they were.

What zoning districts were businesses currently engaging in these services? Kriz asked, and Reed replied that they were mainly in GC, although Limited-Use Commercial (LUC) might have one. They were licensed as spas, but it was never the City's intent to have these uses included for a spa. Spas had added these services without checking with the City to determine if they were a permitted use, Reed remarked.

So they were trying to clarify what was allowed and not allowed and where it could be, Kriz concluded, and Reed said that was correct. Council wanted that information and to ensure that these businesses wouldn't interfere with GC.

Halverson asked if a spa could offer cosmetic tattooing? Reed said the proposal made a spa its own separate operation. He asked if it could be in a medical office building? They were not requiring these services be provided by a medical professional, she replied. Halverson told Ritenour he was in favor of putting this forward to Council.

Allen clarified that under no circumstances was a spa to offer these services, and Reed said that was correct. He said he had no issue with the services but did want to see the businesses separated as much as possible.

Kriz agreed, noting that if there were spas already providing these services, then obviously there was a demand. Regulating these services and filling this hole in the ordinance was a good thing to do, he stated. He also supported a distance requirement, saying a mile seemed about right.

Jenkins said he agreed with the others, as did Ritenour. Ritenour said he would like to see what distance limitations other cities had.

Reed said she would work on the language and bring this back for further discussion and a vote at the next meeting. Ritenour remarked that the Commission seemed to be in favor of allowing these uses with restrictions. Kriz said he would like to see a map of the LUI and LI zoning districts at the next meeting, and Reed agreed to provide one.

2. Consider a Text Amendment to the Land Development Ordinance, specifically Article XI - Vegetation Protection and Landscape Requirements

Commissioner Hamner felt strongly about promoting the use of native plants in landscaping and had proposed this to City Council, Reed stated. Council agreed and also wanted language added to restrict planting of invasive species. She had provided a list of native species used in Athens-Clarke County and another list of invasive species included in the City of Brookhaven's ordinance. The Planning

Commission was being asked to discuss what they wanted to recommend to Council.

Ritenour opened the public hearing, asking who wanted to speak in favor of the text amendment. Landscape architect Warren Elwell said he liked the idea of giving native plants preference and would appreciate having a list of recommended plants. He said it would give the City a more unified appearance and should make staff's job easier in approving landscape plans.

No one else wished to speak either in favor or opposition, and Ritenour closed the public hearing.

Ritenour gave a little background, saying Hamner had been a proponent of this, and he had noticed that on plans they had recently reviewed it seemed the landscapers were trying to use more plants that were native to the southeast.

Jenkins asked about existing plants, and Ritenour said they couldn't remove what was there, but they could regulate things going forward. It would be difficult to regulate on the residential side, but they could for commercial developments. Sometimes, there had to be exceptions, such as if a plant was not available at a certain time of the year.

Kriz said he supported this and noted that former Commissioner Ray Liotta was a big proponent of native species. Halverson said he, too, felt the use of natives was important.

Allen had mixed feelings, recalling a project in Orlando that used plants from sister cities in other countries. It was beautiful, he said. He added he, of course, had no objections to banning invasive species.

Kriz said exceptions could be built into the ordinance, such as gifts from sister cities. Allen asked if they could create a list of non-natives that were approved?

Ritenour asked if this would be only for City property? Allen said homes and businesses should have to get permission before planting. Ritenour said he was thinking more about exchange opportunities on City property, such as specimen gardens, maybe tied into public art installations. That would keep it much more controlled.

Halverson asked Elwell if diseases should be a consideration, and he said that depended on the measures taken by the nurseries. Elwell also added that maybe they shouldn't require exclusively natives. He said he would love to talk to staff about what was readily available. Maybe they could offer points or credits for landscapers who used natives.

Kriz said he liked the idea of credits to the Tree Fund for providing a fully native

landscape plan.

Ritenour asked if the City could ban retailers from selling invasive plants, and Reed said they could not; they could only regulate what was placed on the individual lots.

Reed asked if the Commissioners were comfortable with the two lists of natives and invasive plants or did they want to make changes? She said she could prepare a recommendation for the next meeting with any requested changes.

Kriz said he would like an expert's opinion. Ritenour noted there was an arborist on staff, and Reed said she would get him to weigh in the lists. The Commissioners agreed they wanted to move forward with this.

3. Consider a Text Amendment to the Sign Ordinance, specifically Chapter 66, for revisions to roof sign regulations

This was the continuation of a topic discussed at the previous Planning Commission meeting dealing with conflicting language and discrepancies in the sign ordinance regarding roof signs and signs on parapets and how the City wished to move forward. As of now, the ordinance said roof signs were not allowed but then in another section went on to allow roof signs if they were on a parapet wall.

