



## Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room  
March 22, 2022 ~ 1:30 PM  
Minutes

### MARCH 22, 2022 REGULAR MPC MEETING, 1:30 P.M.

**Members Present:** Joseph Welch, Chairman  
Karen Jarrett, Vice-Chair  
Malik Watkins, Treasurer  
Laureen Boles  
Shedrick Coleman  
Elizabeth Epstein  
Joseph Ervin  
Jay Melder  
Jeff Notrica  
Lee Smith  
Dwayne Stephens  
Tom Woiwode

**Members Absent:** Travis Coles, Secretary  
Wayne Noha

**Staff Present:** Melanie Wilson, Executive Director  
Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services  
Melissa Paul-Leto, Planner  
Nirav Gandhi, Planner  
Sally Helm, 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](#)

##### **Motion**

Approval of Agenda

##### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Karen Jarrett

Joseph Ervin - Aye

W. Lee Smith - Aye

Tom Woiwode - Aye

Travis Coles - Not Present

Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Not Present

**IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements**

**Notice(s)**

[2. April 12, 2022 Personnel Committee Meeting, 10:30 A.M., GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org or Jerry Surrency Conference Room,112 East State Street.](#)

[3. April 12, 2022 Finance Committee Meeting, 11:00 A.M., GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org or Jerry Surrency Conference Room, 112 East State Street.](#)

[4. April 12, 2022 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M., Planning Commission, GO-TO- WEBINAR \(VIRTUAL\) to access go to: www.thempc.org or Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room, 112 East State Street.](#)

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

[5. SPECIAL USE APPROVAL REQUEST | 2110 West Gwinnett Street | File no. 21-006747-ZA](#)

<b>Motion</b>	
Item Postponed to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.	
<b>Vote Results ( Approved )</b>	
Motion: W. Lee Smith	
Second: Dwayne Stephens	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye

Malik Watkins - Aye  
Jay Melder - Aye

[6. REZONING REQUEST | 5659 Ogeechee Rd | File No. Z-1221-000211](#)

**Motion**

Item Postponed to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin - Aye  
W. Lee Smith - Aye  
Tom Woiwode - Aye  
Travis Coles - Not Present  
Joseph Welch - Aye  
Shedrick Coleman - Aye  
Karen Jarrett - Aye  
Dwayne Stephens - Aye  
Wayne Noha - Not Present  
Jeff Notrica - Aye  
Laureen Boles - Aye  
Elizabeth Epstein - Aye  
Malik Watkins - Aye  
Jay Melder - Aye

[7. AMENDED MASTER PLAN | Veterans Parkway and Buckhalter Road | 22-000455](#)

**Motion**

Item Postponed to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin - Aye  
W. Lee Smith - Aye  
Tom Woiwode - Aye  
Travis Coles - Not Present  
Joseph Welch - Aye  
Shedrick Coleman - Aye  
Karen Jarrett - Aye  
Dwayne Stephens - Aye

Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye

[8. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 500 John Carter Road | Rezone from I-L \(Light Industrial\) to I-H \(Heavy Industrial\) | File no. 22-000807-ZA](#)

<b>Motion</b>	
Item Postponed to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.	
<b>Vote Results ( Approved )</b>	
Motion: W. Lee Smith	
Second: Dwayne Stephens	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye

[9. REZONING MAP AMENDMENT | 0 & 6703 Johnny Mercer Boulevard | Rezone two \(2\) parcels from a R-2-A/TC \(Two-Family Residential Limited / Town Center Overlay\) and a P-D-N/TC \(Planned Development Rezoning for Certain Nonconforming Uses / Town Center Overlay\) zoning districts to a B-N \(Neighborhood-Business\) zoning classification. | File No. Z-0222-000234](#)

<b>Motion</b>	
Item Postponed to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.	
<b>Vote Results ( Approved )</b>	
Motion: W. Lee Smith	
Second: Dwayne Stephens	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye

W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye

[10. REZONING REQUEST | 241 Broadwater Lane | File No. Z-0222-000229 - Rezone from PDR-SM to R-A](#)

**Motion**

Item Postponed to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: W. Lee Smith

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- 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

### 11. Approval of the March 1, 2022 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

📎 [03.01.2022 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

📎 [3-1-2022 MPC BRIEFING MINUTES.pdf](#)

#### **Motion**

Approval of the Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

#### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Karen Jarrett

Second: W. Lee Smith

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye

## VIII. Old Business

## IX. Regular Business

### 12. AMENDED MASTER PLAN | 1025 West Gwinnett | 22-000821

📎 [Proposed Master Plan.pdf](#)

📎 [Approved Master Plan.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Report-00821.pdf](#)

📎 [Residential Streets West of the Subject Property.pdf](#)

📎 [Canal District Boundaries.pdf](#)

**Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services**, said the petitioner is requesting MPC approval of an amendment to a previously approved Master Plan entitled *Civic Master Plan – Gwinnett Street West* for property located at 1025 West Gwinnett Street within a PD-S (Planned Development) zoning district.

