



City of Greer
Planning Commission Minutes
March 19, 2018

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

Member(s) Absent: Suzanne Traenkle

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

I. Call to Order

Mr. Hopper called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm and read the opening remarks.

II. Approval of Minutes

ACTION - Ms. Jones made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2018 Planning Commission Meeting as submitted. Mr. Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 0. Suzanne Traenkle was absent from the meeting.

III. Public Hearing

A. AN 2018-05

Mr. Hopper opened the public hearing for AN 2018-05.

Ms. McCormick gave the information for the request and a brief description of DRD zoning. She presented an aerial map, zoning & floodplain map, land use map, street view, and site plan for the property.

Ned Newcomer, resident of Brushy Meadows subdivision, stated he was against the request. He stated that he believes this development would create a dangerous situation. He stated that building one housing project after another in the Greer area has overloaded the infrastructure and roads. He stated that with all the development in the surrounding areas that this area is turning into Five Forks. He stated that this project will be on a dangerous road and is not needed. He advised that the road where this development is proposed has a crest that prohibits drivers from seeing oncoming traffic. He advised that the road was designed over 50 years ago and had no berms, no bailouts, and no room to maneuver if a situation were to occur. He stated that if a traffic study had not been conducted by the state, the Commission could be looking a gross negligence if they approve the request and someone is killed due to their approval of the design. He stated

that there had already been one death on the road in the past years and he felt there would be more if this request is approved. He stated he thinks this is another tax opportunity and that the safety of the people seemed to be secondary. He stated that he is not sure if a wetlands study had been conducted, but this property has wetlands. He advised that there may be oil repositories buried on the property and someone needed to look into that. He concluded that unless there is a traffic study conducted that shows this is a viable project and traffic is not a concern, he feels this request should be denied.

Penny Phillips, resident of Rich Glen subdivision and representative of Rich Glen HOA, was accompanied by other residents of the subdivision and stated their concerns about this request. She stated that she is requesting that a new traffic study be conducted by Greenville County. She advised that the last traffic study did show that Henderson Gap Road qualifies for speed humps, if funded. She advised that the study also showed that speeding was a problem for this road. She stated that the residents of Rich Glen would like turn lanes for this development, if approved, as well as speed humps.

Carol Flink, resident of Brushy Meadows subdivision, asked the Commission to consider smart growth. She stated that the uncontrolled sprawl of development in the area for the purpose of collecting tax dollars or passing on projects to people that they know might have serious consequences. She stated that the roads could not handle the vehicles using them and stated that an updated traffic study needed to be conducted. She advised that she is a retired educator and that the public school systems could not handle the amount of overcrowding from over developed areas. She stated that at Woodland Elementary School is overcrowded and has portable classrooms. She also stated that the ecological system would seriously be upset. She advised that there is vegetation being upset, trees being mowed down in massive numbers, small animals and birds being dislodged from their natural habitat, and land that had soaked up rainwater is being replaced with concrete pads and houses. She advised that flooding will now replace the slow soaking of water into the ground. She advised that she served as the Emergency Management Coordinator in another state for years and this will cause a strain on local service providers such as fire, police, and emergency responders. She asked that the Commission make their decision on the safety of the current residents of the area and not increasing tax dollars or personal connections. She asked that the Commission consider smart growth such as parks, additions to parks, and improved infrastructure.

Brandon Howe, resident of Brushy Meadows subdivision, stated that he was here to speak on two concerns. He said one relating to the change in density from 33 units on 8.1 acres to 62 units with an additional 1.5 acres. He stated that this is a huge increase and that the land use map that staff presented shows this property in the Residential Land Use 3. He stated that most of the area on the map designated as RLU3 is accessed off of either Hammett Bridge Road or Suber Road, not Henderson Gap Road. He stated that those roads could handle the traffic and they have signals and ingress/egress lanes and are better roads. He advised the second concern was the crest of the hill on Henderson Gap Road that a previous speaker had mentioned and speed of the road for safety.

Merle Faulk, resident of Brushy Meadows, was accompanied by other residents of the subdivision, stating that the road and speed is an issue they would like resolved. She stated the speed on the road was so bad that it was too dangerous to slow down and it took her 3 days to get the phone number off of the sign that was posted about the meeting. She stated that since there would only be one entrance to the proposed community and Greer currently has 2.3 cars per family, that there would be 144 cars in and out of that community every day and it would make the road even more dangerous. She stated that even if a traffic study is conducted, she's worried it wouldn't be accurate because people don't always report accidents the authorities. She also advised that home values in the area are suffering and in that area they are lower than the national average and that further development would only make that worse. She asked that the

Commission consider the safety of the current residents and their home values when considering this request.

Seeing that there were no others present to speak for or against this request, Mr. Hopper closed the public hearing.

B. RZ 2018-06

Mr. Hopper opened the public hearing for RZ 2018-06.

Ms. McCormick gave the information for request. She presented an aerial map, zoning & floodplain map, land use map, street view, and site plan for the property.

Allison Ringer, president of Trade Street Neighborhood Association, stated that the main concern of the residents in the area are traffic concerns. She stated that Pelham Street is used as a cut through to downtown and the zoning is very heavily residential. She stated that she doesn't think a commercial use would make sense in the area. She advised that the area is just one block from the first phase of the bike pedestrian trail and that the goal in working with the city in the past few years has been to keep the community feel of the neighborhood as it was 100 years ago. She stated she was concerned that approving this request could open the door to more commercial development in the area. She advised that any commercial zoning would disturb the quiet neighborhood and she was against the request.

