

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Augusta Planning Board meeting held on February 9, 2016

Board members present: Justin Poirier, Alison Nichols, Delaine Nye, Steve Dumont, Tom Connors, Bill McKenna, Pete Pare, Heather Pouliot

Board members absent: Corey Vose

City staff present: Matt Nazar, Lionel Cayer, Betsy Poulin.

Guests present: Lee Allen, Troy McDonald, Bob Gage, Lisa Hodgkins, Donald Rodrigue, Therese Rodrigue, Jim Spellman

Public Hearing: Major Development and Conditional Use. Application of Franklin Land Associates, LLC to build a 9,100 SF Dollar General Store with associated parking, stormwater management and roadway improvements on a vacant lot. Assessor's Map 57, Lot 9. Located at 296 Eastern Avenue in the Planned Development District (PD).

Matt Nazar gave an overview of this agenda item.

Alison: On the images provided, there is a non-cutoff fixture on the building.

Matt: The wall mounted fixtures proposed are full-cutoff.

Lionel Cayer gave an overview of the off-site improvements proposed on Eastern Avenue. The PM peak hour trip rate is 65 vehicles per hour, triggering review of left turning movements. A left turn lane is proposed. A four foot shoulder is maintained on the project site frontage, with 11 foot through lanes and an 11 foot turn lane.

Delaine: Will there be impact on vehicles traveling east on Eastern Avenue at the intersection with Cony Road? Especially for a left hand turn onto Cony Road.

Lionel: The proposal should not have an impact on that type of movement.

Alison: Currently there is a delineated pavement triangle to help with the left hand turn movement. What is proposed?

Lionel: MDOT likes stamped pavement and the City likes striped islands. MDOT could have the final say in how the left turn area is delineated. Traffic could drive over whatever is proposed so vehicles entering from the other side of the street are not restricted.

Matt: Currently there is concrete delineation at the intersection with Cony. A proposed plan is in the back of the Board's packet.

Applicant Presentation:

Lee Allen of NCS:

- The security lighting will not be part of the proposal.
- A revised landscaping plan will be submitted shortly, done by a Landscape Architect.

- All improvements in Eastern Avenue are proposed on the south side of the road.
- An existing trail from the apartment complex to the rear has been re-routed around the building to keep a connection with Eastern Avenue.

Delaine: What changes are proposed for the landscaping?

Lee: A Landscape Architect will review the plan and provide a stamped version.

Bob Gage of GBT Realty out of Tennessee:

- Submitted plans are prototypical. Photos are consistent with what they try to build.
- Lisbon store images are something they are willing to work with the Board for revisions.

Public to Speak in Favor of the Application:

Donald Roderigue: He owns the land and it has been for sale for a while. He got signatures from the neighborhood residents to get the sewer extended to the neighborhood from Cony Road. The Dollar General will be a plus for the City and plus for employment. The store sells everything and will be useful in this area. Turning at Cony Road won't be affected that much.

Lisa Hodgkins: It is true there aren't many things like this proposal in the area. Many people in the area have to travel across town to get small items. Everyone has to go through downtown traffic to get what they want. This will be beneficial to individuals in the area.

Public to Speak Against the Application:

Jim Spellman: Lives in the neighborhood on the corner of Windsor Avenue. He has concerns about trying to get out onto Route 17. It is difficult to turn left onto Cony Road. He has concerns about how the proposal fits with neighborhood compatibility. The proposal will not help with walkability. It seems there are plenty of other vacant properties in the area which could be used.

Public to Speak Neither for nor Against the Application:

None.

Bob Gage of GBT Realty:

- Dollar General has purchased existing buildings and renovated them, but GBT Realty only builds new buildings. A different developer would do renovations. Dollar General chose to do new construction in this area.
- Modeled after a turn of the century General Store. You can get milk, eggs, shoelaces, etc. All brand name items, economically priced. The majority of products are from the US.
- Restocked once a week, typically Monday mornings from the main distribution center.
- Other smaller deliveries, like bread will be more frequent.
- Will start with 10 employees, can increase to 15 employees
- GBT Realty has built close to 500 stores in the last 6 years.

Delaine: The building is extremely utilitarian. Similar buildings in the area were constructed before design review was in place. The proposal is out of character with what Augusta is looking for, particularly as a gateway to the City. Could a pitched roof be added?

Alison: Reading from the Comprehensive Plan, Eastern Avenue is a gateway and should receive special attention, particularly with better site design and landscaping.

Bob Gage: GBT Realty is willing to modify the building design, but a pitched roof would not be possible because it would add \$140,000 to the project and kill it. Other modifications to the façade design are possible. The building currently costs about \$300,000, with site improvements additional.

Alison: Any comments about the HVAC noise?

Bob Gage: HVAC units on the roof could impact the apartments behind the building; screening could be added to deflect the noise up and out.

Matt: The Lisbon store has parapets along the most visible sides of the building. It wouldn't be a pitched roof, but would have other visual interest.

Bob Gage: CVS on the traffic circle and Rite Aid on Hospital Street are flat roof buildings, with variations on the façade. Changes to the proposal could use some of these elements.

Peter: The building is set back far from the road. The current design of the façade is not acceptable. If the design is made in character with the neighborhood, he could support a proposal.

Bob Gage: Revisions can be made. He can bring back multiple options.

Justin: Can the Board provide some guidance to the applicant for revisions?

Delaine: Would like to see a pitched roof. The Lisbon store still looks like a warehouse with a necklace and a skirt on, would like to see something more substantial.

Alison: Gables on the front of CVS are nice, likes the brick, less metal at the top of the building. Feels the use is good for the neighborhood.

Matt: The Board can meet on February 23rd without re-advertisement.

Delaine: Makes a motion to table the Dollar General Retail Store review to February 23rd at 7:00.

Bill: Seconded.

Vote: 7:0. All in Favor. Motion passes.

Minutes

January 12, 2016 Minutes

Motion by Delaine to approve the minutes with noted corrections.

Second: Alison.

Vote: 5:0:2. Heather and Pete abstained, not at meeting. Motion Passed.

Adjourn

Motion by Delaine to adjourn at 8:04 pm.

Second: Alison.

Further Discussion. None.

Vote: 7:0. All in Favor. Motion Passed.

Minutes by Betsy Poulin, Assistant Planner.