The subject property is a triangular shaped parcel, bounded by Gwinnett Street on the north, the Springfield Canal on the west, and Interstate 16 (I-16) on the southeast. With the exception of an existing

cell tower located near I-16, the parcel is undeveloped. In 2008, the property was rezoned by the Mayor and Aldermen in conjunction with a Master Plan.

The 2008 Master Plan was designed to recreate the historic development pattern and the open space network of the Downtown Historic District. The plan included a series of proposed public streets, central open space and planned intersecting vehicular connections to line up with what is now the arena site. There were four access points proposed across Gwinnett Street into the arena site and a potential access across the Springfield Canal to Stiles Avenue to the west. These connections will not be possible based on the design of the Gwinnett Street improvements, which are currently underway. At the time the plan was developed, the final design of the Gwinnett Street improvements was unknown and, therefore, some assumptions had to be made about connectivity. Development guidelines for the site were also created and included standards such as height and mass of buildings, street cross sections, build-to lines, entrances, and parking. The plan was intended to be a dense, urban style development with a mix of residential and commercial uses with internal public streets and including buildings up to 8 stories in height.

The principal concern of the 2008 Master Plan is the amount of impervious surface that would be created at buildout, and the lack of stormwater detention. The neighborhoods around the subject property are subject to negative impacts from stormwater runoff. The pending improvement of the Springfield Canal will help address this issue, but until those improvements are completed, any development of this property will need to address some of the stormwater concerns.

The proposed plan is a two phased approach to develop approximately 50% of the property in the northeast section (Phase 1) of the site and for the remainder (Phase 2) to be open space and stormwater detention. The applicant is proposing additional right-of-way for the City for the widening of the canal. This will allow the property to become developable based on those improvements. The petitioner is proposing multifamily residential as the primary land use. The northernmost building will be developed to accommodate ground floor nonresidential uses as well. West of the primary entrance is a proposed public greenspace in which final design and purpose will be established during the development plan review. Internal amenities and outdoor space is also provided. Phase 2 is proposed to be future development available upon completion of the improvements to the Springfield Canal. The plan dedicates easements for the widening of the canal and for public multi-use trails. The primary access point to the subject property is aligned with the arena site immediately north.

The proposed land use change is consistent with the planned development pattern for the Canal District. The Canal District is proposed to be a mixed-use area designed to support the area around Enmarket Arena with residential density, commercial and hospitality uses. With Master Plans, changes may come as a result of new patterns of development, infrastructure changes or a significant project which changes the landscape of an area. In the case of the subject property, the development of the arena and improvements to West Gwinnett Street have necessitated a reconsideration of how the property should be built out. The plans associated with the area around the subject property, and the area itself, has changed significantly since the adoption of the current plan in 2008. The opening of the Arena and the further development of the Canal District Master Plan have provided a foundation for future development. It is clear that based on stormwater improvements needed in the vicinity, the existing plan is less feasible than the proposed plan. The property will have to develop in phases to accommodate the issue that the location of the subject property is conducive to supporting residential density. It does not immediately abut another use and will be accessed from a new 4-lane roadway and is approximately 600-feet away from the nearest residential dwelling to the west across the Springfield Canal. Planning efforts in the vicinity of the subject property have prioritized densification, pedestrian connectivity, and a mix of uses. The proposed amendment appears to align with these goals and the larger goals of the Canal District. We believe that the Master Plan could potentially catalize additional development in the area.

Staff is recommending approval with conditions:

1. Site plan for the subject property be consistent with the development standards of the RMF-2 zoning district. The permitted uses for the subject property be the same as those permitted in the RMF-2 zoning district.
2. Site plan shall include a secondary vehicular access point as approved by the City of Savannah Traffic Engineer.
3. Any site plan for the property be approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission.

