

**SIMPSONVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
April 11, 2024 6:30 P.M.  
City Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Giordano, Ed Brashier, Loren Duwel, Lawrence Witul, Ray Shannon, and Chairperson Allen Gillespie

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jordan Johnson

**CITY STAFF/LEADERS PRESENT:** Jon Derby, Charlene Carter

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING REMARKS**

(Chairperson) Mr. Gillespie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Derby held roll call

**RULES AND PROCEDURES**

Chairman Gillespie announced agenda item AXZ-2024-01-Annexation and Re-zone project has been removed from agenda per Director Derby. Chair Gillespie advised all items on the agenda will have a staff report, Commission discussion and allowed public comment for each item. Chair Gillespie stated he would be recusing himself from agenda item Z-2024-03 due to his land ownership in close proximity to agenda item location. He requested a Vice Chair be nominated to conduct the meeting due to the absence of Vice Chair Jordan. Commissioner Duwel made a motion to appoint Commissioner Brashier as Vice Chair and Commissioner Witul seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

**March 5, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Shannon made a motion to approve the March 5, 2024 meeting minutes.

Mr. Duwel seconded the motion. The motion to approve the March 5, 2024 meeting minutes passed by a unanimous vote, 6-0.

**Z-2024-03 PROPOSED REZONING OF PROPERTY LOCATED ON WEST GEORGIA RD**

Mr. Derby introduced item # Z-2024-03 location 1214, 1212, 27305 W. Geogia Rd. The current zoning for the location is B-G, Business General and the requested zoning of ID, Innovative Development. Mr. Derby stated the applicant intends to develop a mix-use product with commercial retail shops and a 3-story storage facility.

Mr. Rivers Stillwell, development attorney, spoke about the request to re-zone location. Mr. Chad Fisher, engineering project manager presented site plan and answered questions from Commission.

The following questions and discussions were asked by the commission: Mr. Shannon requested an overview of projected traffic conditions and discussion of SCDOT road changes. Mr. Witul asked for specifics types and square footage of goods to be housed at location. Mr. Witul also asked if fire department had reviewed plans and confirmed sprinklers in building. Mr. Giordano asked about the amazon component and what that included for the commercial space.

Mr. Chad Fisher responded to questions and explained SCDOT had reviewed traffic in the area and possible turn lane opportunity. The 3-story building will include 2 elevators, climate controlled areas, and each of the 3 floors has different sizes of storage. The site will be gated and locked, hours of operation and on-site staffing, and developer/owner plans a long-term commitment to this business. The on-site plan also includes fire department access and lighting/security cameras.

No public comment for this item.

Mr. Derby closed comments with mentioning to the commission the city will benefit by the development bringing sewer to the location.

Mr. Giordano made the motion to recommend rezoning and Mr. Shannon made the second. Vice Chair Brashier requested a motion and the motion carried 5-0. Recusal-Chair Gillespie

### **SP-2024-03 BURDETTE CENTRAL ID MASTER SITE PLAN-PHASE II**

Mr. Derby introduced item SP-2024-03 Phase II of Burdette Central Master Site Plan and provided details of concept plan. Planning staff had minimal changes requested of developer during plan review. The site plan for phase II aligns with prior plans submitted for the ID zoning.

Mr. Chris Price was there to speak and answer questions on behalf of Blue Water Civil Design.

Mr. Brashier asked questions regarding number of parking spaces and how far parking will extend on Hedge Street. Mr. Duwel asked for a review of how parking requirements are calculated. Mr. Derby responded, explaining parking, building uses and additional spaces of on-street parking surrounding the site. The intended use of proposed buildings as office and retail space was also discussed. Mr. Giordano commented on positive improvements to pedestrian friendly sidewalks, parking, and connections to downtown area.

No public comment for this item.

Mr. Witul made a motion for conditional approval of the Master Site Plan. Mr. Shannon seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

### **SP-2024-04 COTTAGE GREEN ID MASTER SITE PLAN**

Mr. Derby introduced item SP-2024-04 Cottage Green Master Site Plan and provided overview of concept plan.