Ritenour opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition, and he closed the hearing.

Kriz said he believed it would be good to fill this gap in the ordinance, and he was in favor of prohibiting parapet signs.

Halverson asked if there were limitations on the size of signs, and Reed said the limits were based on the square footage of the structure, among other things.

Allen and Jenkins had no questions.

Ritenour said there was a business in the City that had signs on the parapet for several tenants, and he did not like it. There was a provision in the ordinance for multi-tenant locations. He believed parapets should be for screening rooftop equipment, not for signs.

Reed said she had provided an option that allowed them to continue to restrict roof signs, but allow for parapet signs, and another that would change the ordinance to disallow both types. If the Commission supported the latter option, they would remove the language that allowed parapet signs in certain zoning districts.

The Commissioners all agreed that they did not want signs on parapets. Ritenour said they would then recommend language from section 66-15 be removed. Hooks suggested they clarify that in the definitions. Basically, what they were saying was that a sign could not extend above the roofline, Ritenour summarized.

Reed thanked them for taking the time for these discussions, noting there were three new Commissioners and she wanted them to be comfortable with the process.

This was different from what they had done in the past, Ritenour noted, but he thought this process worked well. Reed said she would be incorporating their suggestions, such as the LI zoning map, into a report with the suggested language for the text amendment, and they could then vote if they wanted to move the text amendment onto the Council.

Old Agenda Items

None

New Agenda Items

1. Landscape Plan Modification, Aventure Aviation, 108 International Drive

Hooks pointed out the site, zoned General Industrial (GI) at the end of International Drive and adjacent to the Planterra Golf Course. The landscape plan was approved by the Planning Commission in January, and it included a double row of evergreen trees between this site and the golf course. Those trees were supposed to be three inches in caliper and 8 to 10 feet tall. A condition in the approval asked that they consider increasing the size of some of the trees to four inches and reducing the tree fund contribution because they were meeting only 85% of the canopy tree requirement and 67% of the understory tree requirement.

The landscape installation was almost complete, Hooks continued, but it had come to staff's attention that the evergreens had not been installed according to the approved plan. The trees they were using were about six feet tall and in the two-inch caliper range. The area in question sloped steeply, which meant the trees looked even shorter from the Planterra property and did not create a screen as anticipated.

Removing the trees and replacing them with the correct size was not a good option because the size of the root ball would increase and, due to the slope, would protrude from the ground, meaning the trees probably would not survive. The applicant proposed adding another row of the two-inch caliper evergreens to the top of the hill to create a screen that would be visible from the golf course side.

There would be a deficit of 70 caliper inches of canopy trees between what was installed and what was proposed. To rectify that, the applicant proposed planting 11 Virginia pines and 24 magnolias to make up the shortfall. The Tree Fund contribution would remain the same. Hooks said the building expansion project had been divided into two phases, and some of this landscaping would not be installed until phase two was under construction.

She noted that this proposal was not in complete compliance with the City's

development standards, but the applicant was suggesting this alternative as a way to ensure the best survival of the plants.

Landscape architect Elwell represented the applicant. Ritenour told him he understood this was a difficult site due to the golf course and the slope. He had been past the site and saw that it would take a while for the screen to grow.

Elwell admitted his company made a mistake by planting the smaller trees called for on the original plan. However, removing those six-foot trees and adding some that were two feet taller still wouldn't block the view. Adding plants to the top of the hill should appease the golf course, and those trees would grow over time to create a screen. Ritenour asked if there was enough space at the top of the hill to do that, and Elwell said there was, although it would be tight.

The other Commissioners said they agreed this was a suitable solution, with Kriz saying it looked like they were doing the best they could with what they had to work with. Allen verified that the trees would grow tall enough, and Halverson thanked Elwell for being proactive to find a solution that met the intent of the plan.

Halverson moved to approve the landscape plan modification, Aventure Aviation, 108 International Drive. Allen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Building Elevation Modifications, J Alexander's, 100 Market Place Blvd.

Hooks recalled that Fusion AE presented proposed building modifications for the J. Alexander's that was planned for the former Smokey Bones building on Market Place Boulevard at the July 28 Planning Commission Meeting. Those modifications were approved with the condition that the applicant work with staff and Halverson on the color of the canopies and the material on the tower elements.

Halverson and Hooks met with the J. Alexander's team on July 31, and the team said they were working on a new standard for architectural design for the brand and wanted to propose new modifications for the Peachtree City restaurant that would be similar to the new standards.

The entry design that was proposed earlier was still part of the package, along with columns of Eldorado stone on an EIFS background. The big difference was painting the existing brick a warm white with the base a black color and support columns wrapped with black matte metal. The design guidelines for the Highway 54 Corridor Overlay District permitted painted brick and architectural metals, and the paint and metal colors met the standards stated in the Land Development Ordinance (LDO). Hooks showed elevations of the proposed building and a photo of the existing Smokey Bones.

