



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room
June 29, 2021 ~ 1:30 PM
Minutes

June 29, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M.

Members Present: Joseph Welch, Chairman
Karen Jarrett, Secretary
Eula Parker, Treasurer
Laureen Boles
Travis H. Coles
Joseph Ervin
Wayne Noha
Dwayne Stephens
Malik Watkins
Tom Woiwode

Members Not Present: Michael Brown
Elizabeth Epstein
Ruel Joyner
Lee Smith

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director
Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services
Kiakala Ntemo, Urban 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

Approval of the agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Karen Jarrett

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

Notice(s)

[2. June 29, 2021 Personnel Committee Meeting, 10:30 A.M., GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org.](#)

[3. June 29, 2021 Finance Committee Meeting, 11:00 A.M., GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org.](#)

[4. July 20, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M., Planning Commission, GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org.](#)

Information Item(s) for Board Members

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

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

[6. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 6098 Ogeechee Road | Rezone from R-A to BN & RTF | 21-002357-ZA](#)

Motion	
The petitioner has requested that this item be Postponed to the July 20, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting.	
Vote Results (Approved)	
Motion: Wayne Noha	
Second: Travis Coles	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye

Malik Watkins - Aye

[7. SPECIAL USE APPROVAL REQUEST | 10601 Abercorn; 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109 & 111 Wilshire | File no. 21-001929-ZA](#)

Motion

The petitioner has requested that this item be Postponed to the July 20, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[8. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 10601 Abercorn; 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109 & 111 Wilshire Rezone from PD to BN | File no. 21-001928-ZA](#)

Motion

The petitioner has requested that this item be Postponed to the July 20, 2021 Regular MPC Meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- 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

[9. Approval of the June 8, 2021 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.](#)

📎 [06.08.2021 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

📎 [06-08-2021 MPC BRIEFING MINUTES.pdf](#)

The June 8, 2021 briefing and regular meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Motion

Recommend approval of the June 8, 2021 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

VIII. Old Business

[10. SPECIAL PERMITTED USE | 348 Whitaker Street | Special Use for a Restaurant | File No. 21-002772-ZA](#)

📎 [Staff Report6.24.pdf](#)

📎 [348 Whitaker St visuals6.24.pdf](#)

📎 [LETTER - opposition.pdf](#)

📎 [LETTER - Support.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner, stated the petitioner is requesting a special use permit to operate a restaurant at the location of the subject property. Restaurant use is a special permitted use in the D-R zoning district and requires review of the MPC and approval from the City Council.

The subject property is a commercial structure fronting on the eastern side of Whitaker Street, between West Charlton Lane and West Jones Street. Currently, this space operates as a conforming specialty retail store selling home goods, furniture, and apparel. A portion of the business functions as an interior design studio as well. According to the applicant, the owner of the existing business, Erica Snayd, intends

to serve light meals to residents and shoppers in the area from the retail portion of the business. The restaurant is proposing to operate no later than 8pm.

The subject property fronts along the stretch of Whitaker Street that is developed with several walkable, specialty retail stores. Towards the west, across Whitaker Street on West Jones Street, is Mrs. Wilkes Dining Room; this establishment is the only restaurant in the immediate area and has been grandfathered in for its use. This portion of Whitaker Street is an arterial road with approximately 42 feet right-of-way and does not provide on-street parking. Many of the retail uses along this portion of Whitaker Street do not have off-street parking and utilize the on-street parking of the side streets, which are primarily developed with residential dwellings.

The restaurant owner made mention of outdoor dining. However, no plans were submitted to show the area or size of the outdoor dining area. Generally, additional dining space increases a restaurant's capacity which further potentially increases vehicular parking. The subject property has approximately 5 off-street parking spaces that are shared with the other retail tenant space connected to the subject property. The subject property is in the Downtown Savannah Parking District, which allows for a 40 % reduction in off-street parking for a restaurant use. However, the granting of less required parking spaces does not affect the actual number of customers and vehicular parking in the area.

