

**City of Orangeburg
Planning Commission Public Hearing Minutes
January 28, 2021**

Members Present

Guy Best -- Chairperson
Paula Payton-Vice-Chairperson
Dr. Shirlan Moseley-Jenkins
Jeanna Reynolds
John Wolfe

Members Absent

William Evans
Stephon Edwards

Guests

John Ford, Robert and Company

Staff Members

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

Citizens from the community 17
Press present 0

PUBLIC HEARING

Interim City Administrator, John Singh stated, "We had a study of the Comprehensive Plan completed and held a meeting September 24, 2020 so everyone could participate. The final results of the study are being presented at this meeting. This meeting is mainly for the Planning Commission, but we believe in public input. We wanted everyone to have an opportunity to give their feedback. We have heard you loud and clear that everyone here wants their property to be zoned B-1. Is there anybody that does not want their property zoned B-1? Anybody? For the record, no one raised their hand."

Interim City Administrator Singh asked Ms. Dorothy Sells via Zoom, "Ms. Sells, are you in favor of business zoning or keeping it Single Family Residence?"

Ms. Sells responded, "I do not want to keep it Single Family Residence."

Interim City Administrator Singh responded, "That is what I needed to hear. We understand you would like it to be zoned B-1. If anyone has comments for the Commission, Chairperson Best is going to let you do that, but he is going to hold you to about a minute. The Commission is going to listen to the recommendation of the expert that we hired, ask questions, and go through everything. Then they will make a decision tonight on the study. Their decision will go to City

Council. City Council will listen to their recommendation. City Council may agree with the Planning Commission or they may overrule their decision. City Council has been meeting by Zoom, but if you want to have input at that time, we will deal with that at that point. Let's just say after all of this is over, the Planning Commission says that B-1 is the way to go and that goes to City Council. Once that is done, we have three applications that started this process. Those three applications would then go through the planning process. This is the process by state law. We will then post the properties and go through another Planning Commission meeting probably pretty much a rubber stamp and another City Council meeting. That is the end of those three applications. Then we have the rest of you that say you have a property you want changed. That would require an application. There is a process and it is not an overnight process, but I want to make sure you understand it. Does anyone have questions?"

A member of the audience asked what the application fee is.

Interim City Administrator Singh responded, "It is \$300, and the application is online. If several owners whose properties are contiguous want to apply together at the same time, it would be \$300 total for those that apply. If an individual applies alone it would be \$300."

Chairperson Best stated, "Our first item of business is to hold a public hearing. The public hearing is to review the City of Orangeburg 2016-2026 Comprehensive Plan for the purpose of reviewing and possible amendment and change of the Future Land Use map and plan as follows:

The Pecanway Terrace area is currently depicted as Suburban Residential land use on "Map 7.4: Future Land Use map" (page 7.45), be changed to identify the land use as Urban Residential on the Future Land Use map. The Pecanway Terrace area is defined as an area bounded by Saint Matthews Road to the west, Chestnut Street to the north, the rear boundary of non-residential lots facing the northeastern side of Boulevard Street, and Fairfield Street to the east.

Add "B-1" and "B-3" zoning categories to the Urban Residential Land Use Classification under the Alternative Zoning column of Table 7.6; Plan Compliance Index (page 7.49).

Is there anyone here to speak at the public hearing? If it is, please come forward and state your name and address for the record."

Ms. Phyllis Pelzer addressed the Commission, "I am connected to this process in many ways. I am a licensed professional engineer, a real estate agent, I live in the neighborhood, and I am part of the people who applied so I have a vested interest in what is going on. What you are doing tonight is deciding whether our neighborhood should be labeled Urban versus Suburban. I believe that would be the appropriate thing for you to do for us to be able to then have the position to apply for our lots to be B-1. Our lots are the three lots adjacent to the credit union going back towards Chestnut Street. You can take these pictures and look at them if you like. The pictures depict that area by Walgreens where they put the strip mall. It is similarly situated to our properties. It is just as deep and wide as about an acre and a half. If you put ours together you have about the same size. It is right there adjacent to the corner just like they are adjacent to Walgreens on that corner. It is similarly situated; it is similar in mixed-use. There are houses behind it. All the pictures show the houses and how it is incorporated into the neighborhood without any negative impact. I feel like our properties are similarly situated. In front of our property is Grand South Bank and the

