



City of Clemson

PLANNING & CODES ADMINISTRATION

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CLEMSON PLANNING COMMISSION Monday, June 9, 2008 City Hall – Council Chambers – 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Members present: David Allison, Spencer Bryan, Chairman, Julie Craig, Del Kimbler, Vice-Chairman, John Peters, and Elaine Richardson

Members absent: Bob Smith

Staff present: Sharon Richardson, Director of Planning and Codes; Arzu Yilmaz, City Planner; Bob Vecchio, Zoning and Codes Administrator; and Beth Connor, Recording Secretary

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Chairman Spencer Bryan at 7:01 p.m.
2. **Public session:** Public session closed as no one had any business to bring before the Commission.
3. **Adoption of minutes -5/12/08:** Julie Craig requested clarification of discussion point on page 3, paragraph 8 of the minutes. David Allison noted that the name of the book offered on page 5 is as follows: Guidelines for design and construction of hospital and health care facilities / the American Institute of Architects Academy of Architecture for Health. Julie Craig made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected; Elaine Richardson seconded. Motion approved.
4. **Consistency Review:**
 - a. **R-08-03:** Review of the consistency of a proposed 18-acre commercial planned development with the Comprehensive Plan. Applicant: Paramount Development Corp. Owner: Davenport Capital, LLC. PIN: 4064-14-24-6243.

Staff Comments:

Sharon Richardson gave an overview of the proposed amendment to the Issaqueena Trail Planned Development, Lowe's, showing the location of the property. This consistency review is somewhat different than other such matters as the property in question is already zoned PD, the zoning designation has already been determined. The issue before the Commission is not whether or not a Planned Development is consistent with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, but whether the changes proposed are appropriate in the context of the approved PD. Staff would like to note for the record that the proposed change is a major change and requires a full amendatory action to allow the applicant to proceed. The two most significant changes to the existing PD involve the maximum size of an individual building (inclusive of enclosed garden centers) and the required parking requirements.

Ms. Richardson pointed out that the PD currently contains several sections governed by Architectural standard for building constructed in this development. This portion of the PD limits Section D as being capped by a maximum size for an **individual** building at 100,000 square feet, including all covered or enclosed service areas. Note: This section refers to an individual building and does not prohibit the construction of multiple buildings that collectively exceed 100,000 sq. ft. in this section. The individual building the applicant is proposing is subject to specific site plans comprised of the following square footages:

Building (sales area, offices, receiving/storage, etc.)	124,076 sq. ft.
Garden Center, including uncovered area	32,057 sq. ft.
Total square footage	156,133 sq. ft.

The proposed buildings in Sections B and C (tracts fronting Issaqueena Trail) meet the standard established in the current PD and requires no changes as to size. The applicant is proposing to further restrict the uses allowed in these sections which may result in a third change to the PD language.

Ms. Richardson stated that the original PD reflected old parking standards in the zoning ordinance that predate the changes made to adjust requirements several years ago. The applicant would like to reduce the number of parking spaces to reflect the 1 per 300 sq. ft. otherwise allowed in the PD section as they feel this standard more than adequately meets their needs and is consistent with prior changes made to the parking standards.

Ms. Richardson also pointed out that the buffer between this site and Highway 123 will be maintained in the proposed site plan to screen the proposed building from the highway. The building design has the profile of the building substantially lower than the elevation of an earlier proposal (Wal-Mart).

An information meeting was held in May to encourage public input on the proposal. As the property in question is a commercial zoned PD the staff feels the changes are appropriate.

Applicant Comments:

David Harner, Paramount Development Corp and David Graffius, Gray Engineering Consultants, Inc. and Associates were present to answer any questions or concerns.

David Harner presented a general overview of the proposed project which began 6-8 months ago. Mr. Harner spoke of the informal public meeting in May and has taken into consideration the concerns expressed, traffic increase, lighting, safety of children, etc. when developing the proposal. He feels that, regarding the increase of traffic concern, that shoppers will exit off Hwy. 123, do their shopping, and go back onto Hwy. 123. This traffic pattern will have minimal affect on the local traffic patterns. Mr. Harner does not see this type of business as being one that will have impulse buying like a previous proposal for this PD.