**Josh Yellin, Petitioner**, said this Master Plan has been a long time coming. This site was rezoned with the

approved Master Plan that you saw in 2008. Prior to that, it was zoned business commercial for big box retail. Prior to that it was approved for five SCAD dormitories with a SCAD health facility. Fifteen years later, this property remains vacant and undeveloped. In part because of some of the serious site conditions. There is a stormwater issue, there is a Springfield Canal issue, and also environmental issues that are plaguing the site. We feel the plan that is being proposed, there is a solution to this site that is feasible. We have met with City staff and MPC staff to see how we can get this project off the ground. We understand our participation and willingness to work with the City in terms of Canal expansion, not only benefits this property but benefits the community at large. We are specifically trying to keep our development as far away from the Springfield Canal as possible. We want to be able to develop this phase while also working with the City on improving the Springfield Canal, so that in the future, once the conveyance reaches the appropriate level, we can develop the adjacent parcel. We would come back before this Commission for approval, if and when a Phase 2 is feasible. In 2008 when this Master Plan was approved, they were showing connectivity through the Canal District. None of that is feasible now nor does it make sense from a standpoint of protecting and enhancing the Canal district.

We agree with MPC staff and appreciate the recommendations, but there was a disagreement on one point. Under the standards of the RMF-2, the maximum height permitted is 4 stories and 50ft. Because of the problems associated with this property and the environmental concern, the only way the project is developable is through a 5th story on the buildings. The project is over 600ft away from the nearest residential, this is an isolated, unique property that truly does not have any neighbors at this point. We do not believe that a 5th story will inconvenience anyone. The current Master Plan approves 8 stories. If we were to build today, we could do 4-8 story's by right. What we are asking for is to limit the development to 5 stories along with the rest of the RMF-2 standards. We ask that you approve the recommendation of the Master Plan amendment with the condition that we be allowed to develop up to a maximum height of 5 stories.

**Karen Jarrett, Vice Chair**, asked if the entire property was in a flood plane?

**John Giordano, Thomas and Hutton**, said yes, it is in a FEMA flood plane. The City of Savannah has also identified this as a special flood hazard area, based on the Springfield Canal conveyance issues.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked if they would need to fill in order to build and, if the Commission allowed the 5 stories, would this work for the development?

**Mr. Giordano** said yes, they will have to provide fill for the portion that is to be developed. If they were allowed the 5 stories that would allow them to get what they needed for the first phase of the development. The goal is the property would be developed in two phases. We understand the City of Savannah is currently in the process of designing improvements to the Springfield Canal to provide 100 year conveyance. Once that is completed, they would require a ROW from this property. Once 100 year conveyance is provided then the second phase of the project can move forward. The pond area would be back filled. The property would no longer be in a flood plane (once 100 year conveyance is provided), then we could fully develop the remaining portion of the property.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked if Thomas and Hutton is doing the study for the Springfield Canal as well?

**Mr. Giordano** said he believes so. He is not in the stormwater department, they were working on it at some point.

**Mr. Jay Melder, City Manager**, asked if there were any plans of the developer providing affordable housing in this development with the support of 5 stories?

**Mr. Yellin**, said they have started those conversations with the City of Savannah. The process is started, despite the affordable housing not really being a purview of the MPC as it relates to the Master Plan amendment. We have started discussions with the City through a development agreement. We had not discussed the 5th story as being related to that. We discussed looking at some of the other inclusionary zoning mechanisms utilized in Atlanta and Decatur in terms of the City of Savannah providing incentives in a trade off for providing affordable housing on this site.

**Mr. Lauren Boles, Board member**, asked where the secondary access would be? Has there been any opposition from any of the surrounding neighbors?

**Mr. Giordano** said they reached out to the City of Savannah, and were able to get the current Gwinnett street widening plan. We were able to line up the main entrance with where the full access median break is being provided by the City. We would have the secondary access as far over on the East as possible. That would

need to be paved in order to comply with the City of Savannah Fire requirements. There has been no opposition to date on this project.

**Mr. Dwayne Stephens, Board member**, asked what methods were used to notify the community?

**Mr. Lotson** said consistent with the zoning ordinance, we send individual letters to all property owners within 300ft of the subject property. We did not have any response in support or opposition for this case.

**Mr. Stephens** said considering the amount of flooding that this community has been subjected to for decades, the retention pond that is going to be placed in the first phase, is that at capacity for the development, or would you allow for more than the minimum for retention until they get to the 100 year conveyance?

