

City of Orangeburg
Planning Commission Public Hearing Minutes
September 24, 2020

Members Present

Guy Best – Chairperson
Dr. Shirilan Moseley-Jenkins-Vice-Chairperson
Stephon Edwards II
Paula Payton
John Wolfe

Members Absent

William Evans

Guests

John Ford, Robert and Company

Staff Members

John D. Singh, Interim City Administrator
Leann Holloway, Secretary

Citizens from the community	<u>18</u>
Press present	<u>0</u>

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Singh welcomed everyone to the study for St. Matthews Road, an area of Columbia Road, and the surrounding Chestnut Street. The study was ordered by City Council after a hearing was held for a rezoning request. He explained that it is very important from the City's perspective that the public be able to come in person and not just simply watch a Zoom meeting. Mr. Singh wanted everyone to be able to put their hand on a map, look at things, and be able to interact. There was a considerable delay due to COVID-19. This was different than regular Planning Commission meetings in that Planning Commission members were here to listen and receive information. Mr. John Ford with Robert and Company developed our Comprehensive Plan for the City in November 2017. We engaged him to look at the areas for the study. We also assigned a few additional areas. He gave a detailed rundown of these areas and then we had public input time allowing questions for the Commission and Mr. Ford. All of this was recorded and there will be a copy of minutes to go along with the study.

Mr. Singh addressed the audience, he stated, "As a reminder, this study will go back to City Council and they will decide if something needs to be done. That order would go back to the Planning Commission and they would look at it with the base recommendations and there will be public notices to make everyone aware of what is going on and property owners that are involved will have their properties posted. The recording of this meeting will be posted on our Facebook page and others that are

interested will be able to listen to the meeting. We will try to find a way to put it on our website also. We will put a copy of the study online or arrange to email it to you if you want one. Normally this would be a FOIA item, but if you want a copy, we will make you a copy. Our intent is to get everyone's input and do the right thing for the City and the citizens of Orangeburg. I cannot speak for past happenings, but I can make sure we are fair and transparent as possible now."

Mr. Ford began his presentation. He said, "I was contacted in February to look at the plan regarding some specific areas. The Comprehensive Plan is the first step in beginning the conversation. It is not the decision. It identifies some opportunities and initiatives as part of the development process. So, tonight is a conversation about that.

2017-City adopts the Comprehensive Plan including Future Land Use Map, character areas, and some other maps and information

October 2019 – City denies application to rezone three properties along St. Matthews Road from residential to commercial uses

December 2019–City agrees to ask consultant to review Future Land Use Plan for specific properties

March 2020–Consultant visits three areas for review at locations on St. Matthews Road, Columbia Road, and Boulevard Street

April 2020–Consultant prepares draft recommendations. Original meeting deferred due to COVID-19 pandemic emergency

September 2020 – City Planning Commission holds public meeting to discuss potential Future Land Use Plan recommendations

This (indicating on screen) is the plan for the Future Land Use adopted in November and yellow is Low Density, Residential; brown is a little bit higher Single Family; pinks/reds are Commercial; purples are for Industrial, blues are Institutional. This is just to give you an indication of uses. The primary areas we were asked to look at were a small area on St. Matthews Road, a small area on Columbia Road across from St. Andrews Church, and an area where Zan Street has been reconstructed.

The first area we were asked to look at was three primary properties on St. Matthews Road. Three single family residential houses, currently adjacent land uses are suburban residential to the north and east, immediately to the southwest is general commercial and across the street a mixed commercial. Options that we looked at were Suburban Residential that is keeping it as is, General Commercial, or Urban Residential. Some of the adjacent land uses mark it as being at the edge of commercial and residential. That is where planning and zoning always have issues. We recognize that and we want to provide appropriate uses that allow transition from more intensive uses to less intensive uses.

