



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room
October 11, 2022 ~ 1:30 PM
Meeting Minutes

OCTOBER 11, 2022 REGULAR MPC MEETING, 1:30 P.M.

Members Present: Joseph Welch, Chairman
Karen Jarrett, Vice-Chair
Travis Cole, Secretary
Laureen Boles
Shedrick Coleman
Elizabeth Epstein
Wayne Noha
Jeff Notrica
Dwayne Stephens
Tom Woiwode

Members Absent Joseph Ervin
Michael Kaigler
Jay Melder
Malik Watkins

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services
Melissa Paul-Leto, Senior 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 the Agenda

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion:

Second: Travis Coles

Joseph Ervin - Not Present

Tom Woiwode - Aye

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

IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

Notice(s)

[2. October 11, 2022 Personnel Committee Meeting, 10:30 A.M., via GO-TO Webinar or Jerry Surrency Conference Room, 112 East State Street.](#)

[3. October 11, 2022 Finance Committee Meeting, 11:30 A.M., via GO-TO Webinar or Jerry Surrency Conference Room, 112 East State Street.](#)

[4. October 18, 2022 Regular MPC Meeting, 1:30 P.M., Planning Commission, Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room, 112 East State Street.](#)

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

[5. MAP AMENDMENT | Wild Heron Road | Rezone from A-1 to RMF-1 and RSF-4 | 22-002692-ZA](#)

Motion

Approve to postpone this item to the Planning Commission Meeting to Tuesday, October 18, 2022, as requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye

Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Not Present
Jay Melder	- Not Present
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present

[6. MASTER PLAN | Cottonvale Road | 22-002363 | SP-0622-000293](#)

Motion

Approve to postpone this item to the Planning Commission Meeting to the October 18, 2022, meeting as requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles
Second: Wayne Noha

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

[7. MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT | 1901 Benton Boulevard | 22-003026](#)

Motion

Approve to postpone this item to the Planning Commission Meeting to the October 18, 2022, meeting as requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles
Second: Wayne Noha

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

[8. MAP AMENDMENT | 362 Fort Argyle Road | Rezone from A-1 to I-L | 22-003510-ZA](#)

Motion

Approve to postpone this item to the Planning Commission Meeting to the October 18, 2022, meeting as requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

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

[9. TEXT AMENDMENT | Allow Café in Office Districts | 22-003650-ZA](#)

Motion

Approve to postpone this item to the Planning Commission Meeting to the October 18, 2022, meeting as

requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

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

[10. TEXT AMENDMENT | Secs. 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11 and 13.5, Historic Districts True Stucco Clarification | 22-004185-ZA | Staff Initiated](#)

Motion

Approve to postpone this item to the Planning Commission Meeting to the October 18, 2022, meeting as requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

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

Jay Melder	- Not Present
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present

VI. Items Requested to be Withdrawn

[11. MAP AMENDMENT | 1806 Live Oak Street | Rezone from RSF-5 to TR-2 | 22-003746-ZA](#)

Motion

Approve to withdraw this item from the Final Agenda as requested.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Wayne Noha

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

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

[12. Approval of the September 6, 2022 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.](#)

[📎 09.06.2022 Meeting minutes.pdf](#)

[📎 9-6-2022 MPC BRIEFING MINUTES.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve the September 6, 2022 Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles	
Second: Wayne Noha	
Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Not Present
Jay Melder	- Not Present
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present

13. Approve the "Authorized Access Resolution for Business Entities" to update authorized access for the Truist Treasury Services bank account.

[Wilson Planning Commission Bank Resolution for Truist Treasury Services Access.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve to update the check signers for the MPC bank account.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles	
Second: Wayne Noha	
Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Aye
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Not Present
Jay Melder	- Not Present
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present

VIII. Old Business

14. MAP AMENDMENT | 1712 Ogeechee Road | File No. 22-003056-ZA

- 📎 [AERIAL MAP 22-003056-ZA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [FLU MAP 22-003056-ZA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [LABEL MAP 22-003056-ZA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [TAX MAP 22-003056-ZA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [VICINITY MAP 22-003056-ZA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [ZONING MAP 22-003056-ZA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Front View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Lane View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Left Side View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Rear-Left Side View.pdf](#)
- 📎 [July 25th letter of support Rich Fergersen 1.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Letter of Opposition 1.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Staff Report 3.pdf](#)

Mr. Nirav Gandhi gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to rezone the subject parcel from TR-1 (Traditional Residential) to TC-1 (Traditional Commercial). The subject property is an undeveloped parcel northeast of the intersection of Ogeechee Road and Lavinia Street. Lavinia Street provides vehicular access to the subject property. Ogeechee Road has a width of 31 feet and has two-lanes. The property has a total area of 0.11 acres. The zoning was changed from Multifamily Residential-25 units per net acre/Planned Neighborhood Conservation to Traditional Residential in 2019 with the update of the New City Zoning Ordinance (NewZO). The MPC heard this petition at their August 16, 2022 meeting and asked the petitioner to work with MPC staff to find an alternative resolution. Staff has worked with the petitioner and were unable to find an alternative solution that suited him. So, he has elected to move forward with the petition as it was originally submitted.

Mr. Gandhi explained that the petitioner wants to rezone this property to TC-1 (Traditional Commercial). The petitioner's desired use of this property is for indoor sports. However, he wanted to remind the Commission that when they look at zoning districts changing, they look at all of the possible uses that can come with the zoning district change. He stated that he was not saying that this is irrelevant to what the petitioner is planning to do with the property, but they have to look beyond that to see what possible future uses could be on this property and whether the property can sustain those uses. One of the major things they were concerned about this property is a commercial facility hosting the necessary parking. This parcel is small (.11 acres). With the amount of building that a commercial use would probably need, staff finds it unlikely that the parking spaces necessary for whatever the use would be, would fit on this property. He showed the Commission a map of the area and pointed out that everything shown here is zoned residential. This would definitely be spot zoning if the property is rezoned TC-1, as it would be more residentially oriented. This area is definitely not built for this type of impact.

Mr. Gandhi stated that as required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property were sent notices of the proposed rezoning. Public notice was posted on site. The petitioner contacted the Cuyler-Brownsville Neighborhood Association to have a neighborhood meeting. The public notice requirements have been met.

Mr. Gandhi reported that based upon the site concerns and character of the area, as well as the review criteria, staff recommends denial of the rezoning request as submitted.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Richmond Ferguson stated that he would like to go over a few things. Mr. Ferguson explained that

the report denied TC-1, but gave him the TN-1, which he will accept. However, he questioned which report the staff was talking about in their presentation to the Commission.

Mr. Gandhi clarified that staff offered the TN-1 as a possible alternative if the petitioner was exploring a use, such as a museum which was one of the original things he was looking at. However, when he spoke with Mr. Ferguson, he was determined to do the indoor sports, which is not allowed in the TN-1 district. Therefore, the property would need to be rezoned to a full commercial district.

Mr. Ferguson said he does not remember discussing that with Mr. Gandhi. The last use here was Mary's Beauty Shop, which is really commercial in nature. Now, it is a historic dwelling, but it comes under an "out building." At one point, three buildings were on this property. It was zoned RM-25 which is one of the top zonings, and then it was rezoned TR-1. Mr. Ferguson said he believes it would fit in well with the area. The mission is to assist incarceration and conflict among youth. Since he has made this proposal, he is on the Board in Stonecrest. The Drone Soccer has taken off very good. Therefore, they anticipate putting in a drone soccer practice facility which requires a building of 35 feet to 40 feet.

Mr. Ferguson said that he submitted a concept and evidently it was not considered. Pointing to an area, Mr. Ferguson said this building would go well with the smaller building; and parking would be sufficient. He said he also put in an application to acquire the two lots, which are vacant. Trash is all over the place and is owned by the City, but he has not gotten a response yet. Lavania is a small street. but he believes what he wants to do here will really improve the area. He has lived in this area practically all his life. He still lives on 36th Street. Therefore, he is familiar with this area. Also, on Cuyler Park, when he was an appraiser, he appraised several of the houses here. He showed the Commission what a drone soccer field looks like. It is one of the fastest growing "E" sports in the area. They just had a tournament in Stonecrest; and they have a young team which defeated Alabama. They believe that Drone Soccer will become regulated by the government. This will be a good thing to get the young people involved in. In 2025, drone soccer will be featured at the World Games. Therefore, they want to get some children here up to speed. He believes this will benefit Savannah greatly. This will work through the Board of Education. Mr. Ferguson said they would work with the children after school; primarily he is talking about children in the Cuyler-Brownville area; but it is open to everybody. He believes this will benefit the entire Cuyler-Brownville area.

Ms. Epstein asked if the petitioner said that the TN-1 zoning classification was offered under specific conditions?

Mr. Gandhi clarified that when staff originally spoke to Mr. Ferguson, he had a few different ideas. One idea was to get something, such as a small museum. This is something that would work under the TN-1 zoning. Therefore, staff offered this as an alternative when the petition was initially brought to the Commission. However, by that time, Mr. Ferguson firmly wanted to do the indoor sports, which is not allowed in the TN-1. This would have to be in TC-1 or higher commercial zoning. If the petitioner still wishes to rezone the property to TN-1 zoning classification. he will not be able to do what he wants to do, but he has the support of the staff for that zoning.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one was present in-person or on-line.

Mr. Welch asked staff if they received any correspondence regarding this request.

Mr. Gandhi answered "no."

Ms. Epstein asked staff if any individuals or organizations are supporting this project?

Mr. Gandhi said no. However, staff is supportive of the drone soccer idea. But the problem is rezoning this very small property that does not have the right structure to support the commercial aspect. Therefore, it is irrelevant in this case as to what will happen here. However, in the long run, staff does not feel that it fits the Comprehensive Plan for the residents of the neighborhood.

Ms. Jarrett asked if a letter is in the packet from the Cuyler-Brownville Neighborhood Association showing that they oppose the TC-1 rezoning

Mr. Gandhi said a few months ago, staff did receive a letter from the Cuyler-Brownville Neighborhood Association.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Mr. Stephens said as staff has stated, he, too, is supportive of the general idea. But facing the zoning scenario that we have here in this current environment and the impact of the other potential uses that could come with the zoning of this property, he finds it difficult to support anything other than the staff's recommendation.

