

MINUTES
ISLANDS PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 19, 2016 - 6:00 P.M.
Casino Bldg., 530 Beachview Drive, SSI

- MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Ward, Chairman
Desiree Watson, Vice Chairman
Ed Ellis
Stan Humphries
Preston Kirkendall
William Lawrence
Joel Willis
- STAFF PRESENT: David Hainley, Community Development Director
Aaron Mumford, County Attorney
Karl Bursa, Planner II
Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary
- ALSO PRESENT: Commissioner Dale Provenzano, BOC
Capt. Johnson, Glynn County Fire Department

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

MINUTES

March 15, 2016 - Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Joel Willis to approve the Minutes of the *March 15th Regular Meeting*. The motion was seconded by Ms. Desiree Watson. Voting Aye: Mr. Ellis, Mr. Humphries, Mr. Lawrence, Ms. Ward, Ms. Watson and Mr. Willis. Abstained From Voting: Mr. Preston Kirkendall.

Presentation/Proclamation

At this time, Chairman Karen Ward presented a Proclamation by the Board of Commissioners to Mr. Robert Ussery commemorating his many years of service on the Islands Planning Commission. Mr. Ussery thanked the Board of Commissioners, the Islands Planning Commission and staff for all of their support during his tenure as a member of the Islands Planning Commission, and he wished everyone the very best in their future endeavors.

SP3176 Pilar Hotel: Consider a request for site plan approval for a new three-story, 26-unit hotel located at 1200 Ocean Boulevard on St. Simons Island. This property is zoned HC Highway Commercial and is located at the intersection of Ocean Boulevard and Neptune Road. Parcel ID: 04-14178. Larry Bryson, agent for The Oaks Cottages Partners, LLC, applicants and owners.

Mr. Larry Bryson was present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for review and was presented by Mr. Bursa:

According to the site plan, this is a proposal for a three-story hotel with a 9,500 sq. ft. building footprint (24,618 total square feet of building area) with parking underneath to be constructed in a single phase. The total site area is .44 acres, .32 acres of which will be impervious. Thirty-six parking spaces are required for the proposed use and thirty-four spaces are provided, including two ADA compliant spaces. The applicant is providing the required Type “E” Buffer along the front property line. The applicant is requesting a modification to the required Type “A” Buffer along the rear property line to allow for an Alternate Type “A” Buffer with a landscaped wall as described in Section 613.2(3)(a)(5).

Under Section 619.4 (a) of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission’s review shall be guided by the following standards and criteria:

- 1) The application, site plan, and other submitted information contains all of the items required under this Section. *Staff comment: This requirement has been met.*
- 2) The proposed uses, buildings and structures are in accordance with the requirements of this ordinance and other ordinances of Glynn County. *Staff comment: The proposed use does not comply with the density provisions of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) as set forth in the Glynn County Comprehensive Plan. The project site has a FLUM designation of Medium Density Residential (MDR). The MDR FLUM designation provides for “areas that are suitable for moderate density housing between four and ten dwelling*

units per net acre.” This project proposes 26 units on .44 acres or 59 units per net acre, which greatly exceeds the prescribed maximum density. Furthermore, the FLUM states that development proposals “. . . at the high end of the range of densities shall be encouraged in areas where adequate services and facilities can accommodate such densities and where such proposed densities do not adversely affect the stability of existing residential uses.” Given the size of the proposed project and the intensity of the use proposed, it would, by its very nature, adversely affect the stability of existing residential uses in the area, thus rendering it non-compliant per that portion of the Glynn County Future Land Use Plan.

This parcel retains its original zoning of HC which was assigned to it in 1966. A hotel is an allowed use in the HC zoning district. There is, however, a significant divergence between the Future Land Use Map designation and the existing zoning of this parcel. The presence of this zoning district on St. Simons Island is inconsistent with the Future Land Use Map; and it is incompatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Finally, this project stands in direct contrast to the stated goals of the Preamble and Enactment Clause of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, this portion of the Ordinance states its purposes to include “lessening congestion in the streets; ...preventing the overcrowding of land; avoiding undue concentration of population; ...and regulating with reasonable consideration, among other things, the character of the various districts and their peculiar suitability for particular uses, with a view to promoting desirable living conditions and the sustained stability of neighborhood ...(and) conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of the land.”

The intensity of the proposed use would bring an additional 270 average trips per day to this area, as calculated by the Trip Generation metrics provided by the International Traffic Engineers manual. The applicant’s proposal, as previously noted, is more than five times the recommended number of units per net acre noted by the Future Land Use Map. This proposal contrasts with the character of the surrounding district, which mostly consists of medium-density residential and small, single-story commercial buildings. Based on these criteria, staff does not believe that the proposed use, in its current guise, meets the criteria of the Ordinance to encourage the most appropriate use of the land.

