



October 11, 2021 7:00 PM
Town of Garner Planning Commission Minutes
Council Meeting Room
900 7th Avenue · Garner, North Carolina 27529

I. Call to Order

Mr. Blasco called the regular meeting of the Town of Garner Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 11, 2021.

II. Roll Call

The Secretary conducted the roll call for the meeting.

Members present: Jon Blasco, Chair; Phillip Jefferson, Vice Chair; Gina Avent; Clare Fullerton; Vang Moua; Sherry Phillips; and Michael Voiland.

Staff in attendance: Mr. Jeff Triezenberg, Planning Director; Mr. Reginald Buie, Senior Planner - Zoning; Ms. Terri Jones, Town Attorney; and Mr. Brian Godfrey, Planning Technician.

III. Invocation

Ms. Avent gave the invocation.

IV. Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes September 13, 2021 – Mr. Voiland made a motion to approve the presented minutes of the September 13th meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Avent. The vote to approve was unanimous.

V. Old/New Business:

A. Conditional Zoning Map Amendment Request:

CZ-21-07, 5001 and 5005 Old Stage Road – Playmaker Properties, LLC is requesting rezoning for approximately 1.74 +/- acres from **Single-Family Residential (R-20)** to **Community Retail (CR C247) Conditional District**. Conditions are proposed to limit the range of permissible uses down to 21 from a list of 52 uses allowed in the Community Retail district. The site is located at 5001 and 5005 Old Stage Road and may be further identified as Wake County PINs **1701148445** and **1701148256**.

Staff/Commission Discussion: Mr. Buie presented the staff report. Mr. Blasco, referencing the notes from the Neighborhood Meeting, asked about a neighbor's

concern with the timing of road improvements. Mr. Buie responded that the NCDOT improvements are scheduled to begin in 2022 and complete in 2023.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Steve Janowski, of Rivers & Associates, Inc., spoke on behalf of the project. Mr. Blasco asked what timeline represented the best-case scenario for the applicant for opening a future business. Mr. Blasco asked whether the applicant had conducted increased outreach efforts.

Mr. Blasco asked if there were any proponents or opponents wanting to speak on the matter. Hearing none, Mr. Blasco closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the table for additional discussion/motion.

Mr. Jefferson commented that, not knowing what type of business there may eventually be, it will be important to understand effects to traffic. Mr. Jefferson asked for clarification on the NCDOT road improvements and the future forced turns. Mr. Blasco commented that hopefully the road improvements will alleviate existing issues, and that based on NCDOT plans it does not appear the subject site will have a direct connection onto Highway 401.

RESULT: Recommend to Town Council for Approval [UNANIMOUS]

Motion: Ms. Avent – I move that the Planning Commission accept the Consistency Statement detailed in Section V of this report, as their own written recommendation regarding the consistency of the request with the Town’s adopted land use plans, and I further move that the Planning Commission recommend approval of CZ-21-07 to the Town Council for the reasons stated by Town Staff.

Second: Mr. Voiland

VOTE: Aye: Avent, Blasco, Fullerton, Jefferson, Moua, Phillips, Voiland

B. Zoning Text Amendment Request:

UDO-21-03, Downtown Uses, Form and Character, and Community Tree Canopy Modifications – Text amendment request (UDO-21-03) submitted by the Planning Department and Downtown Garner Association to amend the UDO related to the uses, form and character of the downtown area. Specific amendments include, but are not limited to: setbacks, use definitions, landscaping and tree canopy. Further modifications are also proposed for tree canopy requirements throughout the rest of the community.

Staff/Commission Discussion: Mr. Triezenberg presented the staff report. Ms. Fullerton asked for clarification on whether for a multi-story building downtown, the tree coverage requirements could theoretically be planted on the sidewalk across the street. Ms. Fullerton asked whether ornamental grasses and vines needed to be defined. Mr. Blasco observed that grasses can vary greatly in size and asked whether the proposed changes included a size recommendation or requirement. Mr. Blasco suggested that it would be preferable to include minimum size requirements for grass plantings. Ms. Fullerton asked for additional clarification as to why the proposed text amendment included removing the corner lot setback. Mr. Jefferson commented that he would like to see additional standards for vertical planting, sustainable planting, planting which can help reduce stormwater, and planting which serves purposes beyond being purely ornamental. Mr. Jefferson commented that developers should interpret the Town’s existing landscaping standards to include these types of plantings as well.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Ms. Mari Howe, of the Downtown Garner Association, spoke on behalf of the request. Ms. Howe was joined by Mr. Andrew Holton, of Lansing Melbourne Group.

Mr. Blasco asked if there were any proponents or opponents wanting to speak on the matter. Hearing none, Mr. Blasco closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the table for additional discussion/motion.