Mr. Noha said he supports the idea, but he accepts the staff's recommendation for denial of this petition.

Motion

Denial of the Petitioner's request to rezone 1712 Ogeechee Road from TR-1 (Traditional Residential) to TC-1 (Traditional Commercial).

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Travis Coles

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

IX. Regular Business

[15. MAP AMENDMENT | 500 John Carter Road | Rezone from I-L to I-H | File No. 22-000807-ZA](#)

📎 [2022-09-21-SCMC.pdf](#)

📎 [STAFF REPORT.pdf](#)

📎 [Letter of Concern #4.pdf](#)

📎 [Letter of Concern #2.pdf](#)

📎 [Letter of Concern #3.pdf](#)

📎 [Letter of Concern #1.pdf](#)

📎 [Permitted Land Uses IL vs IH at SCMC-Residential Properties Recommendations.pdf](#)

📎 [Unacceptable Uses-Residential Properties List.pdf](#)

Ms. Melissa Paul-Leto gave the staff report. The petitioner, Attorney Harold Yellin, agent for Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA), is requesting approximately 118 acres to remain a I-L (Light-Industrial) classification, and to rezone approximately 513 acres to be a I-H (Heavy-Industrial) zoning classification. The property is approximately 632 acres, with 243 acres of wetland area, and 389 acres of upland. The property abuts Interstate 16 and is accessed from Old River Road and Four Lakes Boulevard. The property identification number is 21047 02001. This Commission heard this petition on May 24, 2022. It was continued for 90 days so that the petitioner could reach out to the community.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that the subject property is located northeast of the intersection of John Carter Road and Old River Road and abuts Interstate 95 to the east. The property is currently vacant.

Ms. Paul-Leto explained that:

- On October 11, 2007, the parcel was annexed from the County to the City of Savannah and subsequently rezoned from R-A Residential – Agricultural) to R-A-CO (Residential – Agricultural – County).
 - On April 10, 2008, the subject parcel was rezoned from R-A-CO to a P-I-L zoning classification.
 - On July 18, 2019, the City of Savannah through the NewZO Transition rezoned the property from P-I-L to I-L
- The property was purchased by SEDA in 2016 as a result of a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. The project was a joint venture between Chatham County and the City of Savannah with the intent of establishing a manufacturing center. The initial phases of development have been completed to include construction of the primary spine road, Four Lakes Boulevard, stormwater detention and wetland mitigation. For the property to have manufacturing uses within Savannah Chatham Manufacturing Center, the petitioner would need to rezone the property from the I-L (Light - Industrial) zoning district to the I-H (Heavy - Industrial) zoning district.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that as required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property were sent notices of the proposed rezoning. Four public notice signs were posted at various locations around the site. The petitioner met, on four occasions, with different community members in the area. MPC staff also met on Friday, September 16, 2022, with the residents of the adjacent property on Ted Newton Avenue

Ms. Paul-Leto explained that the subject property was planned to be an industrial park through the partnership of Chatham County and the City of Savannah. The front portion of the property is currently classified as Heavy Industrial. However, the large parcel in the rear is currently zoned Light Industrial. The parcel to the rear is the subject parcel requesting to be rezoned Heavy Industrial with a portion remaining Light-Industrial. The Heavy Industrial classification would ensure that any manufacturing company or other industrial user seeking to locate at the site would be permitted and would not require a rezoning. This would allow SEDA to market the individual sites to potential businesses with the knowledge that the use would be permitted. The manufacturing center would be required to go through the subdivision process once the petitioner begins to designate parts of the property to future manufacturing tenants. The I-L district includes similar uses as the proposed I-H zoning district with four distinct additional uses that I-H allows:

- Intensive manufacturing
- Solid waste, and industrial landfill facility
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 3, 4 or 5
- Waste incinerator uses

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that the petitioner is requesting to exclude the following uses from I-H:

- College, university, seminary
- Consumer Fireworks Retail Sales Facility
- Fuel, gas station
- Crematorium

- Event Venue
- Dry Cleaner/Laundry, Neighborhood
- Distillery, craft
- Bar; tavern
- Nightclub
- Restaurant
- Food Truck Park
- Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)
- Winery; Meadery; Cidery
- Brewery, Micro
- Vehicle towing and impound facility
- Watercraft sales, repair, and service
- All adult-oriented businesses
- Boat Yard
- Watercraft Launch/Ramp
- Solid waste and industrial landfill facility
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 2 • Mulch or compost processing, Class 3, 4, or 5
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 6
- Recycling collection facility
- Waste incinerator
- Solid waste transfer station
- Airport, airfield; Heliport
- Railyard

Ms. Paul-Leto reported that based upon the existing zoning pattern and character of the area, as well as the review criteria, staff recommends approval request to rezone approximately 513 acres out of the total 631.51 acres of the parcel with the remaining 118 acres be light-industrial at 500 John Carter Road with the following condition:

1. A master plan shall be brought back to the Metropolitan Planning Commission for approval.

Ms. Paul-Leto said staff also suggests that warehousing be located further away from the residential zoned parcels.

NOTE: Chairman Welch, before the hearings started, informed the public that a great crowd of people were present for this petition. He thanked them for coming to the meeting. He told the public that to shorten the process, they could get one or two persons to speak for the group or if they so desired, all of them were welcome to speak.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Attorney Yellin came forward and stated that he was present on behalf of the Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA) and accompanying him were Mr. Trip Tollison, Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Jesse Dillon, Vice-President of Business Development, and Mr. Jason Chamblis, Project Engineer. Attorney Yellin explained that as already noted, the subject property is 630 acres. Of the 630 acres, 243 acres are wetlands, which is approximately 39 percent. The property is commonly known as the "Savannah-Chatham Manufacturing Center." The Center was acquired by SEDA in 2016 with SPLOST funds and was established for the sole purpose of creating a manufacturing center.

Attorney Yellin explained that the existing zoning classification for the entire site is industrial. As a result of NewZO in 2019, it went from being an I-L to a P-I-L Under P-I-L, there are some light manufacturing uses, but primarily this zoning district is geared for warehousing and some services. As the County and the City becomes more attractive for manufacturing (and it is), it is critical that SEDA be able to compete with other cities for manufacturing opportunities with weight scales that they believe will benefit the entire community. They researched NewZO and it is sometimes difficult to tell, when a use comes in, whether it is permitted or not under a light industrial or heavy industrial zoned classification. They want to be in a position in order to be competitive, that they have a pad ready site that they know is certain whether or not a perspective use will fit in the heavy industrial or light industrial. They know that all squares are rectangles; they do not know that all rectangles are squares. Sometimes, the use that comes in, is very difficult to tell where it belongs. So, the petition today is to rezone, not all of the property, but a portion of

the property from light industrial to heavy industrial so that the manufacturing center will have the benefit of both zoning classifications.

Attorney Yellin said that their original petition did call for the rezoning of the entire parcel, but this has been amended. They amended their petition based on meetings with MPC staff and amended their petition based on meetings with the neighborhood. As a result of their meeting with staff, they met on two occasions, and eliminated 29 permitted uses in the I-H zoning classification. Ms. Paul-Leto went over all those uses. They met on four different occasions with their neighbors and agreed to reduce the acreage to be rezoned; so that only a portion of the park next to residential will remain light industrial. Attorney Yellin showed the Commission a map and stated that the section shown in "yellow" will remain light industrial which is what it is zoned now. There is no change to tract that is covered in "yellow." Everything that is shown in "green" is wetland and will not be developed. The plat to the residential side shown in "yellow" will remain exactly as it is now, light industrial, but with additional buffers that are not here now. They decided to increase the buffers that are here now and leave additional buffers than what is required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance. They have increased the buffers from 40 to 50 feet, but maybe it is too small to see 50-foot reductive buffer along the eastern boundary; and they increased their buffer to 100 feet along the portion of the property that they think is adjacent to residential properties. Where there is sort of a three-legged flower pedal, is basically wetlands and is a part of the buffer. They say it is 100 feet, but actually it is bigger than 100 feet.

Attorney Yellin said he found out last week that apparently the neighbors requested that they do additional planting. But he thought the planting would take place after the approval. He said the "red dots" represent where SEDA has planted 20 ten-foot Cyprus trees. This was done at the request of the neighbors, and consequently, they obliged them in good faith and the trees are there right now. They do believe, as a result of their meeting with the MPC staff, and with neighbors, that they have a better petition. They have a better plan as a result of all of these meetings. They are grateful for the MPC staff recommendation for approval and are aware that there is a condition that they need to come back for Master Plan approval. They are saying that they agree; they will come back for the Master Plan approval.

Attorney Yellin thanked the Commission for their consideration of the petition, and he respectfully requested that they approve the staff recommendation. He said that Mr. Tollison, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Chamblis, and he are available to answer the Commission's questions.

Ms. Jarrett asked if the project has gone through the Development of Regional Impact [DRI] review with the State?

Attorney Yellin said the property was rezoned in 2009. This is when it was rezoned to light industrial pre-NewZO. He suspects that a lot of the things that she mentioned in the Pre-meeting was done then. They will pull the package, but they do not mind coming back with the information when they return with their Master Plan. If a DRI is required, they often have properties rezoned subject to DRI's approval. This will be one of them.

Ms. Jarrett asked, "shouldn't the DRI approval precede the rezoning"?

Attorney Yellin answered typically no; they know that they cannot get the permit without DRI's approval.

Ms. Jarrett asked if any analysis and speculations have been done about the impact to the roadway network?

Attorney Yellin said that Ms. Jarrett, in the Pre-meeting, asked about the traffic impact analysis. They will check to see if one was done in 2009. But now they are here 13 years later. He suspects that the TIA is different now than it would have been 13 years ago. Therefore, they are prepared to do it all over again. If there is one, they will present it and if there is not, they will do it again.

Ms. Jarrett asked staff, "if the future land use is the area where the planned development is located."

Ms. Paul-Leto answered yes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Welch informed the public that this section is open to them. They will have three minutes each to make their presentation.

Ms. Jo Ann Cottle, resides at 108 Huckleberry Road, informed the Commission that **Ms. Amanda Wilson** would make a presentation first to the Commission.