Based on our look at that, we felt Commercial may be too extreme for the properties immediately behind on Dantzler Street. We were concerned that there may be impacts of commercial uses, although St. Matthews Road could be identified as predominantly a commercial border. Although this strip of corridor along that portion and frontage with

Pecan Way Terrace Subdivision has not been maintained as single-family residential. I remember when we looked at these, we identified that there could be some potential strength in terms of challenging whether single-family residential would be able to be maintained along that corridor.

When we did prepare the Comprehensive Plan, we thought Urban Residential, even though residential is in the name, there are potential uses in Urban Residential that may be appropriate along a corridor like this. They include office-institutional type uses. They also include several others and on page 7.54 what we identified was Urban Residential can include potentially zoning districts A-2, A-3, O-1, B-1, B-3, and HCD. Those were the various options that may be allowed within Urban Residential compared to A-1 in Suburban Residential. It gives the property owners more options and also should allow if you are considering a rezoning if there are adequate buffers that may reduce the impact on the adjacent residential properties that are intended to stay residential that may be more appropriate in an Urban Residential rather than a Commercial category. We did want to make sure that we protect the suburban residential in Pecan Way Terrace. However, we need to look at something a little more optional for some variability along the St. Matthews corridor. There may be some transportation issues. Certainly, you would not want to see all three properties have a curb cut; however, if they are unified into a single development there may be the potential of providing a curb cut that is far enough from the transition from Boulevard Street and from Stuart Street. There are those kinds of issues that may be excepted. Therefore, what we want to look at is an upgrade of this area to Urban Residential because we felt that Suburban Residential did not have long term viability for maintenance whereas Urban Residential is much more similar to the urban corridors that we have in the City.

The next area is the Columbia Road study area. (This is the block of 1807 to 1961 Columbia Road.) There were three parcels we were asked to look at. They back up against residential. It is currently Urban Residential and was proposed for Mixed-Use Commercial. It is Mixed-Use Commercial across the street. These are single-family homes on large lots. The adjacent land uses are urban residential to the north, west, and south and institutional and mixed-use commercial across the street. The options were Urban Residential which continues what the existing uses are in the Plan, General Commercial which is more intense, and Mixed-Use Commercial which is also more intense than that. You can see that immediately across is institutional use, but then behind that is mixed-commercial, and further to the west is suburban-residential.

The adjacent land uses mark the three properties again as being at the edge of commercial and residential uses; however, they are on what is considered the residential side of the street. The structures are set back quite a bit and seem to be continually viable. Based upon our evaluation, we would recommend that you keep it as Urban Residential that does allow office-institutional uses on the properties if you provide appropriate buffers for adjacent single-family residential areas on Hillsboro Road and Old Orchard Way. As a matter of fact, Old Orchard Way is a relatively new development with single-family homes. We believe that Urban Residential would be a continued viable use for that location because it may allow O-1 or maybe B-1 types of uses.

Moving on to Boulevard Street, the area we were asked to look at is in the vicinity of Zan Street. There are single-family houses on the north side with a multi-family Orangeburg Housing project where the structures have been closed. I believe that is proposed for redevelopment, so the concern was whether we needed to look at those six properties. They were all single-family homes. The adjacent land uses were urban residential and institutional on the north, west, and south, transportation and institutional uses to east and south east. The options again are Urban Residential, General Commercial, and Mixed-Use Commercial. We put together some text to evaluate that and quite a few pictures of that area. As part of that, we determined that we should keep it as Urban Residential. The buffer areas to north, south, and west are urban residential so we decided that may be the best way to retain it as Urban Residential rather than looking at more intensive development here. It will redevelop, but we think it can redevelop primarily as a little bit higher density housing along that corridor, perhaps some O-I uses, especially with the new access across the railroad there. We would say though to consider the added infill residential uses with appropriate buffers, so the adjacent single-family residential land uses on Oak and Peasley are maintained.

That finishes the three areas that we were asked specifically to look at, but then we were asked more recently to look at three more properties, so we are going through those quickly too.

