Statesboro Planning Commission
Minutes
December 11, 2007

The December 11, 2007 meeting of the Statesboro Planning Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Wyatt Johnson at 5:20 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Other Planning Commission members present were Ray Hendley, John Karrh, and Lewis Stewart. City staff members present were Jim Shaw, Planning Director, and Bruce Waldron, City Planner.

Mr. Karrh moved to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2007 meeting as presented. Mr. Stewart seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

The first item of new business was Application RZ 07-12-01; Maxwell-Reddick & Associates requests rezoning from CR (Commercial Retail) to R-4 (High Density Residential) for a proposed 66 unit townhouse development located at the northeast corner of Ed Moore Court and Wendwood Drive.

Mr. Shaw provided the Commission a summary of the staff report. He stated the property is in the center of a mix of zoning districts and land uses. There is a small area of single-family residences with R-15 zoning to the southeast. The property to the west is zoned CR and includes a self-storage business. The property to the northeast is zoned LI and includes Howard Lumber Company. He stated the concept plan submitted with the application shows a single entrance off Ed Moore Court and a circular drive through the property. The 66 units would be constructed in six groups around the drive. The office building on the property would be demolished. He stated the proposed R-4 zoning would provide a transition between the single-family uses to the south and the commercial and industrial uses to the north, east, and west. He stated staff recommends approval of the rezoning.

Joey Maxwell of Maxwell-Reddick and Associates was present to represent the applicant.

No one spoke against the request.

Mr. Hendley made a motion to approve the rezoning. Mr. Stewart seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The second item of new business was Application RZ 07-12-02; Maxwell Reddick & Associates requests rezoning of 3.21 acres of an overall 17.2 acre site from R-4 (High Density Residential) to CR (Commercial Retail) for a proposed retail development located at the west end of Hill Pond Lane, west of Bermuda Run.

Mr. Shaw provided the Commission a copy of a letter from Joey Maxwell of Maxwell-Reddick and Associates withdrawing this request. He stated the application will be resubmitted at a later date when an end user is found.

The third item of new business was Application V 07-12-03; Maxwell Reddick & Associates requests variances to increase the maximum density from 12 units per acre to 17 units per acre and to increase the maximum building height from 35 feet to 55 feet for a proposed apartment development on property zoned R-4 (High Density Residential) located at the west end of Hill Pond Lane, west of Bermuda Run.

Mr. Shaw provided the Commission a summary of the staff report. He stated the overall 17.2 acre property is zoned R-4 and is vacant. The applicant is proposing a 192-unit apartment complex on 13.99 acres of the property. There would be nine buildings with a total of 64 two-bedroom units and 128 three-bedroom units. The site has access from Hill Pond Lane and through the commercial development on Brampton Avenue that includes Video Warehouse. He stated the density variance request to allow 17 units per acre is similar to others that have been approved in the past. Previously, the City Council has determined that density variances were justified if the overall bedroom count was less than the 48 per acre allowed by the ordinance, based on 12 units per acre and 4 bedrooms per unit. In this case, the bedroom density is proposed to be 36.6 per acre.

Mr. Shaw stated the applicant is also requesting a height variance. The limit in the R-4 district is 35 feet or 3 stories. This request is for 55 feet to accommodate 4 stories. The buildings in the Copper Beach development to the west average approximately 31.5 feet. The Market District Center was recently given a height variance to allow its buildings to be 36 feet tall. The greatest height variance allowed in the past few years was to allow two of the Tillman Park buildings a height of 48 feet. The increased height means the buildings will have a smaller footprint, which translates into additional landscaped areas in a development that is primarily buildings and parking. The closest any building comes to a property line is 40 feet and in most instances the buildings are at least 80 feet from any property line. That additional setback reduces the impact on adjacent properties. He stated that to further reduce the impact of the taller buildings, additional landscaping within the parking lot and along the property lines should be provided. Sidewalks have been provided through the interior of the site to connect buildings and parking areas. Those same sidewalks should be extended to the perimeter of the site to allow safe pedestrian travel to nearby businesses.

Joey Maxwell of Maxwell-Reddick and Associates was present to represent the applicant. He provided a revised site plan and explained the access point through the Video Warehouse property had been removed and replaced with a new access directly to Brampton Avenue. There were minor changes to the location of some of the buildings, but not to the number or type of buildings.

No one spoke against the request.

Mr. Karrh made a motion to approve the variance conditioned upon the extension of the sidewalks to the perimeter of the property. Mr. Hendley seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

There being no other business for the Commission’s consideration, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m.