Mr. Welch allotted 15 minutes for Ms. Wilson to make the community's presentation.

Ms. Amanda Wilson came forward and stated that she lives on John Carter Road. Ms. Wilson said she wanted to go over the staff report that Ms. Paul-Leto presented. She wanted to point out some discrepancies that their community felt were important to bring to the Commission, as they are aware that the Commission uses this for their recommendation as to whether or not they approve or deny the petition.

Ms. Wilson said the first thing she wanted to review was on page 2, where the petitioner said that they bought the property "for the purpose to have manufacturing uses within Savannah Chatham Manufacturing Center, the petitioner would need to rezone the property from the I-L (light - industrial) to heavy industrial." She said in 2018, Mr. Trip Tollison, President of SEDA asked Mr. Pat Monihan to respond to an email about some concerns that their community had regarding the site. They were asked to explain what their intentions were and why they bought the property. An email was sent [she can provide the email to the Commission] that SEDA bought the Newton Tract because of its size and because of the existing zoning already I-L. They purchased the site based on the fact that it was I-L and that they could use it for I-L. She said on page 3, she will go over the Land Use chart. It says that to the north is undeveloped, to the south is undeveloped, to the east is single-family and multi-family; and to the west, is vacant.

Ms. Wilson showed the Commission the site. She said [pointing to an area] that as the Commission can see to the south, all of this is their community. To the west, all of this is their community. There are hundreds and hundreds of families' homes. Multifamily is to the south. Pointing to an area, she said New Hampstead is here and there are 11,000 homes slated to come here. She said as was pointed out, most of this wants to be rezoned to heavy industrial and there are a lot of wetlands in this surrounding area. On page 5, under "Suitability Criteria" the question is, if heavy industrial is more suitable than I-L given the fact that there are thousands and thousands of homes surrounding this area, Is heavy industrial suitable? She would say that it is not suitable. Also, the comment is made "that the range of uses permitted under the current and proposed zoning districts have similar uses." Ms. Wilson said this is true - similar for industrial and four additional uses. Those four additional uses in heavy industrial, are very important to note. They are intensive manufacturing, solid waste, mulch. and waste incinerator.

Ms. Wilson said as staff has suggested, when they consider rezoning, they have to consider what the rezoning would allow to be here. She said the petitioner eliminated three of the four items, but they left in intensive manufacturing, Therefore, they can conclude that this is what they are intending to do, intensive manufacturing in a residential area. According to the City of Savannah's website, intensive manufacturing uses that include, but are not limited to the manufacturing processing or storage of settling, lime, cement, gypsum, chlorine, corrosive acid, fertilizer, insecticide, disinfectants, poisons, explosive, paint lacquer or varnish, petroleum products. cold products, plastic and synthetic resins, and radioactive materials. This could also include asphalt patching, chemical batching, paper manufacturing. plastic and rubber manufacturing; smelting, animal slaughtering; oil refinery which includes bulk storage of chemicals. Are these items appropriate for residents or to be in a residential area?

Ms. Wilson said as far as "suitability," Attorney Yellin met with their community and told them that unfortunately, SEDA is not concerned about suitability of their community; they are concerned the suitability for SEDA and bringing in jobs, and the community at-large. SEDA is supposed to bring in about 1,800 jobs but what about the thousands of homes and families that are here. She said, when considering the rezoning, she asked what about the suitability for us?" She said on page 6, whether the proposed rezoning district addresses the systematic need of the county and the city, it will bring in jobs and the community at-large, but suitability for them who are already there and have lived here for 30 years, it is not suitable for what is already there. Ms. Wilson said regarding "compatibility," in the report it says "will this adversely affect the existing properties nearby. She said the "comments" state this rezoning of this parcel may adversely affect the existing zoning and existing surrounding uses. The

property would have a 100-foot buffer from residential uses to the south. She wanted it to be kept in mind that on page 3, it said that there was nothing to the south. However, the subject project is directly adjacent to multi-family. Therefore, the question is it "may affect them here, but it will definitely affect them." She replied that it has already affected them.

Ms. Wilson said according to the City's definition of a heavy industrial district, it is one that generates noise, particularly, matter, fumes, and other nuisances that are not contained on site. She said, pointing to an area, that the proposed light industrial site would be right here. The rest is heavy industrial. The buffer that the petitioner has proposed is shown by the tiny green dot. This is the 100-foot buffer. Along the southern border is a 50-foot buffer and 20 trees. Do you think that 20 trees in a tiny little 100-foot buffer is going to protect these children, these families from a zoning district that allows for the mass pollution. Now, they might say that SEDA will be responsible, even if they did get the heavy industrial zoning approved, they would be responsible and would not bring in something that would cause harm to all of them that live here. However, she wanted to let the Board know that the first facility that is going in is an e-waste facility. This e-waste facility takes electrotonic chips and components of other boards from scrap electronics. They have applied for a synthetic binder permit, which knocks the components down a little; however, even under the synthetic binder permit, they are allowed to put out ten pounds of particulate matter in an hour. All of this is right on top of them. This was allowed under "light industrial." She does not understand how this got approved. Maybe this needs to be approved. This just might need to be reconsidered. She said she can only imagine that if SEDA is allowing this to come in under light industrial, what is going to come in under heavy industrial?

Ms. Wilson asked the Commission to go to page 7 which says that whether the proposed zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan [it is not], it says in the comment that "this designation is planned development and the proposed is planned industrial." She explained that just because the word "planned" is used, does not mean that it is within the Comprehensive Plan. She showed the Commission the Future Land Use Map. Staff said that they need to look at the plan when they are considering rezoning. There are areas along Jimmy DeLoach that is zoned for light industrial. Under "Reasonable Use," it states that they can use it under the current zoning. Under "Adequate Public Services," says that adequate services are available. Ms. Wilson said that this is not the case, when this property was annexed, it divided John Carter Road into three different municipalities. A three-mile road, three different municipalities, four different times. They have had problems with delayed emergency services coming out; they have had problems with policing, road repairs and drainage. Ninety percent of her property was underwater for more than a year because of improper drainage. The study was not done; the land use study that was referred to says, "that it will not create any kind of adverse effects on drainage problems," but this is not the case. Their road looks like a river. As she has said about 90% of her property, except for her house, the driveway and the pool area were under water for a year.

Ms. Wilson said the "Policy Analysis" shows that a heavy industrial zoning would ensure that any manufacturing would be able to come in. They need to consider what can come in when they rezoned. A heavy industrial district in their community abutting residential is not suitable to the area and does not meet the needs of all, especially the area residents are not compatible, and will adversely affect nearby property; it is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and does not have adequate public services. Ms. Wilson said that given all these facts, plus the fact that the property has reasonable use under the current zoning, a rezoning to heavy industrial is not absolutely necessary. This will only cause more harm to the surrounding area, the homes, and the families.

Ms. Wilson asked the Commission to please deny the zoning request and please protect the hundreds and hundreds of families that live here. She thanked the Commission for listening to her presentation.

Ms. Laura Checkit stated that looking at the Land Use Maps and the Updated Plan - 2040, the Character Area Map and the Future Land Use Map, that they are not consistent with what is planned here. Ms. Checkit said that Plan 2040 does not override any existing zoning. Her family recently built a home here. They are planning to be here for the rest of their life. She said that when the light industrial zoning was granted, some things should not have been granted according to the proposed maps. She asked that the inconsistencies please do not be made worse by allowing more harmful things to their families.

Ms. Cheryl Sanderline said she is the most impacted neighbor here. She has lived here for 31 years. In 2016, SEDA purchased 631 acres for development. As flooding began in their area, they contacted the County, City, commissioners, aldermen, and anyone else they could contact. Ms Sanderline said they

received some responses, but not a lot. One meeting was held because of their contact. An employee of the engineering company helped them but stopped. They were told that two neighbors blocked an area to their homes to stop their flooding was creating their flooding. But this was not the entire problem. She has lived on this property for 30 years and it never flooded, not even during a hurricane. Pine trees were moved, culvers were busted, land clearing ditches were blocked, the drainage to the Little Ogeechee basin was not cleared. With all this going on around them, they dreaded what else would come. They requested a drainage plan from SEDA, Thomas and Hutton, and Lee Smith. She and her neighbors have spent thousands of dollars rebuilding their roads which are not city or county maintained. Ms. Sanderline said her 85-year-old father, who was present here today, could not use this septic tank because ground was pouring in so fast. They had to put a pump in so he could use his septic tank. After trying to get some help four years ago, they had a meeting with Thomas and Hutton regarding water issues. This meeting was arranged by SEDA. The meeting extended invitations to two households, the County Engineer, County Drainage Engineer, Thomas and Hutton, and SEDA were present. They finally realized that there was a big issue in this area that too much development was taking place without the proper drainage control and infrastructure in place. They have more than 200 apartments coming within 1000 feet of her home. They have 11,000 homes under development across the street from her home, which is the New Hampstead development. Also, a multitude of commercial development is under construction. All of this is done with the drainage plan just being started. This is just the scope; then there is study, plan of action, and at what point do you say, "maybe we put the cart before the horse?" It is indicated that for their community, about 500 homes and soon to be more, that they needed to think "long term." It may be 30 years before the water issues will be diagnosed and resolved. Ms. Sanderline said their neighborhood is in a lot of trouble.

Mr. Jerry Bogus stated that he wanted to give some perspective about the size of the Industrial Park. Mitsubishi is 3,030 square feet of building area Gulfstream is 7,050 square feet. This site is 3.5 million. He said that he does not see how, in good conscience, 3.5 million square feet of heavy industrial can be allowed next to residential because a heavy industrial zone allows for the highest amounts of noise, pollution, and this is why heavy industrial districts like the port are where they are. Mr. Bogos said he spent 20 years in the United States Marine Corps. Presently, many of them have heard much about Camp Lejeune water. He was stationed there from 1979 thru 1983. Therefore, the probability of him being affected already, has happened. He is 100 percent disabled now. Mr. Bogos said he is blessed to be here. Three years ago, they had property in Port Wentworth. He served on the Planning Commission in Port Wentworth for about 18 years. A developer wanted to come here and bring in warehouses. Most of Port Wentworth is now warehouses. The last one is going to be built about 20 feet from his home. At that time, they made a decision to move. This decision led them to 347 John Carter Road. Now, they are faced with the impact of light to heavy. Why is there a light and heavy? This is not complicated. He does not believe that anyone of them would choose to have a lot of cancer over a little cancer. They would rather have no cancer! He asked the Commission to have a little compassion.

