

**MINUTES**  
**GLYNN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**September 2, 2003 - 6:00 P.M.**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Perry Fields, Chairman  
Robert Ussery, Vice Chairman  
Mike Aspinwall  
Jay Kaufman  
Ann McCormick  
Gary Nevill  
Jonathan Williams

**STAFF PRESENT:** John Peterson, Director  
York Phillips, Planning Manager  
Carolynn Segers, Planner II  
Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary

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Chairman Perry Fields called the meeting to order and the invocation was given, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He then gave a brief recap of the rules, voting procedure and audience participation in discussing agenda items.

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Upon a motion made by Mr. Robert Ussery and seconded by Mr. Gary Nevill, the September 2, 2003 Planning Commission Agenda was approved and unanimously adopted.

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It was noted that no one was in attendance to represent the first two items on the agenda (*GC-2003-17 and GC-2003-18*) and therefore these items were deferred until later in the meeting pending arrival of a representative.

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**GC-2003-19**

Application by J. Thomas Whelchel, agent for Howard V. Seymour, to rezone from R-6 Residential to OC Office Commercial property located at 2000 Demere Road and consisting of 14,947 square feet with 141.29 feet frontage along Demere Road.

Mr. Thomas Whelchel, agent, stated that on behalf of the property owner, he would like to request a withdrawal at this time. He stated that a new application would be submitted at a later date. Staff explained the difference between a withdrawal and a deferral, but Mr. Whelchel stated that he would rather withdraw the application and start over. The request for withdrawal was granted.

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GC-2003-20

Application by J. Thomas Whelchel, agent for Tracy Benton McDonald, to rezone from R-6 Residential to OC Office Commercial property located at 2006 Demere Road and consisting of 20,250 square feet with 150 feet frontage along Demere Road.

Mr. Thomas Whelchel was present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for the Planning Commission's review. (A slide presentation was done by Mrs.Carolynn Segers for the public's view.)

The character of the area is mixed use, with residential uses to the northeast, east and southeast. Property to the north is the former Coastal Center for the Arts, which is the subject property for a pending rezoning application (GC-2003-16), located at 2010-2012 Demere Road. This area is zoned R-6. Across Demere Road to the west and southwest is Malcolm McKinnon Airport, which is zoned PD-G Planned Development-General.

The proposed zoning is Office Commercial. No proposed use is listed on the application, however an August 26, 2003 letter states that the owner of the property has this property under contract for sale to someone who intends to occupy it and use it as a real estate sales office. In lieu of a general layout plan, the applicant has submitted a survey showing the existing layout of buildings on the site.

Zoning application GC-2003-19 (which has just been withdrawn) was filed for adjacent property to the south located at 2000 Demere Road. A neighbor petition in opposition of the application was received by staff and included in the packages. (Mrs. Segers also distributed an additional petition.)

In the staff's analysis, the future land use map indicates this area as low-density residential.

- Proximity to Airport: The northwestern portion of the subject property is located within the approach zone of the primary runway for the airport. Development in this area is subject to Article 13 Airport Zoning Ordinance. Section 1306.2 states the following uses are prohibited in any approach or transitional zone: 1) Churches, schools, theaters and other places of public assembly; 2) Multi-family dwellings in excess of 4 units; 3) Hospitals and other institutions; 4) Any other similar uses where concentrations of people are customary. A number of permitted uses under General Commercial would not be permitted under Section 1306.2. Height limit under zoning is sufficient for FAA regulations for this property (FAA regulations limit the height to approximately 50 feet).
- Utility: Water and sewer service is available to the property, provided by Glynn County.
- Traffic: Subject property is located at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Demere Road and St. Simons Avenue. This intersection is heavily traveled during peak traffic times. Glynn County Traffic Safety has a traffic count scheduled for this section of St. Simons Avenue in mid-September.

A comparison of Trip Generation Rates for Single-Family Detached Housing and Single Tenant Office Building showed comparable rates, as provided by Trip Generation, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, published by Institute of Transportation Engineers.

Weekday Trip Generation Rates				
	Per person or employee	Per unit	Per 1000 feet <sup>2</sup>	Per vehicle
Single-Family	2.55	9.57		6.02
Office	3.62		11.57	
Specialty Retail	22.36		40.67	

- ***Realignment of Airport Road:*** The proposed realignment of Airport Road to allow Demere Road traffic to bypass the Bloody Marsh area and Live Oak tree canopy is currently in design phase. Construction is estimated to begin during 2004. (A map was also included in the packages along with additional information.)
- ***Redevelopment:*** Redevelopment of the property will require site plan review by the Planning Commission, and compliance with current development standards, including parking requirements, buffers protecting adjacent residential uses, and curb cuts. The size of the subject property limits the ability to develop a sizable structure and required site requirements under development regulations.