The hours of operation for many of the retail stores, along the same section of Whitaker Street as the subject property, are 10am -6pm. Mrs. Wilkes has hours of operation that are limited from 10am-2pm on the weekdays only. The hours of operation for the proposed restaurant are somewhat later than the typical hours of operation for commercial uses in the area.

Mr. Phillip McCorkle, agent for the petitioner, stated he does not agree with the staff's recommendation. This building is in the design district and there are several other businesses in this district. Only two businesses in this district have parking. These businesses have been there since before zoning, so there is no required parking. We have 5 spaces for parking.

Mr. Joel Snayd, petitioner, stated we acquired this building to create a lifestyle shop. We currently sell furniture, home wears and different food items at a retail level. The food items consist of spices, jams, honey's, crackers, refrigerated cheeses, soft drinks and waters. We saw this as a convenience at a primary location within the downtown design district. We live in the neighborhood and there has always been a need for a place to go for a croissant, pastries or prepackaged sandwich. We are looking at taking the existing pre-packaged food we already have and serving it unwrapped on a charcuterie board. We would like the opportunity to offer to the customers a place to sit under the carport to rest. We really just want to sell what we already have in the store, just now unwrapped and prepared by us.

Mr. McCorkle, stated they will not be cooking anything. There will not be any vents or fans. They might have a microwave and toaster oven to warm up some stuff. It will be cold foods. We are willing to further restrict the use of the property by limiting the number of seats to 20 and no tables could be any farther south past the edge of the building. We will close not later than 8 p.m. Most of the time it will be closed by 6 p.m.

Ms. Karen Jarrett, Board Member, stated her concern was if the Board granted the Special Use permit, then the permit would go with the building.

Mr. Lotson, stated if City Council approves this request then the City will issue a permit to this business operator. That permit is managed under the permit review criteria, is revocable and does not go with the property.

Public Comments:

Ms. Ardis Wood, showed several pictures of cars parking in the tree lawn and she believes this needs to be fixed.

Mr. John Northup, stated his clients, the Habib's, live in the building that's immediately to the east. My clients are not opposed to restaurants, but what they are opposed to is a restaurant at this location. The reason is that this location is not suitable for a restaurant use. One reason is that this is a small property and there isn't enough parking. Also, people waiting for a table will mostly wait under the big oak tree on

Jones Street, so there will be a lot of people standing around the residents on Jones Street. The petitioners are requesting that this business be open to 8 p.m. on week days and Saturday's and 6 p.m. on Sundays. So we could have people parking and waiting on a table most of the day every day. There is also not enough space in the lane for more trash from a restaurant.

Ms. Cheryl Lang, stated she has lived in the neighborhood for 17 years and the tree lawn has always been like that. The shops in the downtown design district are upscale shops, they are not going to be serving wine or beer. I don't think these people are going to be having rowdy parties. They will be serving high end sandwiches and charcuterie boards. A lot of people in the neighborhood area very supportive. We need to give it a try to see how it goes.

Mr. Henry Inglesby, stated he lives across the lane and his concern was the location of the dumpster.

Ms. Elissa Habib, stated she is very concern about the potential of increased foot traffic. If there are no seats then people will be loitering around in front of my home and it will be noisy. There has been a garage problem from day one.

Ms. Mary Ellen Wegman, stated she has the same concerns that the Habib's have and what their attorney has stated, especially the parking.

Mr. McCorkle, stated staff's write up was based off of them not having the correct information to understand the scope of the restaurant use. They have changed the wheels on the dumpster, so now they can get the dumpster in and out.

Motion

Approval of the request to establish a restaurant at 348 Whitaker Street with the conditions that the hours are limited from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., limit the seating to 20 and limit the table location to north of the structure line.