Ms. Amy Simmons said it concerns her that the rules that are already here seems to be overlooked. The people who live here are having issues. It seems as if the zoning that is already here does not matter because of the things that are coming in. She was wondering if anybody is trying to think about the residents that are already here and whether any of the rules are being applied at this point.

Ms. Andrea Moss stated that the City of Savannah's Ordinance Code 8.5.7 states that "industry manufacture and processing manufacturing operations that are adjacent to a residential zoning district or residential use, shall conform to Section 8.5.5 Industry Manufacturing and Process Limited/Light. Ms. Moss asked why heavy industrial would be considered.

Mr. Donald Stack said he was not sure that MPC got a copy of the submittals that his folks submitted previously. He is aware that a video was sent to Mr. Marcus Lotson. He wanted to ensure that the video is a part of the record. From a delivery of an administrative standpoint, they have heard from the folks, themselves, and he is a firm believer that it makes more sense to hear from the people who are affected than it does hearing from others such as Attorney Yellin and him. The reality is that these are folks that they have to answer to. Mr. Stack, however, asked the Commission to consider "what is the rezoning request?" It is basically somebody, an applicant, telling them that they are smarter than the hundreds of people who come before them and actually submitted and went to the time and trouble of adopting new zoning ordinances, going to all that trouble, preparing copies of plans, looking at long use of plans and strategies for the entire community. Then they say, set all of that aside, we are smarter than you are. He said this really is what they are asking the Commission to do. They are saying forget what

happened to these folks, they know better than you what is best for the entire community. Mr. Stack said, they considered a year ago whether this area should be light industrial or heavy industrial. He said the problem that Attorney Yellin has fallen in on his own face is "when he said the reason, they are asking for the rezoning, is because they cannot tell if the proposed use may or may not be subject to light industrial or heavy industrial." The very uncertainty about this is why every proposed use needs to come back to this Commission for consideration. He said you don't get the chance to write a blank check for five hundred or six hundred acres and then say they will take care of it in a master plan. The law is clear regarding the risk. One of the facts that they need to consider is that the rezoning ordinance since 1914 was the first one enacted in Ohio that says, "there is no obligation for a community to ensure the maximum economical return for an applicant is to ensure that there is a reasonable economic return?" Ms. Wilson has already talked with the Commission about they bought the property knowing full-well what the zoning was. Therefore, why are they trying to get it changed now. One simple answer is "green dollars." They don't want things to be slowed down. They are evaluating each and every proposed use as it comes up. This is the Commission's task, this why you are sitting on this Commission, and this is what these folks are expecting them to do; not write a blank check and say come in with a master plan; submit it and they will approve it at that time.

Mr. Stack said that Attorney Yellin talked about four different meetings with the community. Ms. Sanderline said that. in response Attorney Yellin never gave a meaningful example of what proposal, or what application or industrial might be coming in. If he could not tell them, then that is speculative zoning at its finest. The community is entitled to know a little bit of transparency and they are entitled to know what is actually happening here. They have been asking this for four years. He wanted to simply say, that is their problem; their request for rezoning is created by their own making and these folks should not have to bear the burden of this.

Ms. Jarrett asked Mr. Stack could he tell them about the submittals and presentations he referred to.

Mr. Stack stated that Ms. Sanderline and others submitted information to Mr. Lotson previously and asked that it be distributed in time for the Commission to have an opportunity to review it.

Mr. Rick Butler stated that he is a 20-year resident of John Carter Road. Most of them living on John Carter Road live in the County; have septic tanks and wells. He asked how the City and County can assure them that this project will not affect their water going forward. Obviously, there is no pipeline coming from Savannah. If his well water is contaminated, it will create a huge problem for him. Mr. Butler said his other concern is the traffic. He has not done a scientific study regarding the traffic flow, but within the last two weeks, he has been on the front near the highway doing some work on his property. On Tuesday or Wednesday, he started working about 8:00 a.m. He counted in one hour 42 trucks going up and down John Carter Road. These were dump trucks or bigger. It was almost a constant roar of these kinds of vehicles. Mr. Butler said he does not know what kind of traffic this project will add, but it seems as if the main road is on Old River Road; however, this does not mean that in the future something else might happen and will increase the traffic on John Carter Road, including the possible employees that will be driving up and down the road that is already falling apart.

Ms. JoAnn Cottle stated that she has lived in this area for 33 years. She resides at 108 Huckleberry Road. They have been asked the question, if this has been going on all these years, "why now" about the rezoning. Ms. Cottle said this has been very deceiving. The original owner of the property, Boxfield Company, held a meeting with Thomas and Hutton and several local residents. At that time, they asked the City to rezone the property to light industrial so that he could develop an upscale Equestrian Center. The residents had no problem with this. They found out later that he had no intentions of doing that because on his application it said for the purpose of warehousing. Therefore, they were deceived from square one. They were not opposed to the rezoning because they thought it was going to be an Equestrian Center. Now, because of this deception, they are possibly looking at heavy industrial. This is a far cry from an Equestrian Center to heavy industrial in their back yards. Ms. Cottle said she wanted to know how MPC concluded that even industrial light and especially industrial heavy, is compatible with an area that has homes, schools, and churches. This whole new development on Hampstead Avenue and more than 10,000 homes. They have one daughter and bought their property with hopes that the daughter would raise her family here. At this point, she has the property that is adjacent to them. She has given them three beautiful grandchildren, ages 11, 8 and 6. Probably, if this comes in, they are not going to be able to enjoy the area as the neighborhood that they enjoyed. Her grandchildren attended Bloomingdale School and are now attending New Hampstead School. A lot of the children in the

neighborhood walk to the bus stop a mile from their home because the bus will not come down their road. The church that she has attended for 32 of the 33 years is on John Carter Road. Ms. Cottle said she hates to think of all the impact from all of these trucks, traffic and noise that this will have on their church. They have just celebrated their 179th anniversary. Therefore, it is not just the money, and it is not just the jobs. There are a lot of residents that will have to move. So, they are taking jobs somewhere else because they are willing to bring jobs here. Ms. Cottle said she wishes that they would consider that it is not just about the dollar all the time.

Ms. Garenasin Bogus resides at 347 John Carter Road. She and her husband have lived here for three years. Ms. Bogus said it has taken a lot of push and hard work for a lot of people. It is frustrating for her. She and her husband were in the military. Therefore, she is used to structure and is used to people doing what they say they will do. This is scary as they went through this in Port Wentworth. They had to upheave themselves and move. Therefore, it appears that they will have to upheave and move again. This makes it seem like they are running. Now, in Port Wentworth, the same Council that approved the warehouses being built directly across from their homes, are fighting more warehouses being built close to their homes. Where does this stop? It is frustrating! One of the main responsibilities of local government is land use planning. There are many benefits that come from smart planning. Quality of life is maintained and improved. A clear vision is given for future land use and ensures that the development is compatible in mass, scale, use of the surrounding area and adds value to the surrounding properties. This information was taken directly from the City's web. A rezoning to heavy industrial would do none of these things. Ms. Bogus said heavy industrial is not comparable when abutting residential, neither is light industrial which is why both of them are allocated in the areas and not next to residential. A lot of people are present here asking the Commission to do what they say they are supposed to do. She said her husband spoke of an impact that their family is dealing with the Camp Lejune water contamination which was another time when people did not do what they were supposed to do. She asked that the Commission to look into this, and hopeful deny this petition.

Mr. Donald Wilson said he was curious about the packet that was sent to the Commission, but they have not received it. Mr. Wilson stated that Attorney Yellin said that the property was rezoned in 2009; but he believes it was 2008. They bought their property in 2011 and they believed they were doing due diligence by looking at all the surrounding properties as a lot of undeveloped land was there. He does not know if they are able to trust the map. They invested a huge portion of their finances into building their house, which is just a stone's throw away from Mrs. Sanderline's home. He is sure that their property value is completely destroyed. He has no idea if they will come close to what they have invested in this property; not to mention that this is where they wanted to be; this is where they built a beautiful home. They love it here. Mr. Wilson said he wanted to echo what all the neighbors are asking, please consider the impact this will cause to their homes, families, and children.

Mr. Welch invited Attorney Yellin to respond to public comments. He was allotted ten minutes

Attorney Yellin said a slideshow was presented. They have it. Someone will present the slideshow after he finishes; however, after the slide show is reviewed, he wishes to respond to that also.

Attorney Yellin explained that the petition before the Commission today is to rezone property that is already zoned industrial. There is no question about it, it is already zoned light industrial. They are asking to rezone a portion of the property on the other side of the folks who are behind him to industrial and leave 120 acres in its current form - light industrial. It will be better than it is now because they will put in buffers. Presently, the City Ordinance only requires 50 feet, but they are going to 100 feet; they are adding 100 feet at residential. When he spoke earlier, he said they have added 20 10-foot Cyprus trees, but he was corrected as they added 10 - 10 feet Cedar trees and there was also an existing berm. This was a concern of the neighbors that they take the berm down. They agreed that they would not take the berm down, but that they would permanently maintain it forever.

Attorney Yellin stated that currently, right now, this property is zoned light industrial with a requirement of 50 feet of buffer. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, there would be an oil distributor, lumber yard; saw-mill, textile mill, or a warehouse, which he has heard that the folks are concerned about. All of these things can go here right now. What they proposed was additional buffers to that light industrial area, twice as wide, put in the cedar trees, and adding a berm and preserve it. Therefore, they would say that a number of the issues that have been complained about or not related to the rezoning petition, it is related to the fact that the property is industrial. A comment was made that SEDA is not concerned about

the residents, and he wanted to take an issue with that. What they did tell the residents was honestly, unapologetically, the mission of SEDA is to bring businesses to Savannah with high paying jobs. This has always been their mission; they do not steer from that. They would think that having high paying jobs for their community is something that they want to do. A mom and dad that work at a manufacturing plant does not have to wonder about affordable housing as they would be able to afford housing. So, they believe in their mission; and when the comment was made that they are not concerned, they said no, no, they do care about the residents. They carefully outlined the mission of SEDA, and he wanted to be sure that everyone understands this. Attorney Yellin said they did respond to their concerns, changed their petition, changed their buffers; and eliminated 29 uses. All of this did not happen for no reason, they did so because they listened to the residents.