**In conformance with Section 1103 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance, the following findings of fact were considered in making the recommendation:**

- Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.

**Generally yes, due to the changing character of Demere Road to the northwest and institution uses at the airport. Residential uses to the east are separated by an alleyway.**

- Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

**Unlikely, if future uses do not include retail or other high-traffic generating activities. These uses are further restricted by Article XIII. Redevelopment of the property should respect the safety needs of the airport approach zone and the residential character of adjacent property to the east.**

- Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

**Yes.**

- Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use, which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.

**Proposed use for office would generate traffic comparable to single-family residential use.**

- Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

**The future land use map identifies this area as low-density residential.**

- Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for approval or disapproval.

**Planned realignment of Airport Road in 2004.**

The proposed use as office is appropriate for the site since it will generate less traffic than retail or similar uses, will operate during traditional business hours, and may utilize the existing structure, which will lessen a change in character for the area. The proposed zoning provides for some uses that are prohibited by Article XIII.

The size of the subject property limits the ability to develop a sizable structure and required site requirements under development regulations. The estimated Trip Generation Rates for office use is comparable to single-family residential use.

Staff recommends that the proposed zoning be approved subject to the condition that no retail uses would be permitted.

Mr. Robert Ussery wanted to know if the applicant had a specific use in mind for the property. Mrs. Segers stated that according to a letter from the agent, the property is under contract with the intended use being a real estate office.

At this time, Mr. Welchel gave a brief presentation. He stated that the property is in fact designed to be used as a real estate office. He stated that the applicant is planning to utilize the same existing building. There would not be any destruction and rebuilding. He stated that the proposal is in keeping with the neighborhood. He explained that with this proposal, traffic would be diverted which would make the property even less desirable as residential.

Mr. Welchel stated that he is concerned with staff's recommendation that the property is not to be used for any retail purpose. He stated that he would like to modify the language about retail to avoid any future misunderstandings. He does not want to change the intent, but just in case a church decides to sell cookbooks out of the office or if the real estate office decides to sell maps he would not want them to be in any violation. He explained that he would like to adopt some type of language explaining that sales would not be the primary purpose of the property, i.e., a limited percentage of the sales would not be over a certain amount.

Chairman Fields wanted to know the size of the existing building. Mr. Welchel stated that the lot is 20,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Mike Haugen of 117 Circle Drive stated that he and his neighbors are concerned about the traffic problems that would be created by this development. He stated that he has lived in the area since 1979 and it is already congested. He stated that he is especially concerned about the safety of his children. Mr. Haugen pointed out that it is even difficult to cross the street on foot to get onto the bike path. He stated that the area has always been a residential subdivision and he does not see the need for this rezoning, which he thinks would be a disaster. (Mr. Haugen provided a petition that was included in the packages consisting of approximately 104 signatures of residents opposed to this request.)

Mr. Roy Barker stated that he owns property along the alley. He stated that at one time a childcare center was located in that particular area and traffic was terrible. It has somewhat improved since the property was converted. He stated that he moved away because of the traffic in the alley. He is now renting his property and he is concerned about how this proposal would affect his property.

Ms. Lynn Phipps of 107 Circle Drive stated that this is an old established neighborhood. She is concerned about the traffic problems, the safety of the children, and how the residents are going to get onto Demere Road (because of the additional traffic) once this request is approved. She stated that the neighborhood consists of a lot of elderly people, children and people who walk their dogs. If this request is approved it would turn their neighborhood into a speedway. She also pointed out that once the property is rezoned there are no guarantees of what would be allowed. She is asking that the request be denied.

Mr. Les Manzer of 1912 Demere Road voiced the same concerns. He stated that he has lived in the area for a long time and he loves his neighborhood. He stated that any change in the zoning would change the neighborhood, and he would therefore like to see the area remain as it is currently zoned.

Ms. Gail Peterson of 108 Circle Drive stated that she lives in a neighborhood that she's never wanted to move away from; however, if property starts getting rezoned, moving might be an option that she would have to consider. She has lived there since 1952 and expressed concerns about traffic and safety issues. Ms. Peterson asked the Planning Commission to consider how they would feel if this were their neighborhood.