David Graffius, Gray Engineering Consultants, Inc. presented a conceptual power point. Mr. Graffius began by pointing out the Project Goals for the site. The Developer's goals are working with an arborist to maintain existing trees along Hwy. 123; using dark sky lighting with no light about 90°; having additional interior and perimeter landscaping; increase the front landscaping buffer to 35 feet; creating a large retention pond underground, saving the existing trees in the area and no proposed storm water above ground; creating a pedestrian and bike access; using stepped retaining walls with landscape; screened trash containment area; improve Issaqueena Trail by adding north and south turn lanes and doing a traffic impact study; and, installation of traffic signal.

Mr. Graffius also showed aerial photos showing views from 3 different points.

Included in the presentation was a topographic tree survey of the site. David Allison asked if the contours were 2 feet. Mr. Graffius stated that they were 1 foot contours. Mr. Graffius pointed out that Tramlaw Court and Hwy. 123 are both low points.

Mr. Graffius pointed out that the Bikeway/Bicycle Lane on Issaqueena Trail will be 4 foot wide with a grass strip before the sidewalk.

Mr. Graffius also reviewed the overhead lighting specs. The standard height of the pole is 35'. They will be using more of the 27' pole to keep the lighting acceptable. They will be using Cooper lighting that has a flat glass vertically lamped optics with produces a zero measurable light at or above 90° with less than 4% of the light being produced above 80°.

Mr. Graffius also showed a tree protection drawing showing the type of protection fencing that will be used for isolated trees.

John Peters asked if the retaining wall will be visible from Hwy. 123. Mr. Graffius doesn't believe it will be due to the fact that the area is quite dense and the site sits above the ramp and lower coming up Hwy. 123.

There was also a question regarding the possibility of relocating Chapman Hill Road. Kevin Woodley from the Patrick Square Development stated that was not going to happen.

Chairman Bryan opened the floor to Public Comment. He stated that there would be a 3 minute time limit.

Thomas McInnis, 206 Wescott Drive, lives outside the notification area. Mr. McInnis is very concerned about the increase in traffic. Mr. McInnis encouraged the Planning Commission to have the traffic study done when school is in session and to think ahead 20 years.

John D. Beckerle, 325 Lancelot Drive is concerned about the height of the retaining wall. Mr. Graffis said that the wall will be 12-15 feet high on the Tramlaw Court side and the maximum point where the truck turnaround area is will be 40 feet. The wall will be stepped 3 times to a maximum of 14 feet. Mr. Beckerle also asked what the level of the parking lot will be in relation to Issaqueena Trail. Issaqueena Trail is at the elevation of 846. The elevation of Lowe's will be 834. There will be a 3% maximum grade, with the parking lot drive at 4%. Mr. Beckerle asked about the trees being marked for saving. The intent is to leave as much area as undisturbed.

Kevin Woodley, 107 Ellsworth Lane, representing Patrick Square, wanted to let the Commission know that Patrick Square is excited about Lowe's development.

Peter Laurence, 100 Castle Court, is a trained Architect. He stated that he was not in the area during the controversial Wal-Mart discussion but wanted to advise the Commission that the concerns of the Wal-Mart development still apply. In terms of the size, 156,000 square feet, a large Wal-Mart is 135,000 square feet. His opinion is that it doesn't seem as if anything has changed from years ago.

Jack Davis, 202 Wescott Drive, asked if there would be a financial institution in one of the three other parcels, offering Title Loans. Mr. Graffius said no. If there is a restaurant, he feels there should be an increase in parking spaces.

John Beckerle, 325 Lancelot Drive asked if the commercial zone in the original PD was larger. Ms. Richardson pointed out that there are 3 different properties. The original PD had a cap on individual buildings larger than 100,000 square feet. A Super Wal-Mart is approximately 225,000 square feet. The projected volume of Lowe's is a third of the volume of Wal-Mart. There is less impulse buying for lumber and the items Lowe's would offer.

Giles F. Carter, 101 Hyde Lane, personally feels different towards Lowe's and Wal-Mart. He feels that the concerns expressed by the people are being addressed. He stated that if you compare this Lowe's with the Anderson Target-Lowe's (which is 180,000 square feet) this development would be 25,000 square feet less. Mr. Carter asked what the possibility of changing the street name, Tramlaw Court, which is Wal-Mart in reverse. He feels that they are throwing Wal-Mart in their face.