Attorney Yellin stated lastly, he believes that Ms. Jarrett asked a question about DRI. When he returned to his seat, Jason told him that prior to the 2008 or 2009 zoning, he does not know which one, DRI was approved. It was approved for a site with six million square feet of manufacturing. The current plans that they have are for 2.5 million square feet. The traffic was assumed to be 1,080 peak hour traffic. They will be happy to do another DRI, but the DRI that was approved prior to the zoning 2009 was significantly for more traffic and more square footage. Attorney Yellin said in his closing that they do believe in their plan. They know that they may not agree with the folks behind them, but they have done everything they can to make the project work. They also know that at the end of the day, they will not agree. He learned a long time ago that reasonable people will disagree. They know what they can do, and they know what the residents want. They have done the very best that they can. Therefore, they believe the thoughtful analysis of the MPC staff; and once again, they ask the Commission to approve the staff's recommendation as presented to the Commission.

Ms. Jarrett asked Attorney Yellin if the DRI that was done was for light industrial.

Attorney Yellin answered that it was probably done for light industrial, but it was probably also done for warehousing is his guess. They tried to pull up the records for 13 years ago, but this is their best guess of what happened 13 years ago.

Ms. Jarrett asked Attorney Yellin if he could make a comment on the concerns about the heavy industrial running 24 hours a day.

Attorney Yellin answered that light industrial could run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He said that this was his comment. Some of the issues raised are not related to heavy industrial. He said if he had a 24 - 7 convenience store, he would have a ton of uses. The 24-7 operation is not related necessarily to industrial. Whatever the 24-7 might be, that can happen now.

Ms. Jarrett asked that with the heavy industrial, would there be more noise, more potential pollution in the air, etc.

Attorney Yellin responded not necessarily; they are trying to have a venue where they can offer high paying manufacturing jobs. NewZo is challenging at some times. Light industrial and heavy industrial became a little more generic than it was before. When businesses come in, it is hard to discern what you can and cannot do. They want to be able to compete, and the environment is enormously competitive, they want to be in that position.

Ms. Jarrett asked Attorney Yellin if he is familiar with the drainage. What happened and why did the drainage issues get so much worse? Did the clearing really affect the properties that much?

Attorney Yellin answered that he is not an engineer. They know that when they build that they will have to do a lot of work on the storm drainage. There are many rules governing this. Whatever they do here, many eyes will be watching them. They additionally know that they must address drainage and they will do so.

Ms. Jarrett asked Attorney Yellin if the engineer would be willing to speak on the drainage.

Attorney Yellin said that Mr. Chamblis will speak on the drainage issue.

Mr. Jason Chamblis of Thomas and Hutton explained that they are aware of the drainage concerns in

this area. By way of history, when this project started. the initial push of the project was a rough/ready project. The park originally contemplated just a basic excavating pond, spiling pads; they did storm drainage calculations. They observed and were notified by neighbors that some water backup was in the wetlands. Therefore, at this point, they researched to find out where the backup was coming from. This is a flat area. They spread out and found that an area was blocked, and they released the water. In the course of this investigation, although they designed the storm system based on the conditions as they existed, they observed in contrast to the other areas of Savannah in, that West Chatham County there is a huge wetland system that drains from the Little Ogeechee. In other parts of the County and City, there are canals that have been constructed that allow for deeper, wider, and more intentional drainage passageway. So, it was their recommendation to SEDA that they take a lead in contacting the municipalities that touch the Little Ogeechee, perhaps to push forward a drainage study to look at the western Chatham corridor specifically the Little Ogeechee drainage basin. Mr. Chamblis said to valuate this knowing that, based on this and all the things they know about Bryan County Mega site and the development along I-16, it would be useful for those communities to come together and do a full drainage study of this area. SEDA actually commissioned for the first part of this, and Chatham County took it over. Therefore, it is not only SEDA what they can on their site to be a good neighbor, as they are landowners as well, they have also gone above and beyond to coordinate pushing efforts to look at the wider drainage concerns for the community.

Mr. Chamblis explained that they also found that there were issues in the swamp coming down to the park that predated any activity on the site. Just as Attorney Yellin has said, going forward SEDA is prepared to follow the applicable if storm drainage requirements. All the Ordinances are currently in place in the city to move forward on this project.

Ms. Jarrett asked Mr. Chamblis if they are doing a coordinated effort to figure out what to do with the traffic.

Mr. Chamblis answered that it is an inexact science to predict the industrial traffic. If anyone knows. it is the ITE Codes which predicts traffic. There are a wide variety of situations you can apply to industrial uses. It is a kind of relationship from warehouses that is a little simpler to predict some of these if you know generally where it is. Manufacturing is an entirely different matter.

Ms. Jarrett asked Mr. Chamblis if he does a major road study.

Mr. Chamblis answered that it would be easier as each project comes online with the site plan, that there be some sort of trip generation calculation prepared as a part of the package. This would be run the MPC and the City. If there is essentially a high volume of trucks or employees, this could be addressed at that point.

Ms. Boles asked when the request was made for the Little Ogeechee Drainage Study and what is the status?

Mr. Chamblis answered that the initial investigation that SEDA commissioned would have started 2019 or 2020. However, this is not his area, but he knows that the initial existing conditions are now assisted by the County Commission. It is underway now, but he does not know the completion date. This extends from Effingham County to Savannah. The study will cover everything that touches the drainage at Little Ogeechee basin.

Ms. Epstein asked if the City has plans to bring water out to the site for SEDA.

Mr. Chamblis answered that water is throughout the site.

Mr. Noha explained that one of the issues is, and he believed it has somewhat been stated, the site is in the City of Savannah, the roads are in the County, somewhere in Bloomingdale, he believes that until there is a comprehensive study with traffic, drainage, etc., they are fighting each other. Whether this goes through or not, they need to look at a comprehensive drainage and traffic study for the entire area. It is not John Carter Road or Old River Road that it was five years ago, much less 20 years ago.

Mr. Welch stated that he believes the slideshow is posted.

Mr. Lotson asked if a member of the public would narrate the slideshow?

Ms. Cheryl Sanderline presented the slideshow. She explained that the community was basically deceived from the beginning, which was not SEDA's fault. But, nevertheless, they were deceived. In 2008 when this project was brought before the community, the signs were not posted properly; the neighbors were not notified correctly. This was brought before the community in a meeting, and they were told that this would be the Equestrian Center. They are not metropolitan planning people, they do not know laws, and do not know how to look things up. But, at the same time, the area was already being prepared for warehouses. The community, therefore, did not fight the change to I-L because they were under the understanding that it was going to P-I-L for an Equestrian Center which was required to have the horse stable, etc. But, has had been said, it was already being proposed for warehouses that they were unaware of. She showed the Commission pictures of the site and the flooding of the roads. The majority of the residents in the area are lower income level to lower-middle income community. Some of the residents gave \$10.00; some gave \$30 to \$50.00, and a few contributors were able to give enough money, so they were able to get the information out. They were able to put up signs, notices, and hire an attorney. This was the only way for them to get money to enable them to do what they have done. The proposed map was shown. Ms. Sanderline said that from what they read and finding out things from others, 40 feet of buffer should be provided, this means "clear land." They were kind enough to give them 50 feet of buffer. Directly next to her house, they gave a 100 feet buffer. Out of 12 sites on their proposed map, they were giving up one to an industrial light, leaving the others heavy industrial. In addition, 20 trees were placed. It was nice to have the trees and berm, however, they could have left the 100 feet of buffer that was not needed. The heavy thick trees, but they came in like a "bull in a China closet," and the people who live across the street have not been able to be reached. They cleared right up to these people's house. The 50 feet buffer that they will have is clear empty land to look at the parking lot and the building. Concerning the traffic study that was mentioned, they read in two different places that the prior warehouse was going to be at least a 7,000 cars inlet. Ms. Sanderline said with 11,000 new homes coming across the street and to add this to the new homes, even 1,000 cars would make a significant impact.

Mr. Welch invited Attorney Yellin to respond to the slideshow.

Attorney Yellin responded that they do not see how they are adding to the existing industrial problem. As has just been said, they are concerned about the warehouses and the additional 7,000 cars. But this is not what they are doing here. Ultimately, at the end of the day, they are trying to create two forms of industrial, light industrial against residential, improved buffers based on the DRI to reduce square footage, based on the DRI reduce traffic. Attorney Yellin stated that he supposes that they do not have exactly what they are going to do because once they leave the Commission, it is up to Mr. Tollison and Ms. Dillion to go out and sell. Their job is to sell our community. He looks to be able to tell the Commission that they are bringing in "xyz." This is really why they are here, so that they can go out and market their community and put in manufacturing, something called the "Chatham Savannah Manufacturing Center." This is the only reason they are here today. Attorney Yellin respectfully asked the Commission to approve the staff's recommendation, which is for approval with the requirement that they come back for Master Plan, which they agree to do.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Mr. Notrica moved to deny staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Epstein. The Commission asked that staff's recommendation be shown on the screen.

Mr. Welch stated that based upon the existing zoning pattern, character of the area as well as review criteria, staff recommends approval of the request to rezone approximately 513 acres from I-L to I-H at 500 John Carter Road with the following conditions:

1. A Master Plan shall be brought back to the Metropolitan Planning Commission for approval.

Mr. Stephens asked, for clarification, if the petitioners said that they were going to ask that 100 or so acres be I-L to I-H?

Ms. Jarrett stated 100 acres would remain I-L.

Mr. Noha stated, for clarity, that the remaining acres in the light industrial are what abuts the residential properties. Therefore, any of the heavy industrial would not abut residential properties. Is this correct?

Mr. Welch answered yes. He explained that a motion is on the table to deny the staff's recommendation. The motion was made by Mr. Notrica and seconded by Ms. Epstein.

