



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room
February 2, 2021 ~ 1:30 PM
Minutes

February 2, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M.

Members Present: Joseph Welch, Vice-Chairman
Karen Jarrett, Secretary
Eula Parker, Treasurer
Laureen Boles
Travis H. Coles
Elizabeth Epstein
Joseph Ervin
Ruel Joyner
Wayne Noha
Lee Smith
Dwayne Stephens
Linder S. Suthers
Tom Woiwode

Members Not Present: Michael Brown

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director
Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services
Jordan Holloway, Development Services Planner
Kiakala Ntemo, Contract Planner
Jessica Hagan, Administrative Assistant
Julie Yawn, Systems Analyst

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Agenda

[1. Approval of Agenda](#)

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Motion

Approve the agenda as submitted.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

Notice(s)

[2. February 2, 2021 Swearing-in of MPC Commission by Chief Judge Penny Haas Freesemann Chatham County Superior Court.](#)

[3. February 23, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M., Planning Commission, GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: \[www.thempc.org\]\(http://www.thempc.org\).](#)

Proclamations and Acknowledgements

[4. Acknowledgement of Appreciation by Joseph Welch, Chair to Ellis Cook](#)

[5. Acknowledgement of Appreciation by Joseph Welch, Chair to Lacy Manigault](#)

[6. Acknowledgement of Appreciation by Joseph Welch, Chair to Tanya Milton](#)

Information Item(s) for Board Members

[7. Development Plans Submitted for Review](#)

[📎 2-2-21 MPC Case Log.pdf](#)

V. Item(s) Requested to be Removed from the Final Agenda

[8. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 8020 Waters Avenue | Rezone from RSF-10 to O-I | File No. 20-004502](#)

Motion

The petitioner has requested that this item be postponed to the February 23, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha
Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

[9. SPECIAL USE APPROVAL REQUEST | 4429 Skidaway Road | Restaurant w/ Alcohol Sales | File No. 20-006247](#)

Motion

This item has been postponed until the February 23, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha
Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

VI. Items Requested to be Withdrawn

The Consent Agenda consists of items for which the applicant is in agreement with the staff recommendation and for which no known objections have been identified nor anticipated by staff. Any objections raised at the meeting will result in the item being moved to the Regular Agenda. At a 12:30 briefing, the staff will brief the Commission on Consent Agenda items and, time permitting, Regular Agenda items. No testimony will be taken from applicants, supporters or opponents, and no votes will be taken at the briefing.

VII. Consent Agenda

[10. Approval of the January 12, 2021 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.](#)

📎 [01.12. 2021 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

📎 [01-12-2021 MPC BRIEFING MINUTES.pdf](#)

The January 12, 2021 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Motion

Approve the Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Ruel Joyner

Second: Linder Suthers

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

VIII. Old Business

IX. Regular Business

[11. REZONING PLANNED DEVELOPMENT | Little Neck Road | Rezone from R-A to P-D | File No. 20-005235](#)

📎 [Hopeton Landing Masterplan 2021.01.06.pdf](#)

📎 [Hopeton Landing PUD Standards.pdf](#)

📎 [Maps Combined.pdf](#)

📎 [County Engineering Comments.pdf](#)

📎 [Annexation Letter.pdf](#)

📎 [Context Aerials and Street View.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Report 5235.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the petitioner is requesting to rezone 484.90 acres northeast of Little Neck Road between Ogeechee Road and Interstate 95 from R-A-CO (Residential – Agriculture - Annexed) to PD (Planned Development). The intent of the PD is to develop the Master Plan to include single and multi-family residential uses, as well as commercial, institutional and mixed use. The proposed Master Plan identifies where each land use would be permitted, as well as the location of access points, amenity areas, use buffers, existing wetlands, and residential density for each parcel.

Article 6 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance includes the Planned Development District. The purpose of the Planned Development District is to “allow projects that would not otherwise be permitted under this Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. Generally, the PD district is intended for sites where a developer proposes, and the Mayor and Aldermen desire, to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site and surrounding area.”