Vote Results (Rejected)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

Joseph Ervin	- Nay
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Nay
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Eula Parker	- Nay
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Nay
Malik Watkins	- Nay

IX. Regular Business

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

📎 [Maps Combined.pdf](#)

📎 [County Engineering Comments.pdf](#)

📎 [Annexation Letter.pdf](#)

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

🔗 [Hopeton Landing Proposed Master Plan 05.25.21-REV.pdf](#)

🔗 [Hopeton Landing PUD Standards 060121.pdf](#)

🔗 [Side by Side.pdf](#)

🔗 [Staff Report 05235.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services, stated the subject property consists of 484.90 acres northeast of Little Neck Road between Ogeechee Road and Interstate 95. The petitioner is proposing to rezone the property from R-A-CO (Residential – Agriculture - Annexed) to PD (Planned Development). The intent of the proposed PD is to develop a Master Plan to include single and multi-family residential uses, commercial, institutional, office uses and land set aside for future development. 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 proposed tract of land. The petition was continued from the February 2nd MPC meeting, so that the applicant could address comments from MPC staff regarding the proposed Master Plan and PD text and from the County Engineers office regarding traffic, stormwater, canal access and use and the widening of Little Neck Road. A comment response letter is attached.

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. 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 recommended changes from the previously submitted plan specific to curb cut locations, which have been altered. 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.

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 office uses. The petitioner and the County Engineers office have begun the process of addressing a number of concerns raised related to access, stormwater management and traffic. Although the approval of a Master Plan does not convey approval of any specific site development, staff finds that the unique circumstances of the property, its annexation into the City of Savannah and adjacency to County-maintained properties, create a circumstance where an ongoing agreement is necessary to protect each stakeholder. As previously mentioned, the petitioner has met with County Engineering and responded to their list of comments. However, oftentimes a Master Plan is built out over a period of years and by developers who are not necessarily a part of the rezoning process. Because of this, staff finds that concurrent with the rezoning, if adopted, an agreement that runs with the land should be drafted between the applicant and Chatham County outlining terms as agreed upon related to identified issues including stormwater management, traffic and canal access.

Based on the amount of land disturbance, changes to transportation infrastructure and increases in residential density, the proposed Master Plan will have an impact on the larger community of West Chatham over a number of years. It is also likely that large tracts of adjacent and nearby underdeveloped land will begin to transition to more intense land uses. The changing conditions include the imminent growth of West Chatham and the likely annexation of additional properties. While providing additional housing opportunities and services is needed, this likely outcome will result in the need for additional services and infrastructure in the vicinity.

Mr. Harold Yellin, agent for the petitioner, stated once the property was annexed into the City, we then negotiated a water and sewer agreement with the City of Savannah. This parcel is over 485 acres and will be developed over time. There will be multiple uses and the approximate build-out time will be about 10

years. We agree with the MPC staff report.

Mr. Travis Burke, engineer for the project, stated we met with County staff to address some of their concerns. One of the main concerns was the access onto Little Neck Road. The County shared their future plans for Little Neck including median cuts, so we have revised our plan to align with all the future median cuts. Our entrances will come in before the widening of Little Neck occurs. We will still have to come back to the County to get these access approved. The County also has to approve the stormwater. We will meet all of our requirements with the City and County.

Mr. Wayne Noha, Board Member, stated he had concerns about the smaller lots and emergency vehicles being able to move down these roads.

Ms. Karen Jarrett, Board Member, stated she shares the same concerns as Mr. Noha.

No Public Comments

Motion

Approve the request to rezone the subject property from R-A - CO to PD based on the Planned Development criteria with the condition that the applicant enter into an agreement with Chatham County regarding issues related to stormwater, traffic, and canal access.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[12. RECOMMENDATION of APPROVAL for COMPREHENSIVE PLAN to be Forwarded to Savannah City Council and Chatham County Commission for Transmission to CRC and DCA](#)

Mr. Nicholas Fazio, Senior Planner, gave a presentation on the Plan 2040: Chatham County-Savannah's Comprehensive Plan. The presentation included what is the Comp Plan, plan implementation, project timeline, community feedback and next steps. Staff is requesting the approval of a resolution allowing the transmittal of the Draft Chapters to the Chatham County Commission and Savannah City Council for their review before sending to CRC and DCA.