mall. I feel like whatever the justification was to put that strip mall on that end it is a similar situation. I feel like it should be used to justify what we are doing, but we do know that it is a process. So we are asking that you reclassify it as Urban as well as allow the B-1 and B-3 to be the alternative zoning category so that when people do apply now you have a basis to be able to make the decision to move them to B-1 if that makes sense for the property. We just ask, respectfully, that you guys allow us to make that change. Honestly, that area is in an area called Stilton. Stilton was labeled as Urban, but our little neighborhood from Chestnut, Ellis, Boulevard, and Saint Matthews Road somehow got labeled Suburban. I just thought it was a mistake. Hopefully, you guys will see that if the other side where Popeyes is and all of that is Urban, clearly, where we are is more Urban. In my professional opinion, Suburban is more like Columbia Road, Belleville Road, Rosewood, or Eastwood Acres or something like that. That is Suburban to me, not where we are. We are in the midst of a lot of activity, traffic, businesses, and it just makes sense. I am sorry to take so long.”

Mr. Harry Floyd of 1070 Saint Matthews Road addressed the Commission, he stated, “I had a question. The property behind me on the Future Land Use map was not colored in as Commercial. There is a commercial business right behind me, McGregor Tax Service. On the old Future Land Use map, it looks like Residential. So, when I look out my back window, I am looking at a line of cars at McGregor Tax Service, an office park to the South, and right next door, I am looking at the teller machine for the bank. There is B-1 Commercial all around me for the last forty-nine years and that is what I think we should do as well. That has been my main point. The only other thing that I wanted to mention was back on Dantzler Street on the last Comprehensive Plan there was colored in Commercial small lots on the first four lots coming up the west side of Dantzler Street from Boulevard Street and on the east side they had three lots for Commercial small lots. If that could be Commercial small lots, I don’t know why we could not.”

Mr. Fred Cecchini of 1111 Chestnut Street addressed the Commission, he stated, “My theory about this whole thing is it is commercial all around us. We want to talk about Residential. Now, there is a four-lane highway, St. Matthews Road, four-lane highway on Chestnut. All the subdivisions I go through I don’t see four-lane highways. Why is it four lanes? It must be due to the traffic for them to spend the money to make it four lanes. For that kind of traffic, it is just not safe to have around Residential people. This is why we need to convert this area to Business 1. This is what it is. It is all around us. It is choking us is what it comes down to and this is where the opportunity needs to move forward. It needs to be Business 1. Try to pull out there one day and see how long it takes you even with four lanes. It’s just not Residential. The City is growing, and it needs to be Commercial. Thank you.”

Chairperson Best asked, “Is there anyone else to speak at the public hearing? Is there anyone else to speak at the public hearing? Is there anyone else to speak at the public hearing?”

REGULAR MEETING

Chairperson Best opened the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Jenkins and seconded by Commissioner Wolfe to approve the September 24, 2020 minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. John Ford of Robert and Company addressed the Commission, he stated, "This study was an opportunity to look in more detail at the Comprehensive Plan because some zoning cases that were specifically applied for had some conflicts that the City felt were important to take a relook at the Comprehensive Plan. When the plan was prepared, we looked at this area and it was a close call as to whether we retained it as Suburban Residential, which was a new category, or we looked at it as Urban Residential. There are other portions of the City which we did identify as being appropriate for Urban Residential. No comments were made during the public process during the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan in 2017. However, it was raised as a conundrum when we were looking at it from the standpoint as planners. As we got into the detail of looking at the specific sites, the three initial and then the three more we were asked to look at, we initially looked at Saint Matthews Road and a study area of three properties. As already discussed, Mr. Floyd's property was one of those. As a part of that, we also determined that the land use of Suburban Residential did not work in that situation. We looked at recommending that those three parcels, at least from the bank to Stuart be considered as Urban Residential with the possibility of looking at Commercial as an alternative.

There are some concerns about just changing directly to Commercial within the plan because of accessibility although it was very good in terms of access to the site. There may have been some concerns about getting people on and off Saint Matthews Road, so we identified that as being Urban Residential. We looked at the remainder of Saint Matthews Road and said we may want to leave it as Suburban Residential in our initial analysis. We got a little further into the study and we looked at South Boulevard Street, we looked at Columbia Road and properties in those areas which were identified as Urban Residential. We decided not to go to Commercial on those.

