**Draft Minutes**

City of Senoia

Planning Commission

Work Session

April 12, 2023

Commissioners Present: J. Wood, T. Nolan, C. Williams, A. Garrett, and J. Krabel

J. Wood called meeting to order at 6 and asked staff to begin the presentation of the new business on the agenda.

C. Hindman and D. Johnson together presented each new business item as follows:

**49 Horseshoe Bend – Rezoning from R40 to RH**

D. Johnson detailed the request to rezone from R40 to RH due to the size and layout of the lot the setbacks in RH will allow the applicant to build a house more in keeping with the adjacent new homes that have been built in recent years.

J. Wood asked how deep the lot is, will 20 foot setback be appropriate? C. Williams noted it looked about as deep as the other two lots recently rezoned that had a 20 foot rear. T. Nolan asked what the side setback would be on this lot due to the road frontage. D. Johnson confirmed there would not be a side setback in this case only front and rear. C. Hindman confirmed the applicant is aware of the 20 foot rear setback.

**354 Seavy Street – Rezoning from R40 to RH**

D. Johnson detailed the request to rezone from R40 and RH and to create a second lot. Staff has confirmed that the first lot and second lot will both meet the setbacks and minimum lot sizes. Issues that staff have discovered in review process are the rear setback should be a minimum to protect the adjacent owner and the lot will require a storm line relocation plan, water tap and sewer tap plans prior to building permit.

J. Wood asked what are we addressing this Tuesday the plat or just rezoning. D. Johnson confirmed only rezoning at this next meeting the plat will come the following month.

T. Nolan asked staff to verify the setbacks on the lot since Seavy is a major road versus a minor road to verify the front is 15’ and that the rear is still zero for Seavy. Staff confirmed they will double check this prior to the meeting.

T. Nolan asked staff to explain what is required for the storm line relocation and if this is serving just this lot. Staff confirmed this storm line relocation is required to ensure the future owner will not be building the house on the storm line it must be relocated to continue to manage the drainage as it does today.

A. Garrett asked if changing the zoning from R40 to RH will affect the historic requirements for the house to be built. Staff confirmed that the lot lies within the historic overlay district regardless of the zoning and would have to comply with historic overlay requirements no matter the zoning.

**122 Rock House Road – Rezoning from OI to GC**

D. Johnson detailed the request to rezone the tract from OI to GC for a multi-story building meeting the architectural standards of the Hwy 16 downtown corridor overlay. D. Johnson then went over the conceptual site plan and detailed why the building is more central to the tract due to existing utilities along HWY 16 including utilities outside the right of the way and the 12-inch water main. D. Johnson went over site plan elements including the 8 foot sidewalk along both frontages, one entrance off Rock House road and the proposed underground detention/low impact development measures for storm water. D. Johnson also detailed the general circulation of traffic around the building as proposed will be one way.

J. Wood pointed out this layout does not meet the overlay as the building is required to be up against the sidewalk closer to the street. D. Johnson said the applicant will elaborate on the reason for the building being moved more central to the lot.

D. Johnson pointed out the four sided architecture with an all brick and glass. The front and site elevations were presented as the rear elevations are still being modified to be similar to the front elevations.

A. Garrett asked of this was a liquor store and if that is why the requested zoning is GC. C. Hindman confirmed yes. Staff and Commissioners briefly discussed liquor storm permitting procedures and C. Hindman confirmed that this lot does meet all the separation requirements.

T. Nolan asked how does this site comply with the City’s connectivity plans and goals in the comp plan and where is the connectivity to downtown other than sidewalks? T. Nolan asked if there are plans for future connectivity to the tract to the east. D. Johnson confirmed yes the applicant has agreed to show a future connection to the east but it is not on this site plan but has been discussed and agreed to. T. Nolan also asked for bike racks and other elements from overlay. D. Johnson pointed out they are providing golf cart parking on the site plan. C. Hindman pointed out that the second entrance to this site is not likely to be approved by GADOT and that future connectivity to the eastern side will be the most likely place for a second entrance.