On November 11, 2019, the City of Savannah annexed the subject properties from Unincorporated Chatham County into the corporate limits of the City (*see attached document*). All abutting properties however, as well as those on the south side of Little Neck Road, are a part of the Unincorporated County. This fact creates potential issues related to the possibility of impacts from a development within the City limits, affecting properties outside the City limits. Little Neck Road is currently maintained by Chatham County. Chatham County, therefore, has authority over connections to Little Neck Road and have recommended that a Traffic Study be completed prior to approval of the Master Plan. The canal that bisects the two parcels is also County maintained. The County has indicated that any activity related to drainage, access or use as a stormwater facility will require concurrence from Chatham County Engineering. (*See attached comments from Chatham County Engineering.*)

The subject property is approximately 485 acres in size. It is undeveloped and includes significant natural resources including freshwater wetlands, salt marsh, forested areas, and access to the Little Ogeechee River. The proposed Master Plan includes:

Single-Family - 119 units
Multi-Family - 58.3 units
Commercial - 8.3 units
Mixed Use - 8 units
Institutional - 19.1 units

The residential density proposed for the single-family tracts is 4 dwelling units per acre with the exception of Tract 11, which is 1 unit per acre. The petitioner is also proposing that the minimum lot area for single-family residential be 5,000 square feet, with a minimum lot width of 50 feet. However, they are also proposing that at least 50% of all single-family residential lots be at least 6,000 square feet in area and 60 feet in width. The intent is to accommodate market flexibility in housing types.

The petitioner is requesting a Planned Development zoning classification for the purpose of developing a Master Plan to include single and multi-family residential uses, as well as commercial, institutional, and mixed use. While the Future Land Use Map designates the property as Planned Development, a number of significant issues appear to be outstanding related to access, stormwater management, traffic and adjacent properties which are still in the Unincorporated area. Although the approval of a Master Plan does not convey approval of any specific site development, staff finds that the outstanding issues are significant enough that changes to the proposed plan are likely as these issues are addressed. In addition, with the understanding that Master Plans are fluid over the course of buildout, it is important that the initially approved plan be the best possible starting point for the development of the subject properties.

The proposed Master Plan will have a significant impact on the larger community of West Chatham over a number of years. This is based on the amount of land disturbance, changes to transportation infrastructure and increases in residential density. It is also likely that large tracts of adjacent and nearby underdeveloped land will begin to transition to more intense land uses. As noted in the review of rezoning

criteria:

- The changing conditions include the imminent growth of West Chatham and the likely annexation of additional properties. This likely outcome will result in the need for additional services and infrastructure in the vicinity.
- The proposed development, once completed, will have a significant impact on the fabric of the area, as it is currently somewhat rural.
- A traffic study will be required to understand the impact of the proposed development and what changes may be necessary.
- All abutting properties, as well as those on the south side of Little Neck Road, are a part of the Unincorporated County. This fact creates potential issues related to the possibility of impacts from a development within the City limits, affecting properties outside the City limits.

Mr. Harold Yellin, agent for the petitioner, stated we are requesting a rezoning from a R-A zoning classification, which is a County classification to PD Planned Development, which is a City classification, and approval of a General Master Plan. In the staff report, MPC's staff agrees that a comprehensive land use plan designates this area as a Planned Development under NewZO. Staff agrees that the proposed Master Plan exhibits some of the characteristics and is generally consistent with future land use designation. Staff agrees that the PD range of uses are more suitable than the uses that are permitted under the current R-A zoning. Staff agrees that PD would permit additional housing, which is not possible under the existing zoning. Staff also agrees that a PD would allow a mixed use development consistent with the Future Land Use Map. I think staff is saying this needs to be continued for additional information. We are prepared to continue this petition. Under Georgia law, after you annex into the City you have to wait one year before you can rezone the property. In approving our annexation, the City has already concluded that Hopeton Landing will be served by Fire Station Number 12 and 15. Police protection will be from Precinct Four. The City has reviewed our Master Plan that shows assisted living, office / commercial mixed use, single and multi-family residential.