We looked at Chestnut Street and St. Matthews Road. The properties are from St. Matthews Road to Dantzler Street, the four properties that front along Chestnut Street and one property that is around the corner from St. Matthews Road. The two properties on the end are vacant, but there are two single-family houses along Chestnut Street in between them. It is currently Urban Residential and was proposed for General Commercial. The options we looked at for that are Suburban Residential, General Commercial, and Urban Residential. After looking at the adjacent uses, we are looking at a difference from one side of Chestnut Street to the other. The same that we saw with St. Matthews Road; however, Suburban Residential does not seem to be a strong option. We felt like Urban Residential would make more sense and provide more opportunities for development and allow more density than the A-1 that would be allowed under the Suburban Residential. We did look again in terms of these five properties and came up with looking at changing that to Urban Residential. If you look at Pecan Way Terrace as a Superblock with several blocks as part of it then you are looking at impacts along the edge of the Pecan Way Terrace neighborhood. We believe that it is stronger to maintain Urban Residential as the primary option along the major corridor in order to preserve the interior portion of Pecan Way Terrace neighborhood. Some commercial uses may be appropriate if they are light enough and fit into the Urban Residential category. We would consider town houses as an alternative option. We are seeing more corridor development throughout the country. People are looking at identifying residential along some of these major corridors because they cannot fill all the commercial, institutional, and non-residential opportunities that they present. Appropriate design could allow you to put residential that is higher intensity. There are several options. The need to protect the

adjacent suburban residential use in Pecan Way Terrace is primarily a different portion of Dantzler Street.

Next is 1045 Chestnut Street. That is a little farther to the south on the same side, but this property is a single-family residential lot immediately adjacent to a hotel. It is nicely buffered as much as you can buffer that type of use. However, it does front on Chestnut Street. It would have an impact on two adjacent properties along Chestnut Street. In terms of looking at what the options may be there, Suburban Residential again. Based upon this lot (1045 Chestnut Street), there are two more lots before you come to a residential street. This presents one of the biggest challenges. This area, Pecan Way Terrace Subdivision, with frontage along Chestnut Street and St. Matthews Road is where we are challenged by what land uses may be allowed there. Both of those roads function very well right now however with significant additional turning movements there may be some more challenges in terms of transportation viability along the corridors. We felt that the opportunities here give us primarily urban residential versus general commercial. We believe General Commercial is premature and Urban Residential is the best option for this property as well. Again, it allows more zoning districts and more variety in zoning than is allowed under Suburban Residential.

We have one more application for the property at Chestnut Street and Nelson Street. There are five properties as part of this area. Land uses adjacent include suburban residential to the west and mixed-use commercial to the east along St. Matthews Road, and general commercial along Chestnut Street. We looked at a change to Urban Residential, providing light commercial or office use may be appropriate with expanded buffers to the north and west. Consider town homes as an alternative option. Transportation and turning movements may be an issue along portions of the corridor. It is recommended to protect adjacent urban residential uses along Chestnut Street or consolidate multiple properties to develop appropriate uses. What we have come back with is four properties we think should be Urban Residential. The reason is primarily to give more options to the property owners and maintain protection for the adjacent suburban residential areas. That is looking at it from a use standpoint.

Tonight, this is our first step. We are starting a conversation. This concludes my part of the presentation."

Mr. Singh asked that everyone limit their comments to five minutes and state what street or area they are asking the question about so that the correct map can be pulled up on screen and everyone can be on the same page. Mr. Singh asked for questions from the Planning Commission members.

Chairperson Guy Best asked, "On the Master Plan, what color is urban residential?"

Mr. Ford responded, "It is sort of a light brown, dark orange (indicating on the map), yellow is Suburban Residential, light brown is Urban Residential, pink is General Commercial, red is Mixed-Use, blue is Institutional. This is a good map because it shows you all but

the Boulevard area and essentially, we have issues at this corner, this edge, and this corner. This map shows five of the areas."

Chairperson Best asked, "Has the Urban Residential always included compatible zoning?"