Since EIFS was still proposed for the entrance feature, the front facade would remain 77% primary materials as in the previous proposal, which was a bit short of the 80% requirements, while the remaining three facades would be 100% primary

materials.

Ritenour said he appreciated the meeting between Hooks, Halverson, and the architect. The applicant's representative thanked Halverson and Hooks as well.

Kriz recalled that Halverson expressed displeasure with the color of the awning at the last meeting. Halverson said he was listing those concerns at the meeting with J.Alexander's team, and they stopped him and showed the new design, which Halverson said was much stronger than the previous design. He was not entirely pleased with it, but it was a move in the right direction. He told Kriz he did not have concerns about the tower elements and the materials.

Kriz said he liked the design, and Allen commented on the extreme difference between this and Smokey Bones.

Ritenour expressed his long-standing dislike of painted brick but said he was glad it was a warm, not bright, white. It would set a good example for redevelopment throughout the city.

Kriz moved to approve the Building Elevation Modifications, J Alexander's, 100 Market Place Blvd. Halverson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Landscape Plan, Residence Inn, 400 World Drive

Based on the amount of new impervious surface area of 39,984 square feet, which did not include the existing parking lot, the landscape ordinance required a minimum of 120 caliper inches of canopy trees and 80 caliper inches of understory trees. The proposal was for 126 inches of canopy trees and 84 inches of understory trees, Hook said.

A large variety of plant material was proposed, but none of the trees were native to the eastern United States, although the trees were well-adapted to this area. Hooks included photos of the ornamental trees that were proposed and said the owner's intention was to create an ornamental landscape. She indicated the magnolia and the arborvitae that would be used for screening. Other than the screening trees and the canopy trees in the parking lot islands, the remaining trees would be ornamentals.

Aside from not using natives, which was not in the landscape ordinance at this time, staff was of the opinion that the plan met the requirements.

Landscape architect Scott Young represented the applicant. He said magnolias were native plants, and agreed that the majority were adapted, but not native.

Allen said he liked this plan. Halverson asked about a photo of an unusual plant that would be used, and Young told him it was a weeping blue atlas cedar that would grow up to 15 feet high and would be used for screening things like power

boxes and generators.

Kriz said he would have liked to have seen more native plants and asked what the other Commissioners thought.

Halverson had no comments, and Allen said this was a good example of a specific situation where natives might not be the best choice. Here, he said, they were obviously going for a particular look and randomly picking trees just because they were natives might not be the best choice.

Ritenour asked if there was any opportunity to substitute a like native species, although he did see what the design was trying to do. He noted that using natives was not a City requirement, though. He asked Young if he would be open to that and referred him to staff's listing of native species. Young said they could investigate, although he was concerned about delays, and Hooks said she could look over any substitutions without the plan coming back to the Commission.

Another person with the applicant said he had been a landscaper his entire career and felt that natives were not always the best choice. Right now, there was a trend to use native plants, but they were not always suitable. Ritenour said he understood that and wanted substitutions only if they would fit the design.

Young added that he would be willing to use natives if possible, but sometimes they were difficult to find. Not many nurseries were set up for that. Ritenour again said the Planning Commission did not want to handcuff them but would like to see natives if possible.

Bob Patel from Residence Inn said the idea behind this landscaping was to set up a "wow" factor for guests and asked the Commission to keep an open mind.

Kriz said he understood that they wanted the property to be striking but didn't think asking them to replace 10 to 15% of the trees with natives would be too much.

Allen wondered why the Planning Commission was pushing so hard for native plants. He thought they had a really nice idea here and didn't want to squash it.

Kriz recalled that Liotta had said natives had a better chance of growing and remaining healthy over the long term. He liked the idea proposed here, but a few natives would promise successful growth into the future. Maybe they needed an expert to come in and talk to them about the benefits and drawbacks of natives.

Ritenour again said it was not their intention to limit what they could do, saying he knew it would be incredible. He just asked them to see if there was a comparable native species they could use.

Hooks asked if they were speaking of just trees or trees, shrubs, ground covers,

and everything? Currently, they only looked at trees, she remarked. Ritenour said he thought they should look at all of them.

Kriz moved to approve the landscape plan for Residence Inn, 400 World Drive with the condition that the applicant try to replace, to the extent possible, non-native species with like or similar native species if available. Allen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workshop Items

The next meeting would be on August 25, followed by a meeting of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Steering Committee.

There being no further business, Kriz moved to adjourn. Halverson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary



Scott Ritenour, Chairman