Mr. Terry Coleman, Engineer, stated most of the County's comments are typically items we will work through during the specific development plan process. We will sit down with the County and talk about access points. The traffic study to widen Little Neck Road includes the Keller tracks.

Mr. Lee Smith, Chatham County Manager, stated the all of the County's issues will need to be resolved before the County will agree to do anything.

No Public Comments

Motion

Motion to continue to the March 16, 2021 MPC meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Ruel Joyner

Second: Joseph Ervin

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain

Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

12. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT - Amending Sections 3.21, 3.23, 3.24, 8.4.24, 8.4.3, and 8.8.3 - 21-000448-ZA

[☞ Parcels_in_TN1_StreetLabels.pdf](#)

[☞ Parcels_in_TN2_StreetLabels.pdf](#)

[☞ Ordinance Update \(002\).pdf](#)

Mr. Jordan Holloway, Development Services Planner, presented a proposal to amend the Savannah Zoning Ordinance relative to Limitations on Variance Applications, Limitations on Appeals Applications, Limitations on Nonconforming Uses and Structures Applications, updating Use Standards and Use Table for “Animal Services, Indoors”, updating Use Standards and Use Table for “Office, Medical”, and a clerical update to Permitted Temporary Uses as well as Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses.

Since the adoption of NewZo in the summer of 2019, staff continues to update and advance ordinance requirements that may have been overlooked at the time but are in keeping with the intent of the current ordinance.

Staff discovered that the limitations that were a part of the previous ordinance were never placed in the new ordinance related to Variance Applications, Appeals Applications, and Nonconforming Uses and Structure Applications. Without limitations, applicants could request the same variance, appeal, or approval of a nonconforming use/structure after denial by the governing body, without changing the initial request. This update seeks to place a prohibition on above mentioned applications for twelve (12) months from the date of the written decision by the Mayor and Aldermen.

In September of 2020, the Planning Commission tasked MPC Staff with reviewing the TN Zoning Districts uses and use standards. It was brought to their attention that certain uses may be appropriate to be permitted uses within the TN-1 and TN-2 Zoning Districts, as they were compatible with other similar uses.

Finally, Section 8.5 Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses and Section 8.8.3 Permitted Temporary Uses was updated, however subsection formatting was not adequately addressed. This update seeks to address the formatting so that it is updated and correct.

No Public Comments

Motion

Approve the request to amend the ordinance as outlined.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Ruel Joyner

Second: Karen Jarrett

Joseph Ervin - Aye

W. Lee Smith - Not Present

Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Not Present
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

[13. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 1902 & 1920 Waters Avenue & 1111 E 36th Street | Rezone from TC-1 & TR-3 to PD Planned Development | 20-003664-ZA](#)

- [📎 Maps.pdf](#)
- [📎 11.18.20 General and Final development plan.pdf](#)
- [📎 210118_WATERS AND 36TH_MPC PRESENTATION \(002\).pdf](#)
- [📎 Site Views.pdf](#)
- [📎 Letter of Support.pdf](#)
- [📎 Letter of Objectiion.pdf](#)
- [📎 Block Pattern.pdf](#)
- [📎 Staff Report 3664.pdf](#)
- [📎 Support McDermott.pdf](#)
- [📎 Opposition Merrell.pdf](#)
- [📎 Support Winters.pdf](#)
- [📎 Waters Corridor support letter.pdf](#)
- [📎 Letter from True Light Bible Institute.pdf](#)
- [📎 Midtown Opposition.pdf](#)
- [📎 Support Wilvers.pdf](#)
- [📎 Support Miller.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the petitioner is requesting to rezone .97 acres on 1902 and 1920 Waters Avenue and 1111 NE 36th Street from TC-1 (Traditional Commercial) and TR-3 (Traditional Residential) to PD (Planned Development). The intent of the PD is to develop the properties with two mixed use residential buildings. The combined residential unit count is 74 and the total ground floor commercial space is 4,800 square feet.