J. Wood asked about the power lines how far are they along Hwy 16 and how will this impact other tracts on this corridor? Staff will look to see how many tracts are impacted by the utilities before the next Planning Commission and Mayor and Council meetings. D. Johnson pointed out that the utilities will be very costly to relocate.

Mary P. – asked about the buffers required from the tree ordinance as this road is considered a collector road. J. Wood asked if this overlay (Hwy 16 Downtown Overlay) and the tree ordinnace have the same buffers. D. Johnson pointed out that the overlay and the tree ordinance Mary is referring to have different and conflicting buffers.

Applicant representative, Neal Davis, spoke on the details of the project and presented an updated site plan showing the interconnectivity to the tract to the east. He also detailed the GA DOT approvals that have already been determined for the entrance, he also pointed out the golf cart parking and charging stations on the plan. He detailed the underground storm water plans and to use low impact development tools that encourage infiltration into landscape areas which can be very attractive. He pointed out that the applicant has been through several renditions with the building closer to Hwy 16 and found it will be difficult with the utilities. He said they realize they are first and will be setting the precedence and the applicant is willing to work with the City to achieve the goals of the city for walkability but he did point out that the speed on Hwy 16 is high and it is very uncomfortable today being so close to the road with the sidewalk or trail. He said they do want to be a partner with the City to work this out.

Neal noted that traffic circulation is also a concern for moving the building forward. It could be a little closer but not as close as the ordinance encourages. Also the one access along Rock House makes it difficult to circulate the site for customers and services such as traffic trucks. Also the site plan does allow for a 30 foot buffer along the residential lots which is more than the ordinance requires. C. Williams asked if they have been to GADOT and Neal confirmed yes, they have received approval to have only one access and it must be 100 feet from the intersection. Neal ensured the final driveway alignment will be designed to be safe for all including pedestrians, golf carts and vehicles.

J. Wood, stated that when the overlay was being established the primary concept was walkability on the front of the buildings and for the buildings to be close to the road with a sidewalk streetscape and with vehicle traffic around behind the building with interconnection between uses along Hwy 16. C. Williams said the closer the building is to the road the more it will encourage the speeds to slow down.

Neal said the rear elevation is being worked on and will be very similar to the front and they have changed the stair cases to the offices above. C. Williams asked would the vestibule allow the meter bases to be hidden inside. Neal said no they will be on the left hand side but they will be hidden with landscaping and paint as much as possible. He confirmed the rear will look almost identical to the front. D. Johnson asked will the applicant have the rear elevations for next week’s meeting and Neal confirmed they will.

A Garrett asked about the buffers question that Mary P. raised, D. Johnson pointed out that the ordinance to use would be the more restrictive one and they do conflict so the City will need to decide which elements will be enforced on the landscaping and buffers in the Hwy 16 Downtown corridor overlay.

D. Johnson asked if the board wanted to see the building closer to the right of way line and will it help the board to know how much the transmission lines cost to relocate? J. Wood asked staff to determine how many tracts are impacted down along the corridor. C. Williams said it would be helpful to know how close the building can be to the power lines and what that will look like. D. Johnson reminded the commissioners too that the lines will impact the building location and the landscaping as well.

J. Wood asked Tracy to look at the connectivity to downtown in light of the LCI. C. Hindman pointed out that this parcel and the next two parcels going east and the future 141 South will all be developed and provide the sidewalks that will connect and possibly cross at Pylant in the future. After 141 on Hwy 16 the connectivity toward downtown stops due to the stream and existing conditions.

T. Nolan asked about the multiuse width, it is minimum of 10 feet but the preferred is 12 feet. D. Johnson pointed out the sidewalk width is 8 feet per the overlay ordinance. T. Nolan is seeking a multiuse plan connection not just sidewalks. T. Nolan went over the City’s connectivity plan and the LCI study that is currently going on for the applicant and visitors.