Mr. Frank Warren of HMF Americana addressed and explained project. Mr. Warren explained the number of planned homes has been reduced from 320 to 294. The sewer easement has shifted from prior plans which affects the tree preservation and buffer plans. He addressed the commercial parcels and intent of egress from Merrydale Farms Drive and Harrison Bridge Road. The discussion of timeframe for new SCDOT light was also addressed. Mr. Brashier asked if there would be an island on Harrison Bridge Road and turning lanes. Mr. Duwel asked for confirmation of right in and right out turn lanes egress on Harrison Bridge Road.

Public comments:

Mr. Harrison Musslewhite  
119 Two Gait Lane  
Simpsonville, SC

Recommends a vote of no to the project due to concerns of traffic, additional 600 cars from Cottages and causing death traps on our roads.

Mrs. Angie Fisher  
207 Easton Court  
Simpsonville, SC

Discussed approval of developments is locking her into her neighborhood, irresponsible development, traffic issues at old folks home and you, the planning commission have changed my life.

Rod Polk  
Cottages at Harrison Bridge  
Simpsonville, SC

Asked if he understood that the SCDOT light addition will be triggered by residential development or commercial parcel development. He commented there needs to be turn lane at traffic light and 5 lanes of travel. He also stated the landscaping needs to be backed off the road further due to its future growth. He does not want approved, but if it is he wants connections to other parcels for walking and golf carts.

Mr. Duwel asked questions regarding SCDOT encroachment permit. Did City Council ask developer to install traffic light? No, City Council did not require it, but SCDOT did. The discussion did include light at Merrydale, however SCDOT makes the decision when and what warrants time and addition of light. Mr. Derby responded yes to Mr. Duwel question if the encroachment permit will address site triangles.

Mr. Giordano confirmed the turn lanes with Mr. Derby.

Chairman Gillespie asked for any further comments. Mr. Derby requested a conditional approval of the Master Site plan and stated the plan mimics the approval Council made in December.

Mr. Brashier made a motion to recommend conditional approval and Mr. Witul made the second. Motion carried 5 yes, 1 no (Mr. Shannon)

**SP-2024-05 HARRISON PARK MAJOR CHANGE**

Mr. Derby introduced SP-2024-05 Major Change due to building site plan square footage. Mr. Derby addressed the maximum square feet allowed per Innovative Development-ID is 15,000 square feet building and the design is 15,600 square feet building.

Mr. Barry Starling (333 Kendrall RD Taylors, SC) is here to speak about the site, designs and operations. Mr. Starling addressed capacity as 240-250 children, operational hours as 6:30am-6:00 pm and peak travel times as 6:45am-9am & 4:30 pm-6:00 pm. Also, extra parking was included in the plan and stacking at seen at schools and entrances would not happen.

Mr. Brashier asked if there is carpooling to cut down on traffic? Mr. Starling responded some, but most children are brought by parents. The school will not have drop off, but instead require parents to park and bring child inside. He explains this process will prevent most traffic back-up typically seen at schools and

daycares. Mr. Witul requested a tentative construction timeline for the project. Mr. Starling stated closing is scheduled for the second week of May and hopes to open Spring of 2025.

Mr. Shannon asked about traffic study outcomes and were sidewalks looked at as part of the project? Mr. Starling responded that SCDOT has evaluated the traffic study, and he has just received the report. He also stated sidewalks were not looked at for the project. Mr. Derby also responded that presently connections are being looked at for public access and connectability. Projects that were initially approved and did not include sidewalks cannot be made further in the process to go back and put sidewalks in.

Mr. Duwel asked if SCDOT would review traffic numbers and Mr. Derby stated yes. Mr. Shannon also asked if there is full access to Hipps Road.

During the initial proposal of plans sidewalks were not considered. We are emphasizing interconnectivity now in concept plans and statement of intent site plans.

Mr. Witul asked about the SCDOT meeting and City participation. Mr. Derby responded the City does attend quarterly meeting with SCDOT. He also stated we must rely on SCDOT to determine additions and improvements. Mr. Derby confirmed there are 3 means of egress from location.

Public comments:

Mr. Harry Fisher  
207 Easton Court  
Simpsonville, SC

Mr. Fisher asked at what point is City Council going to put in new streets?

Mr. Jon White  
100 Whiffletree Dr

Is it the City Council or SCDOT going to fix/add turn lanes? He stated there is not enough parking and there are complaints of accidents.