Article 6 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance includes the Planned Development District. The purpose of the Planned Development District is to “allow projects that would not otherwise be permitted under this Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. Generally, the PD district is intended for sites where a developer proposes, and the Mayor and Aldermen desire, to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site and surrounding area.”

The petitioner is seeking concurrent General Master Plan and Final Master Plan approval, pursuant to Section 6.1.11a of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance. This section allows the petitioner to present for consideration all the requirements associated with General and Final Master Plans for the proposed Planned Development at the same time.

Per the Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of the General Master Plan is to “convey the overall concept for the entire development and guide and coordinate any phased development.” The purpose of the Final Master Plan is to “provide additional details regarding dimensions, building and structure locations, roads, utilities, parks, open spaces and other infrastructures, enhancements to public services, and principal site development features.”

The subject properties include three parcels on the east side of Waters Avenue, between 35th Street and Fisk Street. 1111 NE Street is vacant, 1902 and 1920 Waters Avenue are commercial properties with remnant commercial structures on site. The properties are within a Federal Opportunity Zone and a Local Enterprise and Opportunity Zone. Prior to the current Zoning Ordinance being adopted, the properties were zoned as RB-1 (Residential Business), a district that allows limited non-residential uses in close proximity to residential uses, and R-6, a single-family residential classification.

With the adoption of the new Savannah Zoning Ordinance, the properties were changed to the existing TC-1 and TR-3 districts, as identified on the zoning map. The intent of these districts at this location was to allow a mix of uses to be permitted, at the appropriate scale, in the Waters Avenue corridor. Typically, the corridor is characterized by non-residential uses abutting Waters Avenue and residential uses along the east-west streets. Residential scale in the vicinity is typically smaller and includes one- and two-story homes and some low density multifamily. Larger buildings in the neighborhood are typically institutional in nature and along the north / south corridors.

The petitioner is proposing to redevelop the subject properties to include multifamily residential development and ground floor commercial space. The development plan includes two buildings, one on Waters Avenue between Fisk Street and NE 36th Street, which is designed to include 36 dwelling units and 2,400 square feet of ground floor commercial. It also includes a ground floor amenity center and roof top open space. The second building, which is located between East 35th Street and N. East 36th Street, is proposed to have 38 dwelling units, approximately 2,400 square feet of commercial space and amenity space for the residents, as well as roof top gardens.

The petitioner is requesting a Planned Development zoning classification for the purpose of developing mixed – use residential buildings on the subject property. The proposed General and Final Master Plan, if approved by the Mayor and Aldermen, would be the only development that could occur on the property. The PD documents, including development standards, permitted uses and building elevations, would constitute the approved use of the property.

The Planned Development district is designed to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site surrounding area. The PD district encourages innovative land planning and design concepts. The neighborhood's typical residential pattern includes one and two story structures of a relatively modest scale, with the exception of institutional buildings. The proposed development is larger in scale than most structures in the immediate area, although the height is stepped back from the street frontage. The petitioner has provided both horizontal and vertical building articulation, which decreases the overall mass of the buildings.

Under the base zoning, structures are permitted a maximum height of 45 feet, which is the petitioner's proposed building height. However, they are limited to three stories and a building footprint of 5,500 square feet. These are the primary differences between the proposed PD and what could be done by right. The petitioner has attempted to mitigate the footprint issue by breaking up the building architecturally. The additional story appears in one section of each building where ground floor commercial or resident amenities are proposed. The overall height, however, does not exceed that which is already allowed.

Although density can be an asset in a redevelopment scenario, the number of units proposed here is not the issue. The issues of scale and compatibility are of primary concern. The blocks in which the proposed buildings are located are developed with much smaller structures. The proposed building along East 36th

Street will impose upon those nearby residences with a 45-foot wall, which could be within 10 feet of a one-story structure. As noted in the review of the rezoning criteria:

- The use and usability of other nearby properties may be affected.
- A transition in scale is necessary to properly address the existing buildings.
- Under the current zoning, the petitioner could use the property for multi-family residential development.