Then we were asked to look at three more sites around Chestnut Street. To tell you the truth, the decisions on Chestnut Street at Saint Matthews Road changed the paradigm. It is showing there is commercial intensity starting to develop off that intersection, which we felt needed to have some opportunities. For the purpose of the planning study and the Comprehensive Plan, we recommended that we change to Urban Residential for two of those sites. One of those sites was already identified as Urban Residential; however, there is a great opportunity in looking at those sites to review one of the questions that came out of the Comprehensive Plan. If you look at Table 7.5, I believe it is, you will see in the plan that Urban Residential identifies B-1 and B-3 as potentially compatible zoning districts. However, in Table 7.6, the City of Orangeburg Compliance Plan, which is what is heavily used by legal review. B-1 and B-3 were not being shown. We felt it was incumbent upon us as part of this study to add B-1 and B-3, especially under conditional application, as being appropriate for an Alternative Zoning District. That is the gist of the study. We felt like you are in a period of transition. There were some concerns, initially, in terms of trying to protect Pecanway Terrace neighborhood. I think the biggest concern is going to be, not necessarily on the properties along Saint Matthews Road or along Chestnut Street. I think it is the internal properties along Dantzler Street and other roads in the interior. If there is rezoning that occurs along the bank borders, it still needs to protect the residential land uses on the adjacent interior streets. That may continue to change. One of the reasons that we adopted Urban Residential as an alternative is that it should provide a better opportunity for mixed use. There are instances where commercial use can be an asset to the community as long as it is design appropriate. I hope that answers some of those questions."

A member of the audience asked, "Are you talking about just the pieces of this you are wanting to make B-1 or the whole thing?"

Mr. Ford replied, "I am not doing B-1, that's the zoning process. We are recommending the Land Use Plan, the Comprehensive Plan allow B-1 and B-3 in the Urban Residential category and the entire Pecanway Terrace area be changed from Suburban Residential to Urban Residential, at least all the Suburban Residential areas. Mr. Floyd mentioned a property or two that are commercial. They were just along the edges. They did not come across appropriately in the map."

Interim City Administrator Singh stated, "There are two things that must be done. The area has to be changed from Suburban Residential to Urban Residential first. If it is changed, that gives the vehicle to be able to change and those three applications are ready to go. Anyone else in that area would still have to apply to have their property changed. Does everyone understand?"

Mr. Floyd asked, "So the whole neighborhood would change from Suburban to Urban?"

Mr. Ford stated, "Yes, the whole neighborhood would change from Suburban to Urban. Then the appropriate property owners who feel like they want to go to business zoning have the opportunity to pursue it without it being considered totally inappropriate within the plan. It opens the plan up. It's not only this area, it opens the plan throughout the City in terms of where a property, if a property is appropriate to be a commercial use and with the appropriate buffers around it then you can proceed as a City to look at that as appropriate zoning. This stems from the Enabling Act of the State of South Carolina because we want to ensure that it does not create an issue that will stymie the development of the City."

Mr. Floyd, "Yeah, those pictures that Phyllis handed in were to show how they did it in the other area."

Mr. Ford stated, "In a Suburban area, you usually separate uses by space, how far away is it? Within an Urban Residential area, you can separate by design. That's where this comes from."

Interim City Administrator Singh stated, "Mr. Ford and the Planning Commission know this, but I want to make sure the public knows this too. Historically, the City Council's strongest feelings have been to always protect Single Family Residential throughout the City. Mr. Ford who goes many places throughout the Southeast can tell you that most cities do the same thing. Now that trend is changing. Traditionally, we talked about planning in cities, it has typically always been to defend Single Family Residential. So that may help this process make sense for you."

Chairperson Best stated, "We are going to move on to Old Business. Review the City of Orangeburg 2016-2026 Comprehensive Plan for the purpose of reviewing and possible amendment and change of the Future Land Use map and plan as follows: The Pecanway Terrace area currently depicted as Suburban Residential land use on "Map 7.4: Future Land Use map" (page 7.45), be changed to identify the land use as Urban Residential on the Future Land Use map. The Pecanway

Terrace area is defined as an area bounded by Saint Matthews Road to the west, Chestnut Street to the north, the rear boundary of non-residential lots facing the northeastern side of Boulevard Street, and Fairfield Street to the east. Add "B-1" and "B-3" zoning categories to the Urban Residential Land Use Classification under the Alternative Zoning column of Table 7.6; Plan Compliance Index (page 7.49)."

A motion was made by Commissioner Jenkins and seconded by Commissioner Wolfe to approve the request as read by Chairperson Best. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairperson Best stated, "Under new business, we have election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. We will do these separately. The floor is now open for nominations for Chair."

Commissioner Jenkins nominated Guy Best. Commissioner Wolfe seconded the motion. There was no other discussion. The vote was unanimous.

Chairperson Best stated, "The floor is open for Vice Chairperson."

Chairperson Best nominated Commissioner Jenkins. Commissioner Wolfe seconded the motion. There was no other discussion. The vote was unanimous.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jenkins and seconded by Commissioner Wolfe to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



John D. Singh
Interim City Administrator