Alfred E. Bundrick, 107 Hyde Lane, asked about the floor space. Is the size of the store marketable for this area? John Peters stated that he has experience building stores this size in towns this size. Trent Farrell, Associate with Paramount Development Corp said that this is the prevalent size to use in this size town. Lowe's deals mainly with larger items, not small items.

Lowell Johnson, 103 Wescott Drive asked what the operating hours for the store would be. The normal business hour for Lowe's is 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. He is concerned about traffic on Issaqueena Trail. Mr. Johnson asked if the traffic study would be done prior or after Chimney Ridge opens. Mr. Graffius responded that it is unknown at this time. Mr. Johnson expressed his concern that Issaqueena Trail is a narrow rural road that will now have to deal with late night traffic. Mr. Johnson asked if we really need another store.

Chairman Bryan asked if there was any other public comment and there was none. The discussion was open to the Commission.

Chairman Bryan reminded the Commission that the Consistency of the plan is what's on the table. Any thoughts or concerns will be addressed at a later time. However, as all the parties are all at this meeting, Chairman Bryan feels that the Commission should spend a little time on thoughts and concerns they have at

this point rather than waiting for the next meeting. Hopefully, this would help the developers and designers prepare for the next meeting.

David Allison would like to address the issue of consistency. Is the use regional or neighborhood commercial? He feels it's debatable if its use is strip development or neighborhood development. He also feels it's debatable if it's big box or some other development there. He also feels that there needs to be further discussion on how this development addresses the environmental issues of this site. He feels that these issues are relevant to consistency.

Chairman Bryan asked Mr. Allison to further elaborate on neighborhood vs regional commercial. Mr. Allison feels that the Comprehensive Plan talks about fostering neighborhood commercial, meeting daily and routinely the needs of people within the neighborhood. Mr. Allison does agree with the developers that the traffic impact is going to be lower with Lowe's than it would have been with Wal-Mart.

Pat Newhof, Paramount's Architect, stated that they have addressed the issues Mr. Allison has raised and that it is a trade-off for a project to be financially successful. They have prepared sketches up to this point which indicates a denser footprint in order to meet the needs of the development. They realize that they are coming into this asking for concession, as the City has guidelines that have a cap which they are exceeding. In regards to this they have put together a list of things that they would like to bring to the community in exchange for that. They would delineate the exterior of the Lowe's building so that it doesn't have the 'big box' look to it. They would also screen offensive areas; such as loading areas, dumpster areas, etc. They would also work with the Planning Commission and local boards in order to soften the façade with the use of vernacular architecture. Mr. Allison to Mr. Newhof, as he is an architect as well, he is less concerned with those points are he is with the development itself. The site is a sloping site with an 80 foot fall. He can appreciate the attempt to save some of the existing trees, but what he would like to see is an analysis of the existing large trees on what appears to be the back property line of the out parcels. A smaller footprint on this land would allow you to terrace this land in a more incremental way, to work with the natural contours of the grade, deal with storm water in a more reflective way. Mr. Newhof recognizes that concern and that is why the design has left a dense area of vegetation in excess of 100', so that coming down 123 you would see the building, but it would be on the scale of Hilton Head, where there are big boxes there but you really have to strain to see them.

Mr. Allison, if the developer wishes to go forward with this development based on the outcome of this meeting, would like to see a site section, as on the topographic tree survey, indicating not only the trees that will be saved, but also the trees that will be removed. He would also like to see the parking lot take more advantage of the existing trees with additional plantings with islands to help service drainage and use the trees to help with the heat issues.

David Graffius stated that they did check the site and that most of the trees are 30-40" in caliper. The drive still has to come down as you have the immediate fall in the back right corner of the site. It would be very, very difficult to develop even a small commercial property and be able to save those trees. Mr. Graffius had a cross section that he presented to Mr. Allison, which the Chairman asked to have the cross section presented at another meeting. What Mr. Graffius wanted to point out is that there would be a 15-20 foot cut in the area that can't be avoided.

Elaine Richardson asked if there would be an Arborist consulted, especially in regards to protecting the trees from damage caused during construction. There was a very large Oak tree that was thought to have been saved during construction only to have it not leave out. Mr. Graffius said that they would work with the Planning Commission so that they get the appropriate people to work with them on this.