- 3) Adequate provisions are made for ingress and egress, off-street parking, loading, and the flow of traffic, which may reasonably be anticipated. *Staff comment: The applicant has provided the minimum standards necessary to comply with this requirement regarding access and traffic flow.*

- 4) Adequate provisions are made to control the flow of storm water from and across the site. *Staff comment: This requirement has been met by the applicant proposing underground detention.*
- 5) Adequate provisions are made to protect trees that are selected to remain as depicted on the site plan. *Staff comment: The applicant states that adequate provisions will be made to protect trees proposed for retention. Any trees proposed for retention that are damaged or intentionally removed shall constitute a violation of any site plan approval and shall require the applicant to present a modified site plan for approval to the Islands Planning Commission prior to recommencing any construction activities.*
- 6) Adequate provisions are made to buffer intensive uses and to screen all service areas from view of the adjacent properties and streets. *Staff comment: The applicant proposes an Alternate Type "A" Buffer as described in Section 613.2(3) (a) (5). This proposed buffer constitutes a request for modification of buffer standards per Section 613.5 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance. This proposal must meet one of the following criteria:*

1) If the strict application of the provisions of the buffer requirements reduces the usability of a lot because of the buffer configuration or size to a point which would preclude a reasonable use of the lot, then buffer requirements may be modified provided the purpose and intent is met through a combination of architectural and landscaping design.

2) If the proposed modifications with no reduction to the width substantially meet or exceed the purpose and intent of the buffer requirements.

3) If an adjacent lot is occupied by any existing lawful use that would be deemed compatible regardless of the zoning district it occupies, modifications to the buffer requirements may be considered for the area at the dividing property line.

4) If an adjacent property is not suitable for development because of geographical or environmental constraints.

The applicant has provided a taller landscaped wall than is required by the code for the Alternate Type "A" Buffer. The applicant has also provided information on the site plan that meets the minimum required plantings as required in Section 613.293)(a)(5). However, staff does not believe that the applicant's proposed buffer meets the intent of this section.

The wall that the applicant would be required to construct if the Alternate Type “A” Buffer is approved would stand 10 ft. tall per the submitted plans. The hotel would be 37.67 ft. tall from existing grade to the crown of the roof; and the top of the lower level parking area would be 8.67 ft. tall. This would mean that while the lower level parking area would be screened, the remainder of the physical structure of the hotel would be plainly visible to the residential areas behind the property. As a note, the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance measures building height from the greater of either the average natural grade of the building footprint or the Base Flood Elevation (AE-12 for this project). Therefore, the proposed building elevation is 37.67 ft. from grade but measured as 35 ft. per the zoning ordinance definitions.

The adjacent properties to the rear are zoned Resort Residential and are currently occupied by single-family dwellings. The intensity of the proposed commercial hotel use for this site is not compatible with adjacent residential uses and requires the spatial requirements of a full Type “A” buffer and additional plantings in order to meet the intent of “adequate provisions” as described in this requirement.

- 7) Adequate provisions are made to control the location, intensity, and direction of all outdoor lighting so that it will not have an adverse effect upon adjoining properties. *Staff comment: The applicant states that this project will comply with all outdoor lighting requirements.*
- 8) Open space, as required, has been provided and appropriate means are proposed to assure maintenance of common areas and facilities. *Staff comment: The Highway Commercial zoning district is outlined in Section 713 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance. This section of the zoning ordinance has no prescribed open space requirement. Therefore, this requirement is not applicable.*
- 9) Adequate provisions are made for water supply, fire protection, and sewage collection and treatment. *Staff comment: This requirement has not been met. The site plan states that water and sewer will be provided by JWSC, which they note in their review comments that pump station 2002 is currently operating above capacity. As a condition of approval, the applicant would be required to facilitate the necessary improvements to the pump station. Until such time as sufficient downstream capacity is available, “... it is the position of the JWSC that wastewater flow from this development will not be allowed to discharge to the collection system.” JWSC has also provided a memo noting that issues exist with regard to sanitary sewer capacity and adequate water main size for fire protection to the site.*

Mr. Bursa stated that staff has reviewed this site plan and determined that it does not satisfactorily comply with all applicable codes and ordinances.

Mr. Larry Bryson gave a brief presentation and a general discussion followed. During which time, he introduced the following representatives who were also on hand to answer questions: Attorney Joey Strength, Mr. Adam Swan, property owner and Mr. Bert Ethridge of Roberts Civil Engineering.

Although there were approximately 35 to 40 adjacent property owners present to express concerns about this request, they were advised that this application is not a public hearing item. During discussion among the Planning Commission members, it was pointed out that this proposal is not compatible with the area. The parking layout was also discussed as an issue, as well as the proposed alternative buffer, and concerns about traffic.

During a brief rebuttal, Attorney Joey Strength requested a deferral on behalf of the applicant in order to address concerns from staff and the IPC members. Thereupon, a motion was made by Ms. Desiree Watson, seconded by Mr. Joel Willis and unanimously adopted to defer application *SP3176*, Pilar Hotel, until the May 17th IPC Meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m. (*Meeting to be held at the "Strickland Auditorium," Epworth-By-The-Sea, SSI.*)

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.