**Mr. Giordano** said as we progress through this process, we will come back before the Planning Commission with the General Development Plan. At that point, we will have a much more defined site plan outlining how we will meet the RMF-2 requirements. Based on the preliminary calculations we have done, we have adequate excavation area here for the flood plane mitigation. That is separate from the stormwater. The pond water that is being provided is well above any of the requirements that are needed. In addition to providing flood plane mitigation, we are able to meet pre vs. post run off far and above. There is excess capacity here.

**Mr. Melder** said with the requested 5th story, what would be the proposed height?

**Mr. Yellin** said max 65ft.

**Mr. Tom Woiwode, Board member**, said the current site plan approves 8 stories in a smaller area, 6 story's and then 4. You are requesting it to be zoned RMF-2. Is it the RMF-2 zoning that prevents it from going to 5?

**Mr. Lotson** said the RMF-2 zoning has a maximum permitted height of 50ft. It is not measured in stories. Within that, a 5 story building, unless it has a flat roof, is not possible.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked why are we asking for the reduced height? They have an approved plan correct?

**Mr. Lotson** said the approved plan does permit, in a section of the property, up to 8 stories. When the petitioner submitted their Master Plan, they did not include the types of development standards that we would use for review when they submit a General Development Plan. That is why we recommended that it be reviewed based on the multi family zoning designation that it's closest to in the City of Savannah, which is the RMF-2. Within that district, the maximum height is 50ft. We did not make a recommendation that additional height, over what is permitted in the RMF-2 district, be allowed. We did understand that the applicant was going to pursue that with the Board today.

**Mr. Melder** recommended the language be carried over from the original Master Plan in 2008: the height and mass section, specifically as it relates to the building facade being broken down vertically to reduce the mass and create a human scale into the conditions of this approval with the 5th floor.

**Mr. Stephens** asked for clarification on the request and the available uses of the RMF zoning.

**Mr. Lotson** said the current Master Plan allows varying heights based on the location within the site between 4 stories and up to 8 stories. If this plan is amended, the plan goes away and is replaced by the applicants proposed plan. Staff is recommending within this Master Plan, the RMF-2 development standards apply to this property. With this application, that would mean the maximum permitted height would be 50ft. That is what is allowed in RMF-2; however, should the Commission move to allow greater height, we can certainly do that. It would be added as an additional standard on this plan, as well as the language Mr. Melder mentioned.

**Ms. Elizabeth Epstein, Board member**, said the original Master Plan, 14 yrs ago, showed connectivity in the traditional Savannah type grid connecting to the property across Gwinnett Street. Are there no plans in the works for development there?

**Mr. Lotson** said there will be surface parking for the Arena site.

**Mr. Yellin** said they tried to carry over as much as possible from that plan. The grid pattern with the public dedication of streets and the connectivity, it was not feasible. We tried to preserve the aspects that would actually fit in with making a feasible development. We have included a few pocket parks across the development. The pocket park at the front, we have had conversations with the City of Savannah, knowing that the Canal district has tried to have a more art friendly feel than the rest of the City. We've had conversations

about putting public art installations in that park. We also intend to line the entry way with live oaks. We are trying to preserve some of those aspects that we see in the downtown area, but understanding this site is very limited by what we can do.

**Ms. Epstein** asked if there was any opportunity in the ROW in the short-term?

**Mr. Giordano**, said the original plan had Gwinnett street at grade. This was a box culvert coming through there. Currently, the City of Savannah is building a bridge over Gwinnett Street. When you see this large ROW acquisition across the front, that was for tie slopes. This area is all 3-1 side slopes, very steep. The City of Savannah has a maintenance access road that runs through this area. All of that was taken into consideration when laying out the revised Master Plan. If we were to push the buildings up, they would be backed up to a slope coming down off a tie slope and a maintenance road there. We felt this was a good plan to off-set the building and give some room between ground story units looking into a hill. When looking at the City's plan for Gwinnett Street with the grade change coming up and over Gwinnett Street, that is what eventually made all these connection points coming across.

**Mr. Woiwode** asked if a height limit of 60ft makes this unfeasible?

**Mr. Emmanuel Newman, Savannah Development Partners**, said it was a question of slope. I would assume you would want a grander first floor which means 14ft to 15ft of height, and we will need 11 ft on each floor. With the question of are we having a flat roof or a slope roof, the 65ft gives us the flexibility.

#### Motion

Approval of the petitioners request to amend the Master Plan associated with 1025 West Gwinnett Street with conditions.