Mrs. Angie Fisher  
207 Easton Court  
Simpsonville, SC

She commented that she is a former teacher and all the development is putting children in danger. She emphasized more traffic and more accidents happening in the area of Hipps and Harrison Bridge Roads.

Rod Polk  
Cottages at Harrison Bridge  
Simpsonville, SC

Commented on 2 lane roads and needs to be 3 lanes, wants sidewalks, wants to see other methods of transportation like paths for walking and golf carts.

Chairman Gillespie called for Mr. Derby to add anything further on behalf of planning department. Mr. Derby stated the "use" is correct for this project and mentioned 2 daycares closing in the city. The question was asked by commission if this would have come back to planning commission if square footage had been below the maximum requirements, Mr. Derby stated it would not.

Mr. Duwel commented this project is meeting Comprehensive plan requirements. Mr. Shannon stated he wished there were sidewalks for location. Mr. Witul wanted to know if County has any input on project.

Mr. Derby stated the main involvement of County with City projects is storm drains and land disturbance. Mr. Brashier stated he appreciated the public input and County traffic is an issue in the City as well.

Chairman Gillespie called for a motion. Mr. Giordano made the motion to recommend and allow major change. Mr. Duwel made the second. The vote was unanimous, 6-0.

**TX-2024-01 MISC REFINEMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE (proposed text amendment)**

Chairman Gillespie asked Mr. Derby to explain the last item on the agenda. Mr. Derby stated the responsibilities of the planning commission are items such as text amendments, master plans, rezoning etc.

Councilmember O'Rear is requesting a text amendment to the ordinance to reflect a simple majority vote by City Council to override a recommendation/decision by Planning Commission. The current ordinance reads there must be a super majority, 5 of 7 votes to override.

Chairman Gillespie asked for public comments.

Public comment:

Mr. Harrison Musslewhite  
119 Two Gait Lane  
Simpsonville, SC  
Supports Chad O'Rear's ordinance to allow for a simple majority to override the planning commission recommendation

Michael Bolton  
228 Scotts Bluff Dr  
Simpsonville, SC  
Supports Chad O'Rear's ordinance because of urban sprawl impact on Simpsonville, infrastructure, new development, and 2 lane roads.

Mr. Harry Fisher  
207 Easton Court  
Simpsonville, SC  
Responded to the eluded comment he heard saying county or non-city residents don't live in city but are increasing traffic. He stated that he pays and spends a lot of money here in the city.

Rod Folk  
Cottages at Harrison Bridge  
Simpsonville, SC  
Asked for a count of how many in the room were born here-3. He stated everyone had to come from somewhere. He wants access or to know how to see traffic studies. Mr. Brashier commented they are very long. Chairman Gillespie reminded Mr. Polk of comments limited to item for discussion.

Glenn Hurst  
104 Holing Trace Circle  
Simpsonville, SC  
Supports text amendment

Mr. Witul asked Mr. Derby the following questions regarding voting.

How many members of Council? Response 7

How many members make quorum? 4

Mr. Derby stated the quorum a simple majority would be 3 to 1. If there was a recusal, a decision could be made at a 2 to 1.

Mr. Brashier commented he had been on PC since 1973 and help write some ordinances. He believes the relationship between Council and Commissioners works well. He could count on one hand how many times City Council did not vote as Planning Commission recommended. He stated he was not sure why Chad O'Rear thinks the ordinance needs reforming, but maybe somethings do. He stated Chad may be misinformed on things from months ago. Mr. Brashier stated he will not support changing the ordinance.

Mr. Duwel stated that the commission members are here for the Citizens and represent the City. He went on to say we are applying the rules and regulations City Council set forth. I have an issue with this. We are here for all of you and for the right reason.

Chairman Gillespie stated he agreed with what other members have said. Mr. Giordano stated a simple majority would be odd.

Chairman Gillespie called for a motion. Mr. Brashier made the motion as a negative motion/reject proposal and Mr. Duwel made the second. Mr. Derby requested clarification that this motion was for a denial. Mr. Brashier affirmed the motion was for a recommendation of a denial. The vote was unanimous, 6-0 to reject text amendment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Gillespie asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brashier made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Witul seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed by a unanimous vote, 6-0.

**Commission adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**