Mr. Ford responded, "That is what was included in the Comprehensive Plan when it was proposed. I am not sure there have not been any changes since we prepared it. That comes directly from the final draft that was dated November 2017."

Mr. Ford continued, "If you go to the Comprehensive Plan, I believe that it is on page 7.54 and 7.55 it should show this text and this table. The Plan is meant to be interpretive. It can be interpreted as a little bit more generalized than a zoning map. A zoning map is much more specific and much more limiting. Whereas the Plan is intended to be more expansive and give you ideas about where you are going and what you are trying to accomplish in that area. I will remind everyone again that when we prepared the Plan in 2017, we did have questions about the Pecan Way Terrace frontage along St. Matthews and along Chestnut Street. We opted at the time to go ahead and maintain Suburban Residential, but we were expecting there to be challenges to those edges simply because of the impact between commercial uses to one side versus the maintenance of Suburban Residential on the other. These are difficult issues that will work their way out over time, but we were trying to make sure that we protect the Pecan Way Terrace neighborhood at that point."

The floor was opened to the public for their questions or statements.

Ms. Phyllis Pelzer addressed the Commission, "I am making comments in reference to 1090, 1080, 1070 St. Matthews Road. You already said that your recommendation is to be Urban. You mentioned that it is already kind of speculative. If you look at the map it does not seem like it makes a lot of sense for this whole neighborhood to be Suburban in the middle of mixed-use, commercial, and other urban. All the suburban is kind of on the outskirts. Even up Dantzler Street there are houses already marked for future commercial and they are going up into the neighborhood. We are asking ultimately that these blocks be Commercial as well, but the reason we did was because we could not go from Suburban to what we are trying to get to because the Comprehensive Plan will not allow it. It had to be Urban first so that we can go to the Commercial. So, when you get to that point, I want you to consider that because ultimately, we want it to be Commercial. My background is civil engineering. I am a licensed professional engineer and I have worked a little bit with planning. I have worked with transportation, road design, and traffic signals. I have some background in this area. A lot of this area is also rental property.

This area, the strip with Marco's Pizza, is Urban, but it is already transitioning to Commercial. I do not know how that happened. When I asked that question last time, nobody really had an answer for me as to how this property ended up Commercial already. We would like the same down here. There are many businesses in here. That is what I would like to see, and I think that conditions would allow for it. Things are

changing rapidly along the corridor, not down Ellis yet though. Until someone actually sells their house it does not affect them. It does not affect the current homeowner, so it is not really hurting anybody who is currently living in these houses."

Mr. Ken Floyd stated, "The only other thing I would like to say is on Dantzler Street those three lots already have commercial on them."

Mr. Singh stated, "Ms. Pelzer, are you good? I wanted to make sure that we covered publicly what you wanted to make sure that we received."

Ms. Pelzer responded, "I believe so. I would like to know when the Planning Commission is debating or discussing it. I do concur with his recommendation that it be changed to Urban."

Mr. Singh responded, "Everything will be public, there will be a public notice. You all alluded to some things that happened in the past. I cannot fix that, but I can fix the present."

Ms. Pelzer stated, "Actually in the Comprehensive Plan, our area is marked as Stilton and in the Comprehensive Plan it says that Stilton is an Urban area. I figured it was a mistake that is was not actually done, that it was not compatible with the actual map. In the language it said Stilton is in the Urban area."

Ms. Marcia Adkins addressed the Commission, referring to the corner of St. Matthews and Chestnut Street. "Since about 2005, Mr. Floyd and several other people have worked hard to get our covenants and restrictions changed for this neighborhood. Not knowing that you all were doing the Comprehensive Plan at the same time and that it was going to lock us in. We have all spent a lot of money and time on it. I can tell you from talking to a lot of the people along Chestnut Street and St. Matthews Road that people do not want to live there. Much of this property is not owner occupied anymore and a lot of it has not been kept up. Trying to punish us to try to protect everything in this neighborhood does not seem like a fair trade to me."