RESULT: Recommend to Town Council for Approval [UNANIMOUS]

Motion: Ms. Avent – I move that the Planning Commission accept the Consistency Statement detailed in Section V of this report, as their own written recommendation regarding the consistency of the request with the Town’s adopted land use plans and recommend approval of UDO-21-03 to the Town Council.

Second: Mr. Jefferson

VOTE: Aye: Avent, Blasco, Fullerton, Jefferson, Moua, Phillips, Voiland

C. Zoning Text Amendment Request:

UDO-21-04, Community Gardens – Text amendment request (UDO-21-04) submitted by the Planning Department to amend the UDO to define Community Gardens as a separate and specific use apart from Agriculture and Silviculture; and to establish permitted districts, additional standards and landscape buffer requirements for the use.

Staff/Commission Discussion: Mr. Triezenberg presented the staff report. Ms. Fullerton asked why more residential districts were not included in the proposed text amendment request. Ms. Fullerton asked whether a community garden could be included as an accessory use to a downtown development. Ms. Fullerton asked whether there was a size limitation for Community Garden structures/buildings. Ms. Fullerton asked whether electric fences or chicken wire would be allowable. Mr. Blasco commented that there could be missed opportunities with some underutilized sites, such as a burned down building, and asked whether a community garden could be installed as a temporary use in some cases. Mr. Blasco asked whether a Community Garden's storage shed would need to be screened. Mr. Jefferson and Ms. Fullerton asked what the infrastructure requirements for a Community Garden would be.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Triezenberg spoke on behalf of the Planning Department's request for a text amendment. Ms. Maggie Tubilleja and Mr. Martin Petherbridge, of Garner Grows, spoke as proponents of the authorization of Community Gardens and requested additional changes to the proposed text amendment. Mr. Petherbridge also requested the leasing of space at Thompson Road Park for a Community Garden. Ms. Fullerton asked whether the Garner Grows speakers were aware of another nearby municipality that leased a Community Garden space in a public park. Mr. Blasco asked whether Garner Grows had been able to identify properties that were at least close to meeting the proposed standards for Community Gardens. Mr. Blasco asked the Garner Grows speakers what screening requirement they felt was appropriate.

Mr. Blasco asked if there were any proponents or opponents wanting to speak on the matter. Hearing none, Mr. Blasco closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the table for additional discussion/motion.

Mr. Blasco observed the distinction between the Zoning Text Amendment Request before the Commission and the separate request by Garner Grows to use Thompson Road Park for a Community Garden. Mr. Blasco commented that he felt that Community Gardens should be allowable in more zoning districts, and if citizens can successfully make a Community Garden work on a smaller lot, they should be allowed to do so. Ms. Avent asked what types of uses/businesses were found in the Neighborhood Commercial district. Ms. Fullerton asked about the Neighborhood Office district uses.

RESULT: Recommend to Town Council for Approval [UNANIMOUS]

Motion: Mr. Voiland– I move that the Planning Commission accept the Consistency Statement detailed in Section VI of this report, as their own written recommendation regarding the consistency of the request with the Town’s adopted land use plans and recommend approval of UDO-21-04 to the Town Council. **Mr. Blasco** proposed a friendly amendment to the motion: that the Commission also recommend that Community Gardens be a permitted use in all of the following districts: *R-40, R-20, R-15, R-12, R-9, RMH, MF-1, MF-2, NO, and NC*, which was accepted and included in the motion.

Second: Ms. Avent

VOTE: Aye: Avent, Blasco, Fullerton, Jefferson, Moua, Phillips, Voiland

V. Reports

- A. **Planning Director** – Mr. Triezenberg gave the Commission updates and noted upcoming meetings of interest. Mr. Triezenberg stated that the VA Medical Clinic Special Use Permit had been approved, as well as the Special Use Permit for the cell tower on Thompson Road. Mr. Triezenberg noted that the Town was awarded a pedestrian planning grant.
- B. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Blasco spoke about opportunities for the Town to partner with organizations for things like Community Gardens. Mr. Blasco asked Mr. Triezenberg about the different tiers of perimeter buffers that would theoretically be required of a Community Garden in a residential district. The Commission received a request from audience member Martin Petherbridge to refer Garner Grow’s request for a Community Garden at Thompson Road Park to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources (PRCR) Advisory Committee.

RESULT: Referred to the PRCR Advisory Committee [UNANIMOUS]

Motion: Mr. Blasco – I move that the Planning Commission refer the discussion of a Community Garden at the Thompson Road Park to the PRCR Advisory Committee.

Second: Ms. Avent

VOTE: Aye: Avent, Blasco, Fullerton, Jefferson, Moua, Phillips, Voiland

Mr. Blasco commented that this discussion period represented time for Commissioners to bring up particular issues they felt were important. Mr. Blasco asked about beautification projects and small area plans.

VI. Adjournment

Having no further matters to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.