Seeing that there were no others present to speak for or against this request, Mr. Hopper closed the public hearing.

C. RZ 2018-07

Mr. Hopper opened the public hearing for RZ 2018-07.

Ms. McCormick gave the information for request. She presented an aerial map, zoning & floodplain map, land use map, street view, and site plan for the property.

Seeing that there was no one present to speak for or against this request, Mr. Hopper closed the public hearing.

IV. Old Business

There was no old business.

VI. New Business

A. AN 2018-05

Mr. Hopper read a brief statement about conducting the business meeting and opened the business meeting for AN 2018-05.

Ms. McCormick advised the public of the process and gave the information for the request. She then presented the staff report and recommendation for the request.

Paul Harrison, applicant with Bluewater Civil Design, stated that he wanted to address some of the concerns he had heard during the public hearing. He stated that he understands traffic is a large concern and that there is a traffic study for Henderson Gap Road currently underway. He advised that their traffic engineer was willing to coordinate with the county and the city and to fully comply with their recommendations. He stated that he is not sure when it will be completed. He advised that he cannot control the speed on the road but he can meet the requirements of the site distance. He stated that there has been a wetlands delineation completed for this property and there would be no disturbance. He went on to say that with a townhome community you have the ability to have more common area than in single family detached community. He advised that out of the 9.5 acres being developed approximately 5 acres is not impervious area. He advised that they are prepared to address any stormwater concerns and water quality issues during the permitting process. He stated that he and the developer would make themselves available to anyone to help address concerns of the citizens in the area. He stated that the developer is willing to move forward with staff's recommendation to reduce the number of units to match the density of the southern development with an R-7.5 zoning classification. He stated that they wanted to be good neighbors and they wanted to continue to do work in the City of Greer but he feels that the owner of the property should have every right to maximize their property just as others have in the area.

Mr. Martin asked Mr. Harrison to define the white boxes on the site plan he provided. Mr. Harrison said those were the lots. Mr. Harrison stated that they are willing to remove the yards from the buffer area as well if so desired.

Mr. Martin asked if there would be a problem in making the southern area of the property bordering Riverside Chase a buffer that is a non-disturbance area. Mr. Harrison stated that they would conserve as much buffer as possible so that they did not have to spend the money to plant back trees after clearing.

Mr. Martin asked staff to clarify how the Commission will be voting on these items. Ms. McCormick advised that if the Commission desired they could vote on this as two separate items. She stated that Council will be voting on the annexation and the zoning as two separate ordinances. She advised that it may be difficult to split this request up as far as the review by Planning Commission but it was the Commission's decision.

ACTION - Mr. Martin made a motion to table AN 2018-05 for the purpose of having a discussion on how to move forward with the matter. Ms. Jones seconded the motion.

Mr. Martin gave a brief explanation of the subdivisions and their zoning classifications in the surrounding area. The Commission, staff, and applicant discussed the details of the request and the options for the applicant.

ACTION - Mr. Martin changed his motion to hold AN 2018-05 until the traffic study is completed and presented to the Planning Commission for review. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 0.

B. RZ 2018-06

Brian Martin left the panel and recused himself from the following case.

Mr. Hopper opened a business meeting for RZ 2018-06.

Ms. McCormick presented the staff report and recommendation for the request.

D. Allen West, representative for applicant Leon Hix, advised that he first saw the property 6 to 8 weeks ago and advised Mr. Hix that the house needed to be torn down. He stated that he went to City Hall and talked about rezoning at that time. He stated that years ago W. Poinsett Street was all houses and now it's mostly businesses. He stated that since there was commercial around the property now that this request should be granted.

Mr. Hopper asked staff to clarify the request and what the purpose of the rezoning and intended use of the property is. Ms. McCormick gave a brief explanation of the request and told the Commission of some conversations she had had with Mr. Hix's company regarding the property in the past.

Mr. Lavendar asked staff if the requested zoning classification of C-3 was inappropriate for the intended use. Ms. McCormick said they wanted to use it as a residence and garage. She stated that DRD was the only zoning possible for the applicants intended use, although commercial was not recommended for this site.

ACTION - Mr. Lavendar made a motion to deny RZ 2018-06. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 4 to 0. Mr. Martin recused himself from the vote.

C. RZ 2018-07

Mr. Martin returned to the panel. Mr. Hopper opened a business meeting for RZ 2018-07.

Ms. McCormick presented the staff report and recommendation for the request.

Robert Ortega, Real Estate Agent representing the applicant, stated that he advised his client to rezone the property and use it for townhomes for rental property.

Ms. McCormick stated that currently the property could approximately have 4 to 5 units as currently zoned, and the change to R-M2 would give the property owner the ability to increase the number of units to 7 to 8 units.

ACTION – Mr. Martin made a motion to approve RZ 2018-07. Mr. Montgomery seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 0.

VII. Executive Session

There were no items for executive session.

VIII. Adjourn

Before adjourning, Ms. McCormick advised the Commission that there would be a new member next month appointed by Mr. Arrowwood.

There being no other business to discuss, Mr. Lavender made a motion to adjourn at 8:13pm. Mr. Montgomery seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 0.