Motion

Deny staff's recommendation for approval of the Map Amendment at 500 John Carter Road to rezone from I-L zoning classification to I-H zoning classification.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Jeff Notrica

Second: Elizabeth Epstein

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

[16. MASTER PLAN | 0 Fort Argyle Road | File No. 22-003770-PLAN](#)

[Application and Conceptual Plan.pdf](#)

[Submittal 1_Hill-Durrence Property_081122_Master Plan.pdf](#)

[STAFF REPORT - 10.04.2022.pdf](#)

Ms. Melissa Paul-Leto gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting MPC approval of a master plan to a previous zoning approval for property located at 0 Fort Argyle Road. The subject property consists of three zoning classifications comprising a total of approximately 323.11 acres. On May 3, 2022, a rezoning request was approved with the following conditions:

1. A master plan shall be required to come back to the Metropolitan Planning Commission prior to a site development plan approval. The petitioner is doing so today.
2. A 100-foot densely landscaped buffer around the residentially zoned properties.

Ms. Paul-Leto explained that the 2022 Master Plan was designed to include three (3) zoning classifications within 323.11 acres. The front portion of the property which includes 58.83 acres, or 2,563,070 square feet, is zoned B-C (Community Business). The B-C portion includes an indoor ice hockey complex, an indoor soccer complex, an outdoor soccer complex for adults, an outdoor junior soccer complex with associated parking. The middle portion of the parcel is zoned I-L-T (Light Industrial Transition) which includes 108.65 acres, or 4,732,358 square feet. The I-L-T portion includes

warehousing, truck storage, and parking. The rear of the portion which includes 155.62 acres, or 6,779,678 square feet is zoned I-L (Light – Industrial). The I-L portion includes warehousing, truck storage, and truck parking spaces. The development includes a spine access road with ingress and egress from Fort Argyle Road (SR 204). The Master Plan includes the following:

- The Business Community site: 58.83 acres in size with 22.22 acres of wetland include the following uses:

- o Indoor Hockey Complex will be 100,000 square feet in size.
- o Indoor Soccer Complex will be 62,000 square feet in size.
- o Outdoor Soccer Complex with 2 adult soccer fields, and 4 junior soccer fields.

- The Light Industrial-Transition site: 108.65 acres in size with 39.71 acres of buffer/preserved wetlands include the

following warehouse buildings:

- o Warehouse #100 proposed to have 78,000 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #200 proposed to have 77,000 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #300 proposed to have 78,000 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #400 proposed to have 110,000 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #500 proposed to have 50,000 square feet in size.

- The Light Industrial site: 155.62 acres in size with 20.20 acres of buffer/preserved wetlands include the following warehouse buildings:

- o Warehouse #600 proposed to have 157,500 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #700 proposed to have 262,580 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #800 proposed to have 262,580 square feet in size.
- o Warehouse #900 proposed to have 1,410,750 square feet in size.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that the subject site has frontage on Fort Argyle Road, a two-lane road. Fort Argyle turns into Georgia 204 Highway once it passes through the I-95 overpass. Final location of any curb cuts will be determined during the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), which will be required before any development takes place. Public transit is currently not available along Fort Argyle Road within a 500-foot radius. The nearest bus stop is located on South Gateway Boulevard. The property is served by the Savannah Police Department; City of Savannah fire protection, the City of Savannah will provide water and sewer service. The proposed master plan would result in a significant change to the development pattern in the area. The intensity of the uses is expected to continue to increase in this area, which has largely been rural for many years. The submission of the master plan was a condition of approval for the rezoning amendment, as well as a 100-foot densely landscaped buffer around the residentially zoned properties.

Ms. Paul-Leto reported that staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the petitioner's request to the Master Plan dated August 5, 2022 with the following conditions:

1. The buffer requirement from 362 Fort Argyle Road requires a 30-foot buffer with an 8-foot fence, this shall be revised prior to approval of any Specific Development Plan.
2. The buffer requirement from PIN 11034 01010, requires a 40-foot buffer with an 8-foot fence, this shall be revised prior to approval of a any Specific Development Plan.
3. Improvements and access on Fort Argyle Road would be determined by the governing body.
4. A 100-foot densely landscaped buffer around the residentially zoned properties.

Ms. Paul-Leto stated that staff is also suggesting that there might be a stub from the property that was just addressed at 500 John Carter Road to allow for commercial access. This would be for access to 362 Fort Argyle Road, which was before the Commission approximately two months ago. They will probably be going to a Business Community zoning classification instead of a Light Industrial.

Ms. Paul-Leto entertained questions from the Commission.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Scott Allison of Coleman Company stated that accompanying him was **Mr. Greg Coleman**. Mr. Allison said that Ms. Paul-Leto did a great job explaining their plan. However, he wanted to touch on a few things. They agree to conditions, that staff has recommended, and as they promised to the property owners, they will include the 100 feet. Right now, they are calling for the undisturbed buffer, it is wooded surrounding those properties. He pointed out that during their zoning approval and in the master plan they have a significant undisturbed wetland between the B-C designation and the I-L-T. Georgia Power is combined with gas easement separation between the I-L-T and the I-L. The large warehouse in the rear abuts the Heavy Industrial district. They have tried to position any of the larger warehouses in this location.

Mr. Allison said they have applied for a wetland permit with the Corps of Engineers. They were mitigated accordingly based on the approval of said permit from the Corps of Engineers for any wetland pack that they have. Also, they are currently working with Kimley Horn Engineering on a traffic impact analysis. They will be coordinating the results of the analysis with the City of Savannah, the Engineering Group, and the Georgia Department of Transportation. As far as the access control along their property frontage and as was described, if the adjacent property is not able to receive any type of access by the Georgia Department of Transportation, they have some parking and access in close proximity associated with the indoor ice hockey facility. There could be some cross-connection there, depending on the results of GDOT's analysis on the property. Mr. Allison said as they have said, they agree with all of the staff's recommendations. They are here as a follow-up to the condition that was placed on their zoning approval earlier this summer. Mr. Allison said that he and Mr. Coleman were ready to entertain questions from the Commission.

Ms. Jarrett stated that her concern is making sure that they do things as safely as possible. She asked Mr. Allison that the corner piece he was talking about, does he intend to stub a drive to that property so that access is easy and readily available?

Mr. Allison answered that they heard about this today. He said that Mr. Lotson and Ms. Paul-Leto informed them of this today. Presently, they are showing access onto Fort Argyle Road at this location. Their access is based on GDOT's standards and separation between where the accesses can go. Obviously, the spine road, they want to line up as well as they can with Creek Fire across the street. They have the ability to cross-connect to that adjacent parcel based on their layout in the plan. This is to be determined by GDOT and Savannah Engineering, if they can't get an access on this area off 204.

Ms. Jarrett said if they can get an access in, wouldn't it be safer for them to be able to get to a signalized intersection, rather than trying to do an unsignalized.

Mr. Allison stated that they would not hinder any safety. They will work with whatever they need to do to allow for any type of crossing or red light. They don't plan to stand in their way on how GDOT wants those cross-connections to have access to the facility. He has not seen their plans. Their intention is to be a good neighbor and not hinder any type of cross access. Obviously, they have to serve the needs of the indoor hockey facility to make sure ingress, egress, and vehicle circulation applies for all the folks who will visit the facility. However, if you look at the site plan, opportunity is there for a connection.

Ms. Jarrett stated that she understood. The number of trucks is huge there. That's why it seems like a connection would be an important thing to do.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Bieber appeared to be on-line. Mr. Welch asked her several times to unmute her computer. But she did not.

Staff reported that they did not receive any correspondence for or against this request.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Commission was in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Motion

Approval of the Master Plan at 0 Fort Argyle Road as recommended by staff.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Laureen Boles

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

[17. MAP AMENDMENT | 11313 Middleground Road | Rezone from RSF-5 to RMF-2-18 | 22-004122-ZA](#)

[📎 Application.pdf](#)

[📎 Maps.pdf](#)

[📎 Staff Report 4122.pdf](#)

[📎 Aerial Context.pdf](#)

[📎 SIGNED PETITION_Opposition 1 of 4.jpg](#)

[📎 SIGNED PETITION_Opposition 2 of 4.jpg](#)

[📎 SIGNED PETITION_Opposition 4 of 4.jpg](#)

[📎 SIGNED PETITION_Opposition 3 of 4.jpg](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to rezone the subject parcels to the Residential Multifamily designation (RMF-2-18) with the intent of developing the property as apartments on the west side of Middleground Road between Quail Forest and Peachtree Drive. The proposed density is 18 units per acre which would allow up to 207 dwelling units, the petitioner is proposing 192 units based on a conceptual site plan. The property is currently zoned RSF-5 (Single Family Residential). The site is vacant, undeveloped and has been in family ownership for many years. It includes mature vegetation; it is accessed from Middleground Road and is bounded to the west by a detention pond. North and south of the subject properties are single- and two-family residential neighborhoods, constructed primarily in the 1980s.

Mr. Lotson stated that adjacent to the entrance of the subject property are existing single family residential properties, owned by the owner of the subject property. These homes were built in the 1970's. The development pattern in the immediate vicinity of the subject property includes single family

residential, two family and some low-rise apartment buildings along Middleground Road. Nonresidential uses include convenience, retail and institutional uses.

Mr. Lotson explained that the area has access to the City's public water, sewer, and stormwater systems. Infrastructure improvements, including retention, would have to be provided for a development of the proposed scale. The property would be accessed via Middleground Road. Due to an existing median, the property would have right in – right out access at this location. The site also abuts the South Quail Drive right-of-way, which could be opened for secondary access. South Quail Drive connects to Forest Ridge Drive, which intersects with a full access portion of Middleground Road. This, however, would require the development's traffic to be routed through an existing single-family neighborhood. Transit is available on Middleground Road, and several transit stops are in the vicinity of the subject property.

