



City of Greer
Planning Commission Minutes
February 18, 2019

Members Present: Judy Jones, Vice Chairman
William Lavender
Brian Martin
Mark Hopper, Chairman
Walden Jones

Member(s) Absent: John Holland
Suzanne Traenkle

Staff Present: Kelli McCormick, Planning Manager
Brandon McMahan, Zoning Coordinator
Brandy Blake, Development Coordinator

I. Call to Order

Mr. Hopper called the meeting to order and read the opening remarks to begin the meeting.

II. Minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting

ACTION – Mr. Lavender made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 4 to 0. Mr. Jones abstained from the vote. Ms. Traenkle and Mr. Holland were absent.

IV. Public Forum

Mr. Hopper read a brief statement about conducting the public forum section of the meeting and opened the public forum.

Sondra O'Shea, resident at 213 Fairway Estates Road, expressed her concerns about the proposed development known as Oakton that will be located in front of her neighborhood. She stated that the property of the proposed development is sloped down towards her neighborhood and she is concerned that if the underbrush is removed it could make her subdivision more likely to flood, as there would not be natural vegetation in place to absorb the rain. She said that there is an overflow ditch but that it would not contain all the rainwater forever.

She said that she and her neighbors would like assurance that their subdivision's safety from flooding would be taken into consideration as the Commission approves the Oakton subdivision plan. She also stated she and her neighborhood are not trying to stop the subdivision, they just want to make sure their neighborhood will be safe from flooding and that a wide setback will be established from the property lines in their subdivision.

V. Public Hearing

Mr. Hopper read a brief statement about conducting the public hearing section of the meeting.

A. RZ 2019-5

Mr. Hopper opened the public hearing for RZ 2019-05.

Mr. McMahan gave the basic information for this request.

There was no one present to speak for or against this request as such, Mr. Hopper closed the public hearing.

VI. Old Business

There was no old business.

VII. New Business

A. RZ-2019-05

Mr. Hopper read a brief statement about conducting the business meeting and opened the business meeting for RZ-2019-05.

Mr. McMahan presented the staff analysis and recommendation for the request.

Brady Toy, the applicant, gave a brief overview of the request.

ACTION – Ms. Jones made a motion to approve RZ-2019-05. Mr. Lavender seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 0.

B. SUB-2018-15

Mr. Hopper opened the business meeting for SUB-2018-15.

Mr. McMahan presented the staff analysis and recommendation for the request.

Mr. Martin asked staff to confirm if there was an agreement made at the previous Planning Commission Meeting for the developer to provide a 25 ft. buffer in addition to the Right Of Way to allow for future road expansion. Staff did confirm that agreement was made.

Jay Martin, the applicant, gave a brief overview of the request. He gave details of the future road widening on Brushy Creek Road and said that after meeting with SCDOT it would be their preference to widen the road on the center line, meaning that each side of the road would gain an additional lane and a half. After detailed explanation Jay Martin stated they had to widen to their side of the road which was the reason there were changes to the original plan that had been previously submitted to the Planning Commission and City Council.

After a lengthy discussion on the proposed road improvements to Brushy Creek Road by the applicant, the Commission and staff, Mr. Hopper asked for a motion on the request.

ACTION – Mr. Jones made a motion to approve SUB-2018-15. Mr. Lavender seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 0.

C. SUB-2019-02

Mr. Hopper opened the business meeting for SUB-2019-02.

Mr. McMahan presented the staff analysis and recommendation for the request.

Mr. Martin said he is not happy with corners being considered open space in the plan to meet the requirements for cluster development. He said that this open space is not being preserved for the residents of the community to use; he said that it is just unusable space that is not purposeful. He said that open space being laid out this way does not meet the purpose of the Land Development Regulations (LDR).

Ms. McCormick said that “meaningful” space is very hard to define and that they do not require any other developments to be laid out in the way that Mr. Martin is proposing. Ms. McCormick said that if the Commission wants to define “meaningful space” in a certain way, then an amendment needs to be made to the current LDR to include that specific definition, so that developers in the future can understand and be held to the intent of that definition.

Mr. Martin contended Ms. McCormick’s explanation by saying that it is up to the Commission to decide on what is “meaningful space,” and that development plans should come to the Commission with open space spaced out in a meaningful way that would be useful for the residents of the development, not open space cut out from the edges.

Paul Harrison, of Bluewater Civil Design, representing the applicant, gave a brief overview of the request. He also mentioned Fairway Estates, the development brought up in the Public Forum, and how he believes that a 25 ft. buffer between Fairway Estates and Oakton should be considered a meaningful open space buffer because it would put some space in between the neighborhoods and protect Fairway Estates from flooding, which would bring meaning to residents of both neighborhoods. He said also that he reads the LDR regulations for cluster development as requiring for open space to be preserved on the edges of the property, to preserve natural features and “cluster” development towards the center of the property. He said that he feels like the 25 ft. buffer meets the requirements for open space.

Mr. Martin said that he thinks that the 25 ft. buffer should not count as fulfilling the requirement for open space.

After several comments, Mr. Harrison clarified the difference between the requirements for building setbacks and buffers within the development according to Greer’s zoning ordinance. He said that when he adds a 25 ft. buffer in a development he is working on, he always counts it towards his required amount of open space.

Mr. Martin clarified his view of the requirement of buffers and the provision of open space according to Greer’s Land Development Regulations. He read that according the LDR that required buffers do not count as open space.

Ms. McCormick said that until last year the 25 ft. space requirement was considered a setback. At that time The Commission decided that it could be considered a buffer. The Commission since that time, has allowed for the 25 ft. buffer to be counted as part of the requirement for open space in a cluster development. Ms. McCormick said that because the definition of “meaningful open space” differs for everyone, it is difficult to hold developers to a certain standard unless it is specifically defined in the LDR. Ms. McCormick said that the LDR could be amended in the

near future, if that's what the Commission desires to do. She also said that she thinks it is important to think about the practicality of what this 25 ft. buffer means for the development and the surrounding community.

After further detailed discussion on this matter Mr. Hopper asked if there was a motion for this request.

ACTION – Mr. Jones made a motion to approve SUB-2019-02, with the open-space designed with access strips. Mr. Lavender seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 3-2. Ms. Jones and Mr. Martin voted in opposition. The motion passes.

VIII. Other Business

Mr. McMahan said there would be some upcoming trainings, and that they will be scheduled soon.

Mr. Martin asked if changing the regulations and definition of “meaningful open space” is something the Commission would like to do. Ms. Jones said that yes, she would like to see this to ensure that the developers would include this provision.

Mr. Jones asked for Ms. McCormick to read the definitions for open space, and Ms. McCormick said that the definitions in the LDR and the Zoning Ordinance are conflicting and do not agree exactly.

Mr. Martin expressed his desire to get this changed so that it is clear for developers, and the rest of the Commission generally agreed, with Mr. Lavender saying that he appreciates that most developers have put forth plans that are thoughtful and more than meet the requirements of what they must do according to the current LDR regulations.

There is more discussion about what is considered meaningful open space, and what other cities and counties allow for open space in their regulations.

IX. Adjourn

There being no other business to discuss, Mr. Lavender made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.