Mr. Mark Veater of 1930 Demere Road expressed opposition to this request for safety reasons. He suggested that the applicants consider putting the real estate office somewhere else and keep the commercial away from the residential neighborhood.

Ms. Henrietta Palacio of 1932 Demere Road stated that if the request is granted for a real estate office she would like to know if the owners are then going to ask the county to improve the alley to be used for ingress and egress. She stated that the alley is impossible when it rains. She is not really opposed to the change, but she is opposed to having one thing approved and then having someone ask for something else.

Mr. Robert Ussery stated that there is a traffic pattern that needs to be considered. Also, he feels that the requested zoning is too broad for the neighborhood in that there are several other permitted uses within that zoning district that would be allowed. He stated that anytime something is being considered within an existing residential neighborhood it should be done in a very sensitive manner and the change should be minimal. This rezoning does not accomplish that in his opinion.

Chairman Fields had questions about the parking requirements for the proposed facility. Mr. Phillips stated that 2000 sq. ft. would require 10 parking spaces. It would take approximately 4500 sq. ft. to supply 10 parking spaces based on the layout, so between the structure and the parking there would be approximately 6000 or 7000 sq. ft. of lot coverage.

Mr. Whelchel stated that the applicant is fully aware of what the impact would be of any change on the property and he is trying to be sensitive to the neighborhood. He stated that Mr. McDonald has small children, but the property is just not suitable for residential use. He stated that they were trying to find a use that would have the least impact to the area. A real estate office would be a low impact use. He stated that the applicant is not in a position to improve on the traffic but he is not going to harm the traffic with the proposed use. He stated that they are taking a piece of property that does not have a feasible use as residential and transferring it into a use that does have an economic interest with little impact on the neighborhood. Mr. Whelchel stated that they respectfully ask that the request be approved as submitted.

Mr. Mike Aspinwall stated that he does not disagree with how the applicant is proposing to use the land and he understands the sensitivity of the neighbors, but he feels that anything that would exacerbate the traffic needs to be dealt with carefully. As it currently stands, he cannot support this request. Therefore, Mr. Aspinwall made a motion recommending denial of this rezoning. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ann McCormick and unanimously adopted.

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At this time, it was noted that the representative for the first two agenda items (*GC-2003-17 & GC-2003-18*) was now in attendance. It was also pointed out that the two reports could be dealt with at the same time due to the two properties being adjacent; however, two separate motions would be required.

GC-2003-17

Application by Julie Chapman, agent for Tu Ngoc and Susan Ta, to rezone from R-9 Residential to HC Highway Commercial property located at 4431 New Jesup Highway and consisting of approximately 30,200 square feet with 100 feet frontage on New Jesup Highway.

Ms. Julie Chapman was present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for the Planning Commission's review. (A slide presentation was done by Mrs. Segers for the public's view.)

This applicant is proposing to rezone this residential lot to Highway Commercial zoning with retail as a proposed use. The character of the area is mixed use with a predominance of office, retail and limited industrial uses. Zoning immediately north and south of the subject property is R-9 Residential, with HC Highway Commercial zoning to the west and east, and in close proximity to the north and south.

The Future Land Use Map depicts this area for commercial use. The residential character of the area changed since 1970 with a number of rezonings of nearby properties to either Highway Commercial or Limited Industrial districts. The use of U.S. Highway 341 as a commercial corridor further supports the zoning proposal. Driveways for commercial development will require permitting by Georgia Department of Transportation. Water and sewer service is available to the site from City of Brunswick, however the current structure uses well and septic tank.

**In conformance with Section 1103 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance, the following findings of fact were considered in making the recommendation:**

- Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.

**Yes.**

- Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

**No.**

- Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

**Yes, however this is somewhat limited by commercial encroachment.**

- Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use, which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.

**No, due to the limited size of the subject property.**

- Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

**The future land use map identifies this area as Commercial.**

- Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for approval or disapproval.

**None at this time.**

The proposed Highway Commercial zoning is consistent with the character of the area and staff's recommendation is for approval.

GC-2003-18

Application by Julie Chapman, agent for Christopher L. & Lesa R Smith, to rezone from R-9 Residential to HC Highway Commercial property located at 4439 New Jesup Highway and consisting of approximately 30,200 square feet with 100 feet frontage on New Jesup Highway.

Ms. Julie Chapman was present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for the Planning Commission's review. (A slide presentation was done by Mrs. Segers for the public's view.)