Ms. Elouise Hart addressed the Commission, she stated, "I live at the corner of Chestnut Street. I bought it in 2002 and it has been a tremendous change. It is a good area for a good business. I agree with Marcia and Phyllis in everything that they are saying. Walgreens came up after I got the property and then the strip mall. There is more noise and more traffic all the time. I am asking you to consider making a change to fix it."

Mr. Randy Shuler addressed the Commission, he stated, "My wife owns 1080 St. Matthews Road. I appreciate your time and effort and I am glad the City got involved. I just want clarification that you are recommending Urban Residential, but what opportunities does that give us? What all could be listed under Urban Residential? "

Mr. Ford responded, "The Comprehensive Plan specifically states on page 7.54 that the Urban Residential Traditional zoning districts that could be allowed are A-2, A-3, O-1,

B-1, B-3, and HCD. Those were the current zoning categories at the time that we identified within the Comprehensive Plan. I believe that there may be another document out there that may be coming from a different direction and just identifies what you can do without any conditions. I think that may be where there is a difference of opinion. There may be additional conditions that can be applied on any of these zoning categories where it should be successfully evaluated for a zoning category.

Our intent was a little bit ahead of what national theory is doing right now about Urban Residential densities. That is that within an Urban area there should be an offer of choices of what you can do within the land use category. It should be much more inclusive and allow options for specific properties. That's why so much of the City is identified as Urban Residential. Pecan Way Terrace was just identified at the time that the parcels on the interior needed to be protected, and I think that is why we left it as Suburban Residential. We recognize things change over time. As I said before, the Plan should not be the final arbiter it should be the opening step for conversation. Suburban Residential only allows A-1. Urban allows the multiple categories. The public has said they would like General Commercial along Chestnut Street and St. Matthews Road. We recommended Suburban Residential which would allow some forms of commercial zoning to occur. The intent behind that is we want to give the opportunity for the community to make the appropriate decision and this will all go back to the Planning Commission to allow them the opportunity to decide which option they want to recommend."

Mr. Singh said, "To be clear, we are hearing from Mr. Ford, the professionals and from the public their opinions to put it all on record. All of this will be in the study City Council receives. All over the country zoning has always been to protect your A-1, your residential homes and that is still the case today. You can see we made some changes and that was because we wanted to have a living, breathing document and to be able to have conversations like we are having here."

Mr. Jai Singh spoke on behalf of his brother and himself. They own some properties off Chestnut Street on Nelson Street. They would like to change them to an office building or something similar.

Mr. Singh said that it is a corridor section that has issues. These are the same issues that were identified when doing the Comprehensive Plan and were expected to come up again down the road.

Mr. Don Adkins, owner of property at the corner of St. Matthews Road and Chestnut Street thanked Mr. Ford for the fabulous job that he has done. He has seen traffic studies that show 17,000 on St Matthews Road and 34,000 on Chestnut Street and does not think that anyone would build condos or townhouses there. They are surrounded by commercial and he does not think anyone would rent them. He does not think Urban Residential is the way to go. He would like to see it be more commercial.

Mr. Tripp Wingard spoke representing himself and Blake Bolen owners of 1069 Chestnut Street. They would like for it to be Commercial, but if Urban Residential is recommended

then they would be happy with that. He wanted to know if anything needed to be done on his part.

Mr. Singh recommended that everyone wait until the study is complete. It is possible that some properties could be combined within each area. He told the public if they could email us the name and address of their property and we can notify them of any scheduled hearings and then they can gauge when or if they should put in an application.

Mr. Singh stated, "I do not want to promise anyone that this is going to fix what you are looking for, but it will be fair and right for as many people as possible. The next step is to take everything that Mr. Ford put together and add comments from tonight and forward it to the Planning Commission and City Council to digest. Then we will look for instructions from City Council. We will have that on an agenda. It will be a public agenda that you can attend. Thank you for coming."

Respectfully submitted,



John D. Singh
Interim City Administrator