Jay the applicant and owner addressed the commission and detailed her vision for the project is to look like the historic downtown and to provide an experience not just a liquor store. The hope is to have an education component about the spirit business including tastings and other nice things that are not offered in this area. Her vision is to have things like bourbon and wine tastings and a cigar room if possible. The goal is to make this similar to the Kedron Village liquor store a very classy store with very high end top shelf bourbon and to work with breweries in the state of GA to show case those selections as well. She plans to offer an experience not just a sale. She is open to suggestions to meet the City’s goals and wants to be setting the example for this corridor. T. Nolan suggested that staff set up meetings with a couple council members and planning commission with staff to continue to work out the issues. Jay said she would appreciate that and to keep the project moving forward. Staff will set up the meetings as soon as possible. J. Wood agreed that would be a good plan to move forward.

Mary P. also pointed out that if the landscape buffers were strictly enforced it would prevent development and that a compromise was always known on Hwy 16.

**Stallings Farms North and South – Preliminary Plat**

D. Johnson presented the preliminary plat and detailed the history of the site and previous approvals and why they are back today for a preliminary plat approval. The original plan approved in R40-C did not calculate the green space correctly as it relates to the overhead utility lines. The new plat is in compliance with the ordinance on the greenspace but they did proposed 8 lots that front along Stallings road and this is consistent to with recent development in the area. They are preserving the open space as conservation area. The detention pond on the south side is located in the greenspace but it does not count in the greenspace. They are under the minimum density of R40-C with 0.8 units/acre for a total of 32 lots and they are providing more open space than required to provide. As far as staff is concerned this meets the requirements of R40-C and should be approved allowing the applicant to move forward with updated construction plans.

C. Williams asked if the lots on Stallings would have driveways on Stallings road and staff confirmed. There is sidewalks internal on the south side and multiuse path on the south side from the entrance back to the property line going east. The north side lots do not have sidewalk as currently shown.

J. Wood asked if they could build garages that do face the road in that zoning or do they have to be side entry. C. Hindman pointed out there is plenty of room for side entry with the lot size. Staff will check but as far as they know there is no requirement that garages must be side entry in this zoning class.

A Garrett asked if the detention pond is necessary to be so close to the road. D. Johnson said it would be based on existing grade and topography.

T. Brady asked about the access to this open space and D. Johnson confirmed the ordinance puts emphasis on the conversation of area not so much access and hence the reason why this area is labeled as conservation open space. There were discussions previously about trading density from this site to 141. C. Williams asked for clarification on the density trade and was this the same developer but it was confirmed from James N. that the ownership is slightly different between the two properties which is what makes the density transfer not an option. C. Hindman pointed out that the lots fronting Stallings is consistent with other development nearby on Stallings road. C. Hindman pointed out that the property is very large and there is lots of open space and green space provided it just does not all count due to the overhead lines. The previous layout included a road that has been removed and 12 lots have been lost to bring the greenspace into compliance.

T. Nolan pointed out that the City desires sidewalk everywhere and the north side should have sidewalks. T. Nolan asked about the west side adjacent tract and could it possibly be annexed into the City. T. Nolan wants to see the path extend to the west line either along the road or through the site. All discussed options of how this connection could work through the open space and possibly from the cul-de-sac a trail connection from the northern cul-de-sac toward western line and Stallings Road. C. Hindman confirmed that plans have been evaluated for the trail to continue to downtown from this site to Mathews street. James. N. said the property to the west will not likely be developed as it is already existing homes and the transmission line also crosses the road. D. Johnson mentioned maybe we can add a note to this prelim plat to evaluate possible trail connections routes for future path locations and it can be in the open space. C. Hindman asked James N. if the owners would consider a path or sidewalk along the north site in front of the lots. James N. said yes along the frontage of the lots on the north side.

T. Nolan reiterated that the comp plan is to be considered for connectivity and the preference is for side entry garages and historic architecture. It was discussed that If the commission and City asks for all these things then the applicant may decide to go back with first layout and additional lots and ask for a density bonus. T. Nolan said he is mostly concerned that the future connectivity to the west needs to be evaluated fully to make sure we don’t end up with a missing section of connectivity.