No Public Comments

Motion

Approve the Draft Comprehensive Plan to be forwarded to the Chatham County Commission and Savannah City Council for action.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

[13. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 1103 East 69th Street | Rezone request from RSF-6 to B-N | File No. 21-003122-ZA](#)

[1103 E 69th St Staff Report rev.pdf](#)

[1103 E 69th St visuals.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo, Urban Planner, stated the subject property is located on the southern side of East 69th Street, bounded by Sanders Street, East 70th Street, and Waters Avenue Street, within the Midtown Neighborhood. The subject property is 9,000 square feet and has a width of 90 feet and a depth of 100 feet. The property has remained vacant for at least the past 18 years; prior to NewZo, the property was zoned R6, a zoning district similar to RSF-6.

The range of uses permitted by the proposed zoning district are not more suitable than the range of uses permitted by the current zoning district. The proposed zoning district allows for commercial uses that are not appropriate in relation to the existing nearby residences.

The zoning proposal is not compatible with the present zoning pattern. B-N zoning is prevalent; however, it only exists on properties fronting Waters Avenue and on the opposite side of Waters Avenue, where residential development do not exist.

The zoning proposal does have the potential to adversely affect the nearby existing residential housing stock. The range of uses permitted in B-N has the possibility to introduce nuisances by virtue of various noises, odors, and hours of operation that are not fitting for a residential area.

The zoning proposal does conform with the Comprehensive Plan.

The subject property is an area that is developed with a mix of institutional, office, retail, and residential uses. Waters Avenue, the main roadway in the area, allows for travel to and from Downtown, Midtown, and the Southside. The portion of Waters Avenue relative to the subject property is mostly zoned B-N, from East 63rd Street to DeRenne Avenue. With the exception of the furniture store on the corner of Waters Avenue and East 69th Street, there are properties zoned B-N and O-I, Office Institutional, on the northern side of East 69th Street that are located towards the interior of the neighborhood. Although they are separate lots, these properties are under the same ownership and are used in association with the medical office adjacent to the furniture store.

The subject property is 9,000 square feet; an area suitable to develop a range of commercial uses permitted in B-N. The possibility of a high parking demand could lead to patrons using the abutting property to the west, fronting Waters Avenue, for parking or parking on East 69th Street. The variety of noises, odors, traffic, and hours of operation may not only affect the abutting residential properties but

other residences in the immediate area as well.

The definition for the Future Land Use category, Residential Suburban Single-Family, does not contain language which includes commercial developments. At this particular location, B-N would allow for a number of incompatible uses, such as, but not limited to: funeral homes, general retail, event venues/banquet rooms, laundromats, dry cleaners, restaurants, and instructional studio/classrooms.

Mr. Nathan Pollard, agent for the petitioner, stated the medial use property that is on the corner of 68th and Waters has a parking lot directly adjacent to it. We see this as a business neighborhood. The intent is to provide a medial development that would have to meet all of MPC's standards going forward.

Mr. Brian Redman, petitioner, stated because of the setbacks, without purchasing this fourth parcel, our property is completely undevelopable. It's going to be a medical facility to serve the community and will be an improvement to the area.

Mr. Wayne Noah, Board Member, asked if the intent was for this to be a parking lot for the buildings on Waters Avenue?

Mr. Redman, replied that's correct.

The Board suggested to continue this item so that the petitioner can work with staff to find a better solution for what they are requesting.

Motion

Continue to the July 20, 2021 regular MPC meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Eula Parker	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye

X. Presentations

XI. Other Business

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 June 29, 2021 Regular Metropolitan Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 3:54 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.