Mr. Lotson stated that the proposed zoning will allow a development pattern that is dissimilar to properties in the immediate vicinity. The adjacent properties are small scale single family and two-family residential dwellings. Development at the proposed density and scale would change the character of the neighborhood. The property is more suited to be developed under the current zoning with a similar development pattern and scale. The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the subject property as Residential Single Family. Mr. Lotson said that the multifamily zoning designation proposed by the applicant is not consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Lotson explained that the introduction of approximately 200 dwelling units in the form of multifamily residential is incompatible with the surrounding land uses. The current zoning was established on the undeveloped parcel for the purpose of extending the existing single-family pattern. While multifamily residential is often considered the primary response to housing shortages, there is also a need for entry level single-family products, which could be developed on the subject property under the current zoning. Staff finds that the introduction of a multifamily project, between two stable single-family areas, to be inappropriate from a land use planning standpoint. In addition to the land use concerns, the likely traffic impacts are also a concern, due to the limited access on Middleground Road from the subject property, and the potential connection to an existing residential street right of way at South Quail Crossing. South Quail Crossing is a dead-end street within the adjacent Forest Ridge neighborhood. The potential connection to South Quail Crossing would result in vehicle trips from the proposed multifamily development traveling through the Forest Ridge neighborhood because of the full access intersection that serves it.

Mr. Lotson reported that based upon the existing zoning pattern and character of the area, as well as the review criteria, staff recommends denial of the rezoning request as submitted. He stated the applicant held two neighborhood meetings with members of the Wilshire Estates Neighborhood Association. Some information is attached to the agenda regarding this effect in form of a petition signed by many of the neighbors that participated in this meeting. Some of the persons are not present today but did express their opinions through this format. He entertained questions from the Commission.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Attorney Harold Yellin was present on behalf of the petitioners. He said accompanying him was Marvin Vickery. The Vickery family has owned this property for approximately 90 years. Attorney Yellin said Mr. Corde Wilson and Clegg Collins, potential developers, were present also. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Collins are principal builders who have built homes and apartments throughout our community. They are requesting the property located on Middleground Road be rezoned to an RMF-2, which is a density of 18 units per net acre. As they customarily do, they submitted a site plan, which was for illustrated purposes only. It was not necessarily the plan that they would submit to the MPC for site plan approval, but it shows how the apartments do fit and how it can be handled on this site. Attorney Yellin explained that what is unusual is that this property is 11 and one-half acres. When he met with the petitioners about this property, they told him about the 11-acre site on Middleground Road. But he told them that there is no 11 acres on Middleground Road. He was very surprised when they showed him that the site does exist. Therefore, they are aware of how unusual this site is. It is on a major arterial with development all around it, but it is 11 and one-half acres. They also know that there are only two uses that they can put on this site. They are single-family residential or multi-family. He is not asking for industrial on this site.

Attorney Yellin said in the staff report, staff tells them that the development pattern in the immediate

vicinity includes single-family residential, two-family residential and low-rise apartment buildings along Middleground Road. They also tell them that there are several transit stops in the vicinity of this property; in fact, it is at their front door on Middleground Road. He said that staff has recommended denial. He believes primarily based on two concerns. One concern was that the traffic impact due to access on only Middleground Road and potential connection to existing residential right-of-way. He wanted to set the record straight that they have no intention of connecting to the residential neighbors next door to them. In fact, if they were single-family residential, they would as it would make sense to connect if they were single family residential, but they are multi-family. Their access is to Middleground which is a four-lane major arterial road with more than enough capacity for this development. He said with respect to staff's comment about introducing a multi-family development to this area, he wanted to show the Commission what they perceive as a broader picture of this area.

Attorney Yellin stated that as the Commission can see, they see all of the various properties that are currently zone multi-family in this area. They are densities of 10, 20, 25, 25, 10, 10, and 25 all around them; the development pattern for single-family residential and it includes multi-family. This was purely taken off of SAGIS. He thought he would go ahead and put some names to these properties and what he is showing the Commission in "yellow" is Hidden Lakes, Hickory Grove, Ramsey Run; Rendant, Ridgewood; Pointer; Bricktown Flat; and Savannah Commons, which is not a traditional apartment as it is an elderly facility, but it is multi-family. Attorney Yellin asked the Commission to please pay particular attention to the color "purple." The property shown in the color "green." He showed the Commission the density calculations for some of the properties he named. He said the Commission can see the acreage ranges from a low of 1.69 to a high-up to 12.79. Attorney Yellin explained that the densities range from 5.59; 21.4 units breaker, all within the area of the property that is before the Commission.

Attorney Yellin said that lastly, they asked their consultants what the area looks like in terms of what is around them. He said that everything that the Commission can see in "yellow" is an apartment building. The first circle represents a one-mile radius from the subject site; the second circle is a two-mile radius from the subject site. Every yellow dot they see is an apartment complex. They are not entirely sure why, but there is an inference that multi-family is considered to be inconsistent with single-family. This is sort of built into the staff report. But they would submit to this Commission, that multi-family and single-family co-exist, not just downtown, but everywhere. Attorney Yellin said there is "Buccaneer Trace." Now, it is in the County, it has a density of 13.5 units per net acre and is smack in the middle of a residential community and he is not aware that there have been any issues with Buccaneer Trace. On the southside of "Jackson Woods Boulevard," which has units which are 10 units per acre, 15 units per acre, and 20 units per acre, side-by-side with residential, single family residential, and "Windsor Forest." He said he has highlighted four areas which are 15 units an acre, two of which are 25 units per acre in the middle of Windsor Forest.

Attorney Yellin said; therefore, they are not sure why there is an inconsistency. Why are they saying that the land pattern should not have multi-family when in fact, what they see in this neighborhood is multi-family on Apache, multi-family on Mohawk and multi-family on Middleground Road. He said they hear the rattling cry for more housing. They are near other multi-family, near public transportation; and they are on a major arterial. They also find themselves wondering because when this came before the MPC in 2019, they were asking to rezone the property to a PRM-24 (24 units an acre). Even, though, the MPC staff recommended denial, the MPC voted in favor. When it got before City Council, the policy analysis was changed based on the MPC's comments, which says that "the existing zoning along this portion of Mohawk has remained unchanged for 35 years. Rezoning the subject property to PRM-24 would allow multi-family in a block that is not developed in that way to date. We recommend approval to PRM-24 based on the overall development pattern of a broader neighborhood and the existing examples of multi-family residential on the vicinity." Therefore, he is not sure why they are different. There may be residential directly next door, but there is no question that there is multi-family everywhere along Apache, Mohawk, and Middleground Road. For these reasons, Attorney Yellin said they respectfully request approval of their petition as submitted. He said that Mr. Wilson, Mr. Collins, and Mr. Vickery are available to answer any questions from the Commission.

Mr. Collins thanked the Commission for hearing their petition. He said he wanted to give the Commission an idea of the type of multi-family that they are proposing. It is not super high-end, but it is a nice, good, solid product which is what is needed in Savannah. He wanted to address one thing that Attorney Yellin said about the potential uses for the property, which will be single-family and multi-family. They are also single-family developers and contractors. They build a lot of houses in the City of

Savannah, entry level housing. They would not absolutely touch this property from a single-family standpoint, even if it was given to them for free. The economics of the area do not work. If they cannot make it work, he does not believe that anybody can. As he has said, they build entry-level housing; they build affordable workforce multi-family as well. Mr. Collins said he understands the neighbors' concerns. He is sure that the neighbors would like it to stay wooded forever. He was sure that the Commission would hear some of the neighbors. If they are turned down for multi-family, the neighbors just might get their wish as it probably would remain wooded forever.

Mr. Vickery said they see this as an opportunity to bring affordable housing to the southside of Savannah. It will not be "class A Apartments," but it would be a nice product. A hospital is nearby. This will be their third development in the area. The first development is completed and is doing nicely. This development is on Apache and Hickory Grove. They have another development [64 units] around the corner on Mohawk. They are very excited about this development. Mr. Vickery said they appreciate the Commission hearing their petition today. He entertained questions from the Commission.

Ms. Jarrett said her question was for Attorney Yellin, but she believed that all three of them could answer her question. Why not build townhomes? You will have 190 units that will not have a left-turn off a main road. She said she understands why they do not want to connect with the residents in the area, but this sounds like danger to her.

Mr. Collins stated that the right-in and right-out makes it less dangerous. There is only one way that you can turn.

Ms. Jarrett said this means that people will have to make U-turns at Forest Ridge.

Mr. Collins said the people already have to make a U-turn to get into the next neighborhood.

Ms. Jarrett asked if more U-turns will be added to this intersection?

Mr. Collins answered that more U-turns will be added at this intersection.

Mr. Jarrett replied that she does not like that.

Mr. Noha asked if there was no intent for access to be gained through South Quail.

Mr. Collins answered that he believes the City of Savannah will require that there be emergency access, but it will be a single lane just wide enough for a fire truck to get through.

Mr. Noha asked if it will be gated.

Mr. Collins answered, yes, it will be gated.

Mr. Noha, for clarity, asked if the intent is for no residential traffic coming through that neighborhood.

Mr. Collins stated that it will also serve as a benefit to the Forest Ridge community that if their entry is blocked and an emergency vehicle is needed, access will be right there on the secondary entryway.

Ms. Boles stated she was glad that the entry-level single-family question was answered, but was the response about townhomes

Mr. Collins said the economic for townhomes does not work for them either. He said earlier today, Attorney Yellin asked them if they would accept the lower density, they told him that they would not. The economics just do not work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Anita Jordan said if you take a trip through the southside, you will see many apartment complexes. Ms. Jordan said she wanted to buy a home on the southside, but the space is limited. Now, she hears that there is a crisis, they need more apartments. Around that location, there are roughly 20 to 25 apartment complexes. She called and asked about the availability; every single one, except two, told her that she could move in immediately. Ms. Jordan said not having affordable homes is what is causing the

home situation in Savannah. If these builders are not able to build homes is not her problem. However, she is sure that there are builders in Savannah who can handle this. There is a lot of difference living in a home instead of living in an apartment. Homeownership is a beautiful way to build generational wealth. There is no rent control in Savannah. The rent prices she heard did not sound affordable. But where she lives is fairly low-income to middle-income. They need houses, they do not need more apartment complexes. She bought her house because she was told that it is a residential community. If she was told when she bought her home that they were planning to put nearly 200 apartment complexes here, she would not have bought her house. This will affect them; it will ruin their property values. The neighborhood is against the apartment idea.