The applicant is proposing to rezone this residential lot to Highway Commercial zoning with retail as a proposed use. The character of the area is mixed use with a predominance of office, retail and limited industrial uses. Zoning immediately south of the subject property is R-9 Residential, with HC Highway Commercial zoning to the north, west and east, and in close proximity to the south.

The Future Land Use Map depicts this area for commercial use. The residential character of the area changed since 1970 with a number of rezonings of nearby properties to either Highway Commercial or Limited Industrial districts. The use of U.S. Highway 341 as a commercial corridor further supports the zoning proposal. Driveways for commercial development will require permitting by Georgia Department of Transportation. Water and sewer service is available to the site from City of Brunswick, however the current structure uses well and septic tank.

**In conformance with Section 1103 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance, the following findings of fact were considered in making the recommendation:**

- Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.

**Yes.**

- Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

**No.**

- Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

**Yes, however this is somewhat limited by commercial encroachment.**

- Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use, which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.

**No, due to the limited size of the subject property.**

- Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

**The future land use map identifies this area as Commercial.**

- Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for approval or disapproval.

**None at this time.**

The proposed Highway Commercial zoning is consistent with the character of the area and staff's recommendation is for approval.

Chairman Fields had questions about the curb cuts that currently exist for residential use. He wanted to know if it is necessary for the applicant to approach the state for any other curb cut. Mrs. Segers replied yes, because DOT requirements for a commercial curb cut are different. Also, the spacing would be different. Glynn County would defer to whatever DOT requirements are. Chairman Fields wanted to know if it would be possible for two properties to share a curb cut. Mrs. Segers stated that it would be possible.

Ms. Julie Chapman stated that she is representing both applicants. She stated that they are asking for a very logical rezoning. She feels that the properties will sell as one parcel and could have one curb cut, but she has no objections to a shared curb cut.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Robert Ussery to recommend approval of application **GC-2003-17**. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jay Kaufman and unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Mr. Gary Nevill to recommend approval of application **GC-2003-18**. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jonathan Williams and unanimously adopted.

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#### PP-2003-0805-1345 Caleb's Crossing

Application by Kern-Coleman & Co., agent for Title Properties, LLC, owner, for approval of a revised preliminary plat in accordance with the Planned Development Zoning Text for the Golden Isles Gateway Planned Development (Tract R4W). Property located on the north side of Harry Driggers Boulevard, approximately 14,600 feet west of its intersection with US 17 and consisting of 33.37 acres with approximately 2,349 feet of frontage on Harry Driggers Boulevard.

Mr. Toss Allen was present for discussion.

In a memorandum addressed to the Planning Commission, Mr. York Phillips explained that the Planning Commission previously approved the preliminary plat and later approved a revision to allow for phasing of the project. This request is for minor changes to the phasing plan and the layout.

Staff has reviewed the changes, as well as minor changes to the approved construction plans and had no significant comments. The requested corrections have been made. Staff's recommendation is for approval of the change in the approved preliminary plat, including the change in the phasing plan.

Mr. Toss Allen pointed out the changes. He stated that Lot 17 was around to the west side of the pond. They have reconfigured the pond so that it is to the north side of the pond to be included in Phase I. The pond was pushed in toward the center to include additional depth to Lots 13, 14, 15, 18 and 19. These are the lots that surround the pond.

Chairman Fields had questions about the common area, Lots 1 and 2. He wanted to know if these would be deed restricted to avoid access through the northern boundary off of Lexington Place. Mr. Allen stated that they have provided pedestrian access off of Promise Lane, which is the internal road on the south side. He stated that all access would be through the development itself. Chairman Fields asked if a note could be added that all access would be through the internal road. Mr. Allen stated that the only exception would be if there were a requirement that they have to have a certain area designated for trash pickup. Otherwise, that would not be a problem. He would be glad to include the additional note.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gary Nevill to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Aspinwall and unanimously adopted.

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SP-2003-0603-1600 Dr. Bowen Professional Office  
Request by Dr. Diane Bowen for site plan approval of a medical office and outpatient surgery facility located on the south side of Hamilton Road, east of its intersection with Arthur J. Moore Drive, and approximately 1,000 feet west of Sea Island Causeway.

Mr. Larry Bryson, Mr. Don Hutchinson and Dr. Bowen were present for discussion.

In a memorandum addressed to the Planning Commission, Mr. Phillips stated that the property is zoned PD Planned Development and is located adjacent to the American Legion post. The Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners previously approved a change to the planned development text to reduce the parking requirement.

Staff initially reviewed the plan and had concerns regarding fire protection and drainage. Following discussion with the design team, the requested corrections were made and are acceptable to staff. Staff's recommendation is for approval.

