



**Forest Acres Planning Commission
Minutes
April 16, 2024
City Council Chambers
6:00 PM**

I. Call to order

- 1. Determination of a Quorum**
- 2. Statement of Notification**

A quorum was determined with the presence of Ellis Creel, Ralph Bailey, Marshall Minton, Stephen Powell, Nola Armstrong. Jack Cantey and Lyle Lee were absent.

Mr. Ellis Creel, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:09 PM and confirmed the quorum.

Shaun Greenwood, City Administrator, was also present.

II. Approval of Minutes

- 1. March 19, 2024** – Mr. Creel noted that the February minutes have not been reviewed and approved. Ms. Armstrong made a motion to approve the March 19 minutes; Ms. Minton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. New Business

1. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 6431 Briarwood Road (TMS 14115-09-05) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. **Mr. Powell made a motion to approve. Ms. Minton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

2. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 6810 Longbrook Road (TMS 16905-04-10) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. Mr. Greenwood noted that we currently serve the street, so staff has no concerns about annexation. **Ms. Minton made a motion to approve. Ms. Armstrong seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 4714 Norwood Road (TMS 14111-04-04) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. Mr. Greenwood noted that we currently serve the street, so staff has no concerns about annexation. **Mr. Powell made a motion to approve. Ms. Armstrong seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 6824 Valleybrook Road (TMS 14112-05-01) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood noted that the current use is as a duplex. He further noted that R-2 and R-3 allow duplexes, but there is no existing contiguous R-2 or R-3. So, it would have to come in as an R-1 with non-conforming use. So, if the property ever redeveloped it would have to be redeveloped as a single family residence. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. Mr. Greenwood noted that we currently serve the street, so there is no immediate concerns with service.

Ms. Minton asked what the conditions would be that would result in our not allowing it to be a non-conforming use any more. Mr. Greenwood noted that there's a non-conformity chapter in our ordinance that lays out such conditions. Improvements beyond a certain threshold (50% or assessed value) would render the non-conformity no longer acceptable, as would the property sitting vacant for a year.

Mr. Bailey noted that he is opposed to this request and would need to see the property owners address issues with the area before annexing into Forest Acres.

Ms. Armstrong made a motion to defer to allow time for the City Administrator to discuss this with the property owner to make sure they understand the implications of coming in as non-conforming. Ms. Minton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 4507 Mosshill Road (TMS 16803-11-07) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. Mr. Greenwood noted that we just began serving the street with a recent annexation and this is an area for targeted annexation. **Mr. Powell made a motion to approve. Ms. Minton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 6540 Haley Drive (TMS 14112-08-05) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. Mr. Greenwood noted that we currently serve the street, so staff has no concerns about annexation. **Mr. Powell made a motion to approve. Ms. Minton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Map Amendment—A request to annex and rezone properties at 4608 Brenthaven Road (TMS 14116-01-09) and to establish R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning.

Mr. Creel introduced the item. Mr. Greenwood identified this property on the zoning map and contiguity was demonstrated. Mr. Greenwood noted that we currently serve the street, so staff has no concerns about annexation. **Ms. Armstrong made a motion to approve. Mr. Bailey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. Old Business

1. Zoning Ordinance – Presentation of Modules 4, 5, & 6 of the Zoning Ordinance Update

Mr. Creel introduced the topic and turned the floor over to White & Smith Planning & Law Group representatives, Justin Wallace, Sean Scoopmire (virtual), and Kelly Cousino. Mr. Wallace reviewed White & Smith's progress so far on facilitating the re-write of the Forest Acres zoning code, noting that they've taken their initial guidance from public comment and administrative input. He noted that they previously presented on Module 1 (zoning ordinance and land development regulations, which will be consolidated into a unified development ordinance) to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Wallace discussed overarching changes that they're making to the zoning ordinance (e.g., consolidation with land development regulations, alignment with certain Richland County code items, etc.).

Mr. Wallace then began discussing Module 4: Site & Development standards, beginning with proposed neighborhood infill development standards. Mr. Creel noted his opposition to codified development standards. Mr. Wallace discussed proposals regarding:

1. Screening, walls, and lighting in neighborhood transitional areas. Mr. Greenwood noted that we currently have standards, but that these will be tighter and more easily interpreted.
2. Vehicular Access in commercial areas, minimizing curb cuts and encouraging interparcel access. Encourages such access through lessening parking and landscaping reductions through administrative waiver process.
3. Parking, increased flexibility through shared parking, use change considerations, and alternative parking plans. (diagrams making provision for diagonal and parallel parking included)
4. Parking ratios, change in calculation methodology (based more on gross floor area (GFA) rather than other metrics like seats in restaurants).
5. Bicycle parking requirements for commercial and multi-family uses.
6. Landscape buffering in right-of-ways, consistent with Forest Drive corridor study, including a table assigning different buffering types for different zoning districts
7. New ways of making provision for (and calculating) landscaping within a parking lot, in an attempt to prevent large unbroken parking lots.

Sean Scoopmire discussed the proposals White & Smith has developed around signs and trees. He noted that the revisions to the code around signs were significant, with an emphasis on making the code easier to administer while ensuring content neutrality given the current legal environment. The proposed code will establish different standards for signs based on zoning districts, and include easy-to-use tables. This will also implement content neutral terms (e.g., “incidental” or “temporary” signs) in the code rather than content based terms (e.g., directional or political signs). This also gets away from use of “shopping center” and favors “multi-tenant development” which moves the language to content neutral (“shopping” can imply content).

One of the items that came up in comment from constituents was frustration with the 20-ft setback for freestanding signs, so the proposed code will reduce that to 5 feet.

There’s discussion of and provision for canopy signs, with a prohibition on roof signs. He also noted that they added a mural allowance in the Covenant Crossing district, with an eye toward creating an arts district. (Shaun Greenwood noted that City Council may reconsider creating this provision.) Mr. Scoopmire also discussed digital signs and the time between the changing of messages.

Mr. Greenwood asked and Mr. Scoopmire confirmed that we moved from a static limitation on sign size to a ratio methodology (1 sq ft of sign for every linear foot of wall, subject to a maximum in each district).

Mr Scoopmire then discussed the proposed changes to the tree protection standards. There is a reconfiguration of what constitutes a significant tree (increasing the size that defines significant and eliminating pine trees from the definition of protected tree), but an increase in the percentage of significant trees that must be replaced (from 50% to 100%) when removed. Mr. Creel noted his concern with the idea of taking pines out of protected status and he noted that he thinks that 12” at dbh is significant. Mr. Scoopmire noted that it would be a fairly simple change to alter these provisions. He also noted that certain trees were added to the “Trees to Avoid” list.

Kelly Cousino noted that the proposed ordinance aligns the City’s water quality buffer standards with those of Richland County. This also changes some procedural issues surrounding water quality buffer waivers, from administrative approval to approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Cousino then discussed provisions for open space for public use in major redevelopment initiatives, including group developments. It also shows different types of open space (e.g. greenway, neighborhood park, etc.) and dictates the minimum size of each. They modernized language around fee-in-lieu of land reservation if the developer can’t meet the standards. She then discussed low impact development incentives for developers (e.g., rain garden) designed to assist with stormwater management.

Ms. Cousino noted that all of the proposed changes are redlined for easy review and she noted the next steps (Module 3, which will include Administrative Procedures and Definitions).

V. Adjournment

Ms. Minton made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Armstrong seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andy Smith, Asst. City Administrator/Finance Director
(Administrative support of Planning Commission)