#### Vote Results ( Approved )

Motion: Jay Melder

Second: W. Lee Smith

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye

#### [13. REZONING REQUEST | 7411 Skidaway Rd | File No. Z-0222-000233](#)

[VICINITY MAP Z-0222-000233.pdf](#)

[AERIAL MAP Z-0222-000233.pdf](#)

[Pics.pdf](#)

[R-1 Uses.pdf](#)

📎 [B-N Uses.pdf](#)

📎 [Sandfly Concept Plan.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Report Final.pdf](#)

**Mr. Nirav Gandhi, Planner**, said the petitioner is requesting to rezone four properties at 7411 Skidaway Road from R-1/EO to B-N. The property currently consists of four undeveloped lots which are used as an overflow parking lot for several nearby restaurants, including those in the shopping center to the west and north of the subject property across Skidaway Road. The property has been used this way for approximately 10 years. The back of the property abuts a residence on Ridgewood Road. The applicant is the owner of the adjacent shopping center to the west. Both property owners have been contacted. In Staff's recommendation, there is a vegetative buffer of 30ft on the east and south sides.

"The purpose of this district shall be to create an environment in which one-family dwellings, and certain non-dwelling uses, are permitted in order to promote stability and character of low-density residential development with adequate open space. A maximum density of five dwelling units per acre of net residential land area shall be permitted in this district".

Skidaway Road is a heavily trafficked commercial corridor, which begins to transition to residential just east of the subject property. The subject property has been used as overflow parking for nearby restaurants for years now and would likely continue to be used that way in the future, but paved and with properly maintained access and buffers. The proposed zoning would allow neighborhood scale retail and services, which are similar in nature to the existing commercial uses in the vicinity. This, in addition to the fact that residential development is unlikely at this location, lends justification to the requested rezoning.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed rezoning with the following conditions:

A 30-foot vegetative buffer shall be required along the eastern and southern property lines with a degree of opacity which will obscure the site from the right of way and adjacent residential property as determined by the County Arborist.

The County Arborist shall approve the removal of any existing trees on site.

**Mr. Rob Brannen, Attorney for Sheffield and Shore**, said we feel this will be an improvement from the parking lot it has been over the last 25 yrs.

**Ms. Jessica Perry, Chatham County Arborist**, said when the plan is reviewed, she would like to have the two live oak trees on the property saved.

**Mr. Brannen** said they agree with saving the live oaks.

**Mr. Melder** asked if part of the conditions is the petitioner makes sure there are no grave sites are on the property prior to construction. There is a grave site across the street from this property.

**Mr. Brannen** said yes.

**Mr. Lotson** said, should a site plan be submitted for development of the property, there are no existing headstones on the property. Should something be found on the site, they would have to go through the normal procedures through the state of Georgia to address that.

**Mr. Jim Sheffield, Managing Partner for Sheffield and Shore**, said across the property on the strip of land across from the Driftaway Cafe, I purchased that property years ago. There were head stones so I gifted that property to the old cemetery's.

## Motion

Approval of the requested rezoning with the following special conditions:

A 30-foot vegetative buffer shall be required along the eastern and southern property lines with a degree of opacity which will obscure the site from the right of way and adjacent residential property as determined by

the County Arborist.

The County Arborist shall approve the removal of any existing trees on site.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Karen Jarrett

Second: W. Lee Smith

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Abstain
Jay Melder	- Aye

[14. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN | Wicklow Street | Kerry Street | Dixie Avenue | 22-000704](#)

[☞ Staff Report -0704.pdf](#)

[☞ TAX MAP 22-000704-PLAN.pdf](#)

[☞ General Development Plan Avention Apartments.pdf](#)

[☞ Street Photos.pdf](#)

**Mr. Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services**, said the petitioner is requesting approval of a General Development Plan related to a proposed multifamily residential project on 11.57 acres south of East Victory Drive between Wicklow Street and Dixie Avenue. The subject property was rezoned by the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah on December 21, 2021 from B-C (Community Business) and RSF-E (Single Family Residential) to RMF-3 (Multifamily Residential) with conditions. These conditions included:

- No vehicular or pedestrian access directly to Dixie Avenue.
- The provision of a 10-foot multi use path on the south side of Kerry Street.
- A vegetative buffer and privacy fence between the site and residential properties on Dixie Avenue.
- Pedestrian connectivity to Bee Road.
- The Metropolitan Planning Commission shall approve the General Development Plan.

Section 3.8.4 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance outlines the review procedures for General Development Plans. General Development Plans are intended to "...identify the overall concept of a proposed development. Information required on such a plan is intended to convey the character and layout of the project and to identify issues that must be addressed on the Specific Development Plan".