Mr. Joshua Yellin, agent for the petitioner, stated this is a small scale PD, particularly created in NewZO to encourage innovative projects like this one. The text of the ordinance specifically states that the point of these PDs is to allow leeway in development standards that would otherwise make innovative projects unfeasible. We are here today to try to bring an innovative project to the Waters corridor, which otherwise would be unfeasible. Our requests are to permit the height of 45 feet but to add an additional story, to increase the building footprint and then to adopt some of the commercial parking standards that have allowed small local neighborhood-oriented businesses to thrive in other areas of the City. We looked at what the City has in the Savannah's Eastside Redevelopment Plan and came up with a plan that we thought would provide density, adequate parking and height in keeping with the underlying zoning ordinance to revitalize this site.

Mr. Patrick Shay, architect, stated Lot C is currently zoned TR-3 and that the proposed building does not build up to the property C line. It is built up to Lot A's property line. The parking area will be fenced in and there will be a landscape buffer on the side. We will not be putting up a 3 or 4 story building right up next to that house. We have proposed commercial along Waters Avenue on the ground level.

Ms. Karen Jarrett, Board Member, stated she has concerns about the massive height of the back of the buildings.

Mr. Bob Isaacson, property owner, read a statement into the record.

Public Comments:

Mr. Calum Crampton, spoke in opposition. He stated why would we have a Master Plan in place and then grant variances for every proposal that comes up.

Alderman Detric Leggett, spoke in opposition. He stated all the surrounding neighborhood associations have met with Mr. Yellin, and they all have said no to this project. He asked the Board to continue the petition so we have the opportunity to work with the petitioner to come up with a different plan. As of now, we are all not satisfied with the project.

Ms. Susan Merrell, spoke in opposition. She stated the scale and density is too big for the feel of the neighborhood.

Ms. Kathryn Dillon, spoke in opposition. She stated she doesn't agree with the project as it is now.

Mr. Aaron Miller, spoke in support. He thinks this is something everyone has been waiting to see in this neighborhood. This project is almost identical to a project that the City wanted someone to put together.

Mr. Patrick Wilver, spoke in support. He stated he knows people are concerned about the density of this project, but for the project to be viable you have to have more units.

Mr. Scott Cleaveland, spoke in support. He stated something has to happen in this neighborhood.

Alderman Alicia Miller Blakely, asked Mr. Lotson to state staff's recommendation on this project. She stated that people do not want this project. People are getting pushed out of their homes. Taxes will get higher.

Alderman Keshia Gibson Carter, asked what are the benefits that will be returned to the community since this is an opportunity zone? I ask that everyone come together and let's decide on what's best for

the community.

Mr. Isaacson, stated his understanding is it does not do what it should do for the residents. It helps people defer capital gains but most of the people that are in this community are not worried about how to shelter capital gains

Motion

Motion to deny.

Vote Results (Rejected)

Motion: Karen Jarrett

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Nay
W. Lee Smith	- Nay
Linder Suthers	- Nay
Tom Woiwode	- Nay
Travis Coles	- Nay
Joseph Welch	- Nay
Karen Jarrett	- Nay
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Eula Parker	- Nay
Wayne Noha	- Nay
Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Nay
Laureen Boles	- Nay
Elizabeth Epstein	- Nay

Motion

Motion to continue to the March 16, 2021 MPC meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Tom Woiwode

Second: Joseph Ervin

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Linder Suthers	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Abstain
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye

Michael Brown	- Not Present
Ruel Joyner	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

X. Presentations

XI. Other Business

Recess to Executive Session - motion required

XII. Executive Session

The Planning Commission may adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes that may include litigation, personnel, or any other matter allowed by the Georgia Open Meetings Act.

Motion to recess to Executive Session.

XIII. Adjournment

[14. Adjourn](#)

There being no further business to present before the Board, the February 2, 2021 Regular Metropolitan Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

MW/jh

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.