John Peters asked about the type of businesses that are specified as restricted. Mr. Peters asked if they would be a bar or restaurant type business. Mr. Harner responded that a business that has more than 50% alcohol would be classified as a bar and that is not the type of business they would be looking for. Mr. Peters asked if they would be looking for a fast food restaurant or something like that. Mr. Harner said he would consider a Zaxby's, or something like that. They have not specifically specified a fast food restaurant. Discussion followed.

Mr. Harner spoke of Lowe's and large commercial developments parking being in the front of the buildings. Lowe's is willing to have 3 spaces per 1,000 feet. Mr. Allison pointed out that when he has been to the Lowe's in Anderson as well as Easley, their parking lots are rarely more than 50% full in front of Lowe's.

Julie Craig appreciates that the developers are trying to be creative but, she feels it would be detrimental to the site to have restaurants with drive thru areas on this site. She would also like to go along with Ms. Richardson regarding the use of an Arborist so as to prevent any harm to the trees that are intended to be saved. Mr. Harner said that, in light of the number of existing trees that will remain, they fully intend to have an arborist as part of the team to oversee this part of the development. They would be willing to have additional approval sessions as the tenants create the plan for their development so as to maintain the sense that the Commission hopes for.

Del Kimbler asked Sharon Richardson if it is possible to put language into the PD that would require that kind of approval. Mr. Kimbler stated that this is not an Architectural Review District, Ms. Richardson confirmed. What Mr. Kimbler was thinking is the type of approval of site plans, exterior look of the development. Ms. Richardson stated that the Commission could put additional standards in that, but typically under State Law the Planning Commission cannot get involved in the review of site plans other than the land development issue. Ms. Richardson said that the staff would do some additional research before a definitive response is given.

Julie Craig said that gas station is an issue and asked if this was something under consideration. Mr. Harner stated that he didn't mean to specifically exclude gas stations, service shops was what was intended to be excluded. What Mr. Harner would like to do is bring back to the table with their proposal as to businesses in the front parcel, rather than coming out and flat denying specific business types.

No additional discussion. Del Kimbler moved that we find in favor with consistency of this proposal with the Comprehensive Plan at the conceptual level. John Peters seconded. Motion carried.

The next step, which is an Informal Public Meeting, will be July 14, 2008 at 5:30 in the City Council Chambers.

5. Advisory item

- a. **R-08-04:** Text amendment to reduce the off-street parking requirement for nursing homes in Sec. 19-441.

Staff Comments:

Arzu Yilmaz spoke of the proposal brought forward from the May meeting regarding the Assisted Living / Office Complex to be built on property zoned CP-2 next to the Ingles Store. At that time it was brought to staff's attention that the parking requirements for Assisted Living are quite excessive. At this time, the staff is using hotel parking standards, which is 1.1 parking spaces per bed and thinking about the nature of the use, is quite excessive. Even though the staff is currently working on the re-write of this ordinance, this project is getting close to being a reality. Based on staff's research, including the APA Planning Standards, ITE Parking Standards, polling of upstate jurisdictions and also referring to the book that Mr. Allison mentioned, the staff is proposing 1 parking space per 4 units, using the dwelling unit and bed interchangeably and in addition 1 parking space per 300 square feet for the office space.

Mr. Kimbler asked if Ms. Yilmaz stated that they were using beds and dwelling units interchangeably. Response was Yes. Mr. Kimbler is not sure that it's a good thing to do. Discussion followed. Mr. Peters stated that most people in Assisted Living will not have a car. This creates a guest parking space.

Bob Vecchio added that if this is tied to beds, which comes and goes, the dwelling unit and the floor plan remains constant. Discussion followed.

Mr. Allison is concerned that 1 to 4 may be going too far, even though he is in favor of reducing parking spaces.

David Allison moved we approve the proposal as presented. Del Kimbler seconded. Motion carried

6. Discussion

a. Other

Sharon Richardson reported that the ordinance rewrite process is ongoing. Ms. Richardson is tentatively planning on having a working supper meeting in mid to late July with the Planning Commission to look at the entire revised document.

Julie Craig thanked the staff for their hard work on the Zoning Ordinance rewrite.

Chairman Bryan asked that when the packets are mailed that they contain all materials for the meeting. He also requested that the 11x17 maps also be in the packet as it is difficult to print them.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Connor, Recording Secretary

Note: The proceedings of this meeting have been recorded on digital media.