Mr. J. J. Bellemare, resides at 14 Peach Row, stated that his neighbors submitted a petition with more than 100 signatures thereon opposing Southern Apartment Builders, LLC zoning request to build multi-family residential units in their neighborhood. This will negatively impact their neighborhood and property values. The people here have many different beliefs, but what they have in common is none of them are independently wealthy. All of them work so they can pay their bills and they all made a commitment when they became residents of this neighborhood. They knew about the zoning of the property that they bought or rented; and they knew about paying taxes. He became a U.S. citizen in 2007 and when he made the decision to become an American, he did not decide to choose what he liked about America. When he decided to become a homeowner at 14 Peach Row, he decided on the things that were already here. He did not ask for anything to be rezoned nor did he ask for any laws in Savannah to change for him to become the owner of his home. Presently, there is nothing being proposed that benefits their neighborhood. The only people who will benefit from this are Attorney Yellin, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Collins and Mr. Vickery. They do not live in their neighborhood or in the case of Mr. Vickery, he makes enough money to move out of the neighborhood after their property values go down the drain.

Ms. Laura Brothers said she lives at the end of Forest Ridge Drive. She moved to Savannah about 5 and one-half years ago from New England. She has a lot of requirements that she needs. Ms. Brothers said she looked at a lot of houses to find one that was accessible and safe. She has issues with noise, this affects her medically. She showed the Commission some photos of her deck she had built onto her property. She also showed a picture of a tree line that runs the full length of her property. On the other side of the fence, 192 units are going to be built. In everyone's backyard she assumes is similar to hers, but she lives at the end of the cul-de-sac for a reason. She believes there are a lot of pros to having one way in and one way out. This is a much safer place when there is only one exit. She hardly sees any traffic. Ms. Brothers said all the bedrooms in her home are about 30 to 40 feet from the fence line. They are talking about at least 182 parking spaces. From her calculations, this appears to be the size of a football field wide. This property is directly up against two properties. She cannot imagine 192 units in this small space. Ms. Brothers said she does not know whether any of the Commission members have tried to pull out from Forest Ridge or any of the other close communities onto Middleground, but good luck. She cannot imagine adding 500 more cars trying to do the same thing. She asked that the zoning not be changed from single-family.

Mr. Welch invited Attorney Yellin to respond to the public comments.

Attorney Yellin stated that the petitioners before the Commission are very knowledgeable in the area of single-family residential, multi-family residential, and townhome communities. He said that sometimes they are a little blunt in their assessment. They know their product and know this market. The reason they chose the 18 units per acre is that they know what will work. Economically, they know that it is less than the density of the other apartments. He showed the Commission what is in the neighborhood, but that did not include the mobile home park that is right next to this residential community. A lot is going on here. Attorney Yellin said he appreciates the fact that one of their neighbors think they should only build single-family residential that build wealth, but their target intends to be nurses, students, and soldiers. Housing is not typically what they do for their soldiers, students, or nurses. Therefore, they think this is an appropriate commodity for that user. They do not believe that this will ruin property values because if this was true, property values would already be ruined. by a mobile home park next door. At the front of this development, there is an apartment building here. He looked for the name of the apartments but did not see it. The apartments are not down the street or a few miles away, but right at the front of the neighborhood. Therefore, as he has said, they do not see values changing. The Vickery family has owned this property since the early 1930s; this has been approximately 90 years. He supposes that they should have developed this sooner and then they would be here looking at a beautiful apartment building on site. Therefore, the question now is what they put here. They would love to put

single-family residential, but it does not solve the problems that they are hearing today. They do not want anyone to move. They don't want anyone to leave. But if someone builds single-family residential, that grove of trees will be destroyed. This buffer that is being enjoyed now, will no longer be there no matter what goes here. They have to come back for a site plan. Whatever they build here, whether it's apartments or anything else, they have to come back and protect the buffer between them and the neighborhood. Attorney Yellin entertained questions from the Commission.

Mr. Notrica asked where the mobile home park is located.

Attorney Yellin answered that at the top of the page where it says RMH-P, to the north.

Mr. Collins pointed out that where it says Forest Ridge Road extension, this is a mobile home park. There are three mobile home parks here.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Mr. Welch stated that when Georgia Southern took over the campus, it was known to them that 20,000 students would be coming to Chatham County. This is a lot of students; especially with the nursing school that has been moved to the campus. This was especially needed when the five young ladies lost their lives on I-16. They all knew that this entire area would grow for apartments, something that students can afford. Some people cannot afford to have a \$1,400 house payment.

Mr. Welch said this looks like a clean plan to him. When they get the site plan, they can look to see what kind of buffer is put here to protect the fence line. This will block the noise and the view. This will be done correctly; they have control over this as well. This is one of the cleanest apartment plans that he has seen for 11 acres to make it fit; and it does not look overcrowded. He just wanted to advocate what that impact would do to this area, which he is surprised that it has not already happened. However, it is on the way to happening.

Mr. Noha said he is a builder and has developed apartment complexes. He has fought this same battle. He looks at it totally different today than he did 20 years ago, before he started building apartments. Within an apartment complex, you have one owner, that's the same owner who invests. This is probably more than a \$10 million investment. Therefore, they are going to ensure that it is maintained properly. Mr. Noha said he feels for the residents, but he also knows that there is a need. He believes they need to look at this wholistically. As the Chairman has said, he, too, believes it is clean.

Chairman Welch entertained a motion.

Motion

Approve the Map Amendment request at 11313 Middleground Road as requested by the petitioner.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Wayne Noha

Second: Jeff Notrica

Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Nay
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Nay
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Wayne Noha	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Aye

Laureen Boles	- Aye
Elizabeth Epstein	- Aye
Malik Watkins	- Not Present
Jay Melder	- Not Present
Michael Kaigler	- Not Present

[18. AMENDMENT TO A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PLAN | 5525 Abercorn Street | File No. 22-004119-PLAN](#)

[☞ Staff Report.pdf](#)

[☞ Amended Plan.pdf](#)

[☞ Petitioner's Narrative.pdf](#)

Mr. Marcus Lotson gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to amend a previously approved plan for property located at 5525 Abercorn Street, known as the Abercorn Walk shopping center. The intent of the amendment is to update the plan to reflect changes to the site that occurred as a result of road widening, to decrease the overall parking count by eight spaces, and to allow for a new outdoor patio area. No changes to building footprints are proposed. The original development plan was approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission in 2004 (P-040401-38579-2). The property, 6.8 acres, is bounded by Abercorn Street to the east, White Bluff Road to the west and Janet Drive to the south. The site was developed consistent with the approved plan to include approximately 69,000 square feet of retail space along with associated parking and infrastructure. The center has operated continually since its opening.

Mr. Lotson explained that the proposed amendment is more of an administrative remedy to a hardship on the current owner, than it is a typical change in site layout or permitted uses. The 2004 approval included a minimum 15-foot development setback along White Bluff Road. The plan met that standard and identified a dedication of ten feet of additional future right of way. Both the buildings and parking were outside the setback as required. Improvements to portions of White Bluff Road since that time have resulted in portions of a parking area encroaching into the setback, thereby creating a nonconforming condition. The original approval required 331 parking spaces, 334 were provided. The applicant has submitted an updated plan to reflect the proposed changes which include an outdoor seating area and a 5-space parking reduction from the requirement. The proposed plan, if approved, would essentially be a variance to these standards

Mr. Lotson said that during the 2004 review process, the plan was found to have met the development requirements including parking, buffers, landscaping, height, and setbacks. The center has operated under these parameters since that time. Improvements that took place in the White Bluff Road right of way have resulted in creating a nonconformity as it relates to the required setback. Staff finds that the proposed changes are minimal, and no operational functions should be affected.

Mr. Lotson reported that staff recommends approval of the amendment to the previous plan and approval of the variances to setbacks and parking as identified on the site plan. He entertained questions from the Commission.

Mr. Noha asked if staff received any public comments.

Mr. Lotson answered that staff received one comment, but it was related to signage at this location, which is not a part of what is being reviewed today. The comment is kept for the official record.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Attorney Josh Yellin said he wanted to clarify one item. He realized that this problem may keep coming back to the Commission because of NewZo. When all the shopping centers were developed along Abercorn Street, they were planned business commercial. Therefore, each one of them has a master plan Now, as new owners are coming in and they want to make even minor changes to the site, it will require a master plan approval process to make the minor changes or a variance that was outside of their control. But the new owner is trying to get financing. When a lender sees that a shopping center is said

to be nonconforming, they are reluctant to loan money. Therefore, this is the nature of their request and why they are here.

Attorney Yellin said the plan is to reduce the parking by five spaces. The site is still compliant with all City of Savannah parking requirements. There is still an access of parking along the site, but they just wanted to provide another amenity for the tenants. He entertained questions from the Commission.

Ms. Jarrett asked Attorney Yellin if he could have taken this to the Zoning Board of Appeals [ZBA].

Attorney Yellin answered yes and no. He explained that because the Master Plan was approved, any changes to the Master Plan needs to come back to the MPC.

Mr. Welch asked if local persons bought this site. He did not need to know the individual's name. He was just curious.

Attorney Yellin believed someone from Jacksonville, Florida.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Motion

Approve the staff's recommendation for the amendment to the previously approved plan for 5525 Abercorn Street.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Travis Coles

Second: Dwayne Stephens

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

X. Presentations

XI. Other Business

19. Election of Officers for 2022 - 2023

Mr. Noha gave the report. The Nominating Committee nominated **Mr. Dwayne Stephens, Chairman, Mr. Travis Coles, Vice-Chair, Mr. Tom Woiwode, Secretary, and Ms. Elizabeth Epstein, Treasurer.**

Mr. Noha stated that from the floor, the nomination was given for **Mr. Joe Welch, Chairman, Mr. Wayne Noha, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Tom Woiwode, Secretary, and Ms. Elizabeth Epstein, Treasurer.**

After the votes were cast by ballot, the newly elected officers for 2023 are: **Mr. Dwayne Stephens, Chairman, Mr. Travis Coles, Vice-Chair, Mr. Tom Woiwode, Secretary, and Ms. Elizabeth Epstein, Treasurer.**

XIII. Adjournment

20. Adjourn

There being no further business to present before the Board, the October 11, 2022, Metropolitan Planning Commission Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director
MW:sh:mem

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.