Mary P. also pointed out that Stallings Road is also one of the collector roads that needs to have the increased width buffers along the road. She would like to see the buffers adhered to in this case for the residential development to help mitigate the noise and light pollution.

J. Wood asked again to clarify where sidewalks and multiuse paths are proposed now on the plan and asked T. Nolan to restate the requested additions? C Hindman confirmed also the south side elevation change on the shoulder is prohibitive to install a multiuse path due to the grade. The houses from the north side would be able to cross the road and use the multiuse path on the south side. C. Hindman also reminded them that the speed limit is 25 mph and at 35 mph the golf carts can use the road.

A Garrett asked about the buffer issue Mary P. raised and D. Johnson verified that the buffers on this plat do meet the R40-C requirements not necessarily the tree ordinance buffers also some trees will need to be trimmed at the entrance to meet sight distance and safety for drivers.

T. Nolan again stated the multiuse trail needs to be installed now if possible versus an easement set aside for future. He said it would be ok to use the internal subdivision road as part of the connectivity from east to west with a trail that leaves the northern cul-de-sac headed to the western property line. With sidewalks on north side along the lots then those homeowners could cross over to the multiuse trail. D. Johnson cautioned against requiring a crossing or encouraging a crossing at this location in the curve without an engineering study or signal as this would be a mid-block crossing and might not be a safe crossing without a signal. A signal of this type is usually expensive and it could be excessive to ask the developer to put a crossing in that curve. The drivers entering the city limits are driving much faster than 25 mph and a crossing there would need signs, lights, signals etc. to give the drivers warning. When you violate driver expectation is how an accident will occur. Staff does not disagree that a sidewalk should be there but only cautioning against requiring a crossing without further engineering study.

C. Williams reiterated that the City needs to be clear about what they are asking. Sidewalks along the north side frontage lots, a possible multiuse connection between two lots in the cul-de-sac and a note that in the future the city of Senoia could add multiuse paths in the open spaces.

James N. said he is planning to take this advice to the owner and see if they can offer as much as possible and hopefully obtain a recommendation for approval with conditions at the Tuesday meeting.

**Waffle House – Construction Plans**

D. Johnson presented the plans for approval for final permitting of the waffle house. The commissioners were very happy to see the landscape islands and bike rack and the pond layout. D. Johnson did confirm that the monument sign is approved but the wall sign is not approved due to size and being internally lit. T. Brady asked if the applicant will be seeking a variance and staff said they were not sure if they will seek a variance or make modifications.

J. Wood asked what is the commission approving at this time. D. Johnson confirmed it is approval for the final plans before permitting since they are in the overlay. C. Williams asked did we look at all questions from the previous meeting and staff confirmed yes and that all variances are approved.

C. Hindman discussed the changes to the sidewalk for major safety reasons. The sidewalk connectivity was moved to an alternate route through the Bank of Ozarks property and away from the roadside to achieve a safer connection. D. Johnson also discussed how the road is currently crowned and draining and it would require the installation of curb and gutter along the entire frontage in order to install a sidewalk. Commissioners wanted to confirm that this sidewalk would have a required public easement recorded and staff confirmed yes the owner will be required to record the easement.

T. Brady asked about the golf cart parking, bike racks and the 5% open space requirement in the ordinance. The only items noted that need to be clarified is the 5% open space and the applicant can achieve this by adding outdoor seating to the open space such as tables or benches on the left side near the bike racks and away from the dumpster and the City is requesting that the owner agree to convert some of the regular parking spaces to golf cart spaces at such time that a multiuse trail is accessible to this site. At this time the City does not know when the multiuse path will be there but it is in the works and it will be there in the future.

Staff pointed out the applicant is proposing the thin brick veneer which meets the ordinance as currently written.

Having no further business or announcements, J. Wood adjourned the meeting.