Chairman Fields wanted to know the size of the building. Mr. Phillips stated that the footprint of the building is 5,876 sq. ft. Chairman Fields asked if there would be any type of ambulatory service that would require more parking or additional facilities. Dr. Bowen stated that the office does have an ambulatory surgery center and those issues have been taken into consideration.

Mr. Robert Ussery wanted to know if any consideration had been given to just having one curb cut. Mr. Don Hutchinson explained that they needed two curb cuts due to the ambulance access.

Following a brief discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gary Nevill to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Aspinwall and unanimously adopted.

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FLETC Dormitory Phase IV  
Request by Cristy Llewellyn Lawrence of Thomas & Hutton, on behalf of H & P Investment Partners, Inc., for approval of a twenty-five percent parking reduction under Section 611.7 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Cristy Lawrence was present for discussion.

In a memorandum addressed to the Planning Commission, Mr. Phillips explained that this is a request for reduction in the required parking for the FLETC Phase IV dormitory. When the first three phases of the dormitory project were permitted it was determined that the closest applicable standard for parking was that for "hotel." This requirement is 1.1 spaces per hotel unit. This initially worked because the total required parking for the first three phases would be about what was appropriate for the anticipated total project. Now that the final phase is being designed, some resolution of the parking requirement is necessary.

The applicant requests Planning Commission approval of a 25% reduction based on preservation of a 4.29 acre area for open space, as identified on the sketch plan included in the packages for review.

Staff is also pursuing an ordinance amendment to establish an appropriate parking standard for dormitories. Discussions with the applicant indicate that the current experience is that there is more than sufficient parking, particularly in light of the reality that a large percentage of students arrive by commercial transportation and rely on FLETC shuttles for their transportation while in the community.

Staff recommends approval of the requested reduction, including designation of the 4.29 acre site as the set-aside.

Following a brief discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Robert Ussery to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ann McCormick and unanimously adopted.

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SP-2003-0731-1000 Frederica Academy

Application by Frederica Academy, Inc., for site plan approval of a high school building on the Frederica Academy campus located on the north side of Hamilton Road, east of Sea Island Causeway, approximately 700 ft. north of Demere Road, St. Simons Island.

Mr. Brent Remler was present for discussion.

Mr. Phillips explained that the above referenced property was recently zoned PD Planned Development. An important issue at the time of rezoning was the setback from the buffer on the north side of the site. The proposed site plan accommodates the limitations established at the time of approval of the planned development master plan.

Mr. Phillips stated that the only issue remaining on the plan has to do with the routing of a reservation of a strip or a future easement to allow for the relocation of the sewer, which runs underneath an existing building. He stated that there is a process underway to determine exactly where some of the sewer is in the vicinity for the purpose of being able to come up with that alignment. This particular issue will be addressed but not at this time. However, staff is confident that there will be a solution to the problem.

Mr. Phillips stated that all other issues have been resolved and staff's recommendation is for approval of the site plan.

Following review, a motion was made by Mr. Jay Kaufman to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ann McCormick and unanimously adopted.

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**MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting: August 19<sup>th</sup>**

A motion was made by Ms. Ann McCormick to approve the Minutes of August 19, 2003 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gary Nevill. Voting Aye: Mr. Mike Aspinwall, Mr. Perry Fields, Mr. Jay Kaufman, Ms. Ann McCormick and Mr. Robert Ussery. Mr. Jonathan Williams did not attend the August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and therefore abstained from voting.

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## STAFF ITEMS

### a) **Ordinance Amendment: Parking for Dormitories**

Staff prepared a draft amendment for discussion purposes. According to Mr. Phillips, this issue surfaced during the review of site plans for the new FLETC dormitories. The existing provisions for parking in the Zoning Ordinance do not address parking for dormitories, and the closest standard is for hotels. Staff has researched the issue and has determined that parking standards for dormitories are usually based on the number of beds, and range from one space for two beds to one space for four beds. These standards are usually associated with college dormitories and may or may not be indicative of the parking demand for FLETC.

During the course of discussion, it was determined that there needs to be a clear definition for dormitories and the use needs to be clarified. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that this proposal is not ready to be advertised for public hearing at this time. Staff was advised to continue its research and perhaps conduct a comparison to other schools with dormitories and report back to the Planning Commission.

### b) **Calendar of Amendments**

Staff presented an updated list of amendments for review and a general discussion followed.

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There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.