General Development Plans are often submitted by applicants before they go into the time and expense it takes to produce a specific development plan so they can get initial feedback from review departments,

the MPC staff, the City, and or County. Approval of a General Development Plan does not permit an applicant to pull any permits or garner any approval that would allow construction. They will still need to submit a specific development plan which would include the engineer drawings and the construction drawings. In review of the conditions associated with the adoption of the rezoning, the applicant has provided those conditions on the General Development Plan and they are in compliance with the requirements of Section 3.8.4 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance.

The proposed development consists of four (4) residential buildings, surface parking, garage parking, amenities, and detention. The site is designed for 280 dwelling units across four buildings and a total of 427 parking spaces including 24 garage spaces and 9 ADA spaces. The northern portion of the site is accessed via Wicklow Street. Wicklow Street is an improved City of Savannah street with a 40-foot right-of-way. The southern portion of the site will be accessed via Johnson Street. Johnson Street is currently an unopened right-of-way proposed to be opened and improved to City of Savannah standards by the developer. The locations of these access points were determined in consultation with the City of Savannah Traffic Engineer.

Based on Staff's review, the proposed General Development Plan meets the requirements of Section 3.8.4 Development Plan Review Procedures. The proposed plan also meets the additional requirements that were conditions of the 2021 rezoning of the property by the Mayor and Aldermen. Based on the plan provided, and in consideration of the entire review process, the applicant appears to have exhibited that the standards can be met in conjunction with the Specific Development Plan review. Staff is recommending approval of the General Development Plan with a note that the Specific Development Plan approval will be contingent on conformance with all standards and require the abandonment or quit claim of the Muenster Street right of way.

Mr. Travis Burke, Coleman & Company, said there were five conditions placed on this by Council, which we have addressed. 1.) Presenting to the Planning Commission which is the reason we are here today. 2.) Removed any access we were currently showing from the project to Dixie Avenue. 3.) We are providing the 10ft wide multi use path on the South side of Kerry street, this path will connect to the Police Memorial Trail and provide that connection back to Bee Rd and Daffin Park. 4.) Providing the vegetative buffer and fencing for the properties that are adjacent to the property along the Dixie Avenue. 5.) Pedestrian connectivity to Bee Rd: we are currently working with the Salvation Army on securing the necessary easements in order to construct that access. Kerry Street is only a 32 1/2 ft ROW. There is not a lot of public ROW space there to fit in this proposed sidewalk. The Salvation Army is excited to be a part of this. They see it as a benefit to the community and they see it also for them as an opportunity to bring in the community to the center. They have just recently renovated their gym floor. They are planning outside recreation and activities, and are hoping this will help bring the community together in that aspect.

**Ms. Karen Jarrett, Vice Chair**, asked how big are the parking spaces? Is there a reason that Wicklow Street is renamed to Johnson Street in that area where ROW is being added?

**Mr. Burke** said they are the standard size from the City's ordinance. This is a 60 scale, the new standard is 9ft by 17 1/2 ft with a 26ft wide drive isle. The street is currently named Johnson Street on open ROW. We can continue Wicklow, I am sure 911 addressing would appreciate that. We were just going by what is currently on the map.

**Ms. Epstein** asked what size of units, number of bedrooms are being considered?

**Mr. Burke** said there will be a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units. They are working through the final architectural drawings now. It will be a blend of those three unit types.

**Ms. Lauren Boles, Board member**, asked if there was an opportunity for affordable housing?

**Mr. Burke** said they are presenting them as Class A apartments.

**Mr. Harold Yellin, Attorney for petitioner**, said in the zoning petitioned, the front parcel and the back parcel are different. The back parcel is the site of a former dump. We will be spending roughly \$2 million to \$2.5 million cleaning up the dump site. We will be contributing that to help remediate that dump site. The pedestrian connectivity to Bee Rd will be connecting Grayson Stadium with the bike path. People

from Parkside and Ardsley Park will be able to get on their bikes with kids and travel. We are doing a lot of things, affordable housing at this stage is not a part of the program. We are making enormous community benefits.

**Motion**

Approval of the General Development Plan.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Tom Woiwode

Second: Karen Jarrett

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
W. Lee Smith	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye

**X. Presentations**

**XI. Other Business**

**XII. Adjournment**

15. Adjourn

There being no further business to present before the Board, the March 22, 2022 Regular Metropolitan Planning Commission Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Wilson  
Executive Director

MW/sh

***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.***