

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, May 20, 2024 – 5:30 PM

GLPC Commission Members Present: Ron Bythwood, Franklin Bailey, James Miller, Steve Miller (Vice-Chair), Vicki Rountree, and Chip Wildes

GLPC Commission Members Absent: Johnny Ball, Ed Hightower, Chris Webb and Tommy Willis

Staff: Jamie Horne – Remerton Fire Chief; Matt Martin - City of Valdosta Planner; Jason Davenport – Lowndes County Projects Assistant; and Molly Stevenson - Lowndes County Planning Analyst (Clerk)

VISITORS PRESENT:

(Sign-In sheet available in file.)

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chair Steve Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner James Miller led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Invocation. Vice-Chair Miller welcomed everyone to the GLPC meeting and explained that the Planning Commission serves as an advisory (recommending) body to the local member governments regarding land use requests, and the final determination of the requests presented at this meeting will be made by the applicable local governments. Vice-Chair Miller then explained the meeting procedures and announced the dates of the public hearings for the local member governments, as listed on the agenda.

Agenda Item #2

Approval of the Meeting Minutes: April 29, 2024

Vice-Chair Miller called for additions, questions, and corrections of the April 29, 2024, GLPC meeting minutes. There being none, Vice-Chair Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to approve the April 29, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner James Miller second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Items #3 & #4

- V-2024-01 Bryce Nerland, 1526 Woodard St., 0084B 094, ~0.35 acre
Variance to reduce side & front yard setbacks
- V-2024-02 Bryce Nerland, 1526 Woodard St., 0084B 094A, ~0.18 acre
Variance to reduce side & front yard setbacks

Fire Chief Horne presented both requests together in which the applicant is requesting Variances to the side and front yard setbacks on two parcels consisting of: 0084B-094 and 0084B-094A with the address of 1526 Woodard St, Remerton, GA. For reference, in 2013, a variance request was

granted by council to increase the density to allow for the six parcels on the above-mentioned parcels.

The side yard setbacks variance requests for all 6 parcels will be a reduction of 3 feet, from 8 to 5 feet. The second variance request for the front yard setback is as follows: Lot 1-3 is requesting a reduction of 10 feet from 55 to 45 feet and Lot 4 - 6 is requesting a reduction of 15 feet from 55 to 40 feet.

The subject property possesses road frontage on both Woodard Street and Edgewood Drive and is classified as a Residential Street.

The main motivation behind the request is to allow a reduction in setbacks to allow new construction for 6 single family homes on 2 vacant lots.

Overall, staff is supportive of requests V-2024-01 and V-2024-02 to allow for a reduction in the side yard setbacks from 8 to 5 feet. Additionally, staff supports reducing the front yard setback for Lots 1-3 from 55 to 45 feet and Lots 4-6 from 55 to 40 feet, and therefore recommends approval of both requests.

Vice-Chair Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Bryce Nerland, Applicant – 3510 Bankhead Ct., Tallahassee, FL.
- Austin Weaver, Contractor – 577 Hwy 135 N., Lakeland, GA.

Mr. Nerland stated he wishes to build 6 individual homes and make them affordable. The setbacks requested are the same as the setbacks for the lots to the north.

Commissioner Rountree inquired about the original number of lots. Mr. Nerland stated there were 2 original lots. Vice-Chair Miller clarified that the intent is to combine and re-subdivide the parcels into 6 parcels. Commissioner Bailey asked Mr. Nerland if the homes would be for rent or to sell. Mr. Nerland stated the intent is to sell them.

Commissioner James Miller inquired as to the expected sq ft of the homes. Mr. Weaver stated the homes will be 1244 sq ft. Commissioner Bailey asked what the price point would be. Mr. Nerland stated the expectation will be for the homes to be between \$160,000 and \$180,000.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Vice-Chair Miller called for motions.

For case # V-2024-01, Commissioner Rountree made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Bailey second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

For case # V-2024-02, Commissioner Rountree made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Bailey second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5

REZ-2024-13 Robert Carter, Glenn Rd., 0237 037, ~4.33 acres

Rezone from E-A (Estate Agricultural) to R-1 (Low Density Residential)

Mr. Davenport presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning. The subject property possesses road frontage on Glenn Road, a locally maintained County Road, and is within the Rural Service Area and Rural Residential Character Area. The subject property is family land that the applicant would like to subdivide into conforming lots for individual residences. The applicant intends to keep a portion of the land. The subject property currently contains one residence. If rezoned, up to 4 lots are possible. There have been no phone calls for or against the request.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land use, lot sizes, and zoning pattern, the lack of available utilities, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-1 zoning.

Commissioner Bailey asked for clarification on the acreage involved as the Letter of Intent states 8+ acres. Mr. Davenport clarified that the Letter of Intent had an error. The acreage involved is ~4.33 acres.

Vice-Chair Miller asked if there were any questions for staff from the commissioners. There being none, Vice-Chair Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor of, nor in opposition to the request.

Vice-Chair Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Wildes second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #6

CU-2023-04 Roche Kempson (1206 West Magnolia Street)

CUP for Personal Care Home

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for an expanded Family size Personal Care Home with 5 residents, in a Single-Family Residential (R-6) zoning district. The subject property is located at 1206 West Magnolia Street, which is along the north side of the street halfway between Scott Drive and Hightower Street. The property contains an existing single-family residence (3 BR, 2 bath) (1,510 sf) which currently houses a 3 person Personal Care Home for disabled adults, that has been operated by the applicant since June 2023. The applicant is now proposing to increase the occupancy of the facility to 5 residents, which triggers the need for CUP approval. The applicant has no plans to increase the physical size of the facility, nor make any physical changes to the site or the building interior.

The subject property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

Family sized Personal Care Homes are licensed by the State and they are defined locally as having 6 or fewer residents, in a single-family home setting. The smaller sized facilities with up to 3 residents are a Permitted Use (or a use by right) in all of the City's single-family residential zoning districts, while those with 4-6 residents require CUP approval. The allowable maximum occupancy of a PCH is generally and initially determined by physical size (floor area) of the overall facility, its number and sizes of bedrooms and floor plan design as dictated by State licensing requirements as well as the International Fire Code and Life Safety Codes, etc... However, it is also possible for the City Council to set a more restrictive size limitation based other considerations such as site conditions, overcrowding or over-institutionalizing a given facility or surrounding neighborhood. The whole intent of a "Family" size Personal Care Home, at both the State and local level, is for the facility to generally blend in and operate in the same manner as a regular household unit within the surrounding neighborhood.

In this case, the applicant has already been operating a 3-person Personal Care Home on the property for the past 12 months, and staff is not aware of any complaints or concerns being raised regarding the facility thus far. The subject property is part of a well-established single-family neighborhood, with many of the immediately adjacent houses being owned and managed as rental units by the Valdosta Housing Authority. Therefore, continued operation of the facility while blending-in as a regular household within the neighborhood, should be deemed fully acceptable. However, in this case there have been some concerns raised about the facility itself not being able to safely accommodate more than 4 residents, or perhaps seem over-crowded with its limited floor area (1,510-sf) and limited parking in the driveway (2 cars maximum), or otherwise give an impression of it being more "institutional" rather than "residential" in character. However, given its positive track record so far, and with proper conditions of approval and the installation of a fire sprinkler system etc., staff is supportive of increasing the allowable size of this facility to 4 persons.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommends approval to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Approval shall be granted for a Personal Care Home with up to 4 residents, that continues to meet all State and local licensing requirements.
- (2) All parking for the facility shall be on fully paved surfaces as approved by the City Engineer
- (3) Install a fire sprinkler system and alarm monitoring system as approved by both the Fire Marshal and the Building Official
- (4) Conditional Use approval shall expire after 2 years from the date of approval if no amended Business License for the increased size in the facility has been approved by that date.

Discussion between commissioners and staff related to sprinkling, number of residents and utilities provision.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Roche Kempson, Applicant – 1206 West Magnolia St.

Ms. Kempson stated she was present to answer any questions. Commissioner Rountree asked her if she is ok with limiting the number of residents to 4. Ms. Kempson said yes. Commissioner Rountree asked what the minimum sq ft requirement per resident is. Ms. Kempson stated 80 sq ft. Commissioner Bythwood asked if the current residents are in separate rooms to which Ms. Kempson replied they are and that all are female. Commissioner Bailey asked the applicant if sprinkling the building is financially feasible. Ms. Kempson said she is considering it.

Commissioner James Miller asked if the intent is for the largest bedroom to house 3 residents. Ms. Kempson relied it is.

Commissioner Rountree asked staff if the sprinkling recommendation comes from staff or the fire marshal. Mr. Martin relied that it comes from the fire marshal, regardless of whether there are 4 or 5 residents, but for 4 residents, there might be an alternative solution. Commissioner James Miller asked if the projection is for an increase to 4 residents to which the applicant responded yes.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Vice-Chair Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Wildes to recommend approval of the request as presented with Conditions. Commissioner James Miller second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

Other Business

A Planning and Zoning training opportunity will be presented on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, at the South Georgia Regional Commission office. All GLPC Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

There being no other business, Vice-Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Ed Hightower, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date