

**Town of Smithfield
Planning Board Minutes
Thursday, September 2nd, 2021
Town Hall
Council Chambers
6:00 PM**

Members Present:

Chairman Stephen Upton
Debbie Howard
Doris Wallace
Sloan Stevens
Alisa Bizzell
Ashley Spain
Michael Johnson

Members Absent:

Vice Chairman Mark Lane

Staff Present:

Mark Helmer, Senior Planner
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent:

Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Stephen Upton suggested that the board vote to amend the agenda and hear RZ-21-02 first and move CZ-21-06 to the second item.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from August 5, 2021

Michael Johnson made a motion, seconded by Debbie Howard to approve the minutes as written.
Unanimously approved

NEW BUSINESS:

CZ-21-07 Whitley Townes: J & J Flowers Finch Inc. is requesting a conditional rezoning request of 11.61-acres of land from the B-3 (Business) zoning district to B-3 CZ (Highway Entranceway Business-Conditional Zoning) district with a master plan for a planned development consisting of 70 attached single family townhomes. The properties considered for rezoning are located on the northeast side of West Market Street approximately 300 feet southeast of its intersection with Britt Street. The properties are further identified as Johnston County Tax ID# 15084001 and a portion of 15084003A.

Mark Helmer said J & J Flowers Finch Inc. is requesting a conditional rezoning request of 11.61 acres of land from B-3 to B-3 CZ with a master plan for a planned development consisting of 70 attached single-family townhomes. The property is located on the north side of the West Market Street approximately 1,056 feet west of its intersection with Wilson's Mills Road and west of the former Heilig-Meyers store. Water and sewer will be provided by Town of Smithfield and electric service will be provided by Duke Energy.

The applicant is proposing a master plan consisting of 70 attached single-family townhomes fronting on private parking facilities and accessed by a public cul-de-sac. With the approval of the rezoning, the

Planning Board/Town Council is required to adopt a statement describing whether the action is consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan and other applicable adopted plans and that the action is reasonable and in the public interest. Planning Staff considers the action to be consistent and reasonable:

- **Consistency with the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan** – the comprehensive plan supports flexibility in zoning regulations and the master plan complies with the medium density guidance.
- **Consistency with the Unified Development Code** – the property will be developed in conformance with the UDO conditional zoning provisions.
- **Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses** - The property considered for rezoning will be compatible with the surrounding land uses.

Planning Staff recommends approval of CZ-21-07 with the following conditions:

1. That the future preliminary plat and development plans for the subdivision be in accordance with the approved Master Plan, B-3 Zoning District, and UDO regulations with the with the following deviations:

Item	B-3 CZ
Street	30' wide back-to-back.
Parking Lot Curbing	Valley curbs are proposed in the parking lots.
Recreational Amenities	26,000 sq. ft. open space with no amenities.

2. That the trash/recycling rollouts be stored within garages or rear yards.
3. That the parking lot entrances be constructed in accordance with the town’s standard driveway.
4. That a landscape architect designed landscape and buffer plan be submitted with the preliminary plat in accordance with the sketch plan and staff comments, including
 - a. landscaping should extend up and down the berm to provide a solid screen of rear yards from West Market Street
 - b. Rear yards be screened with fences and landscaping and that there be at least 4 shrubs and one ornamental tree planted in front of each unit.
 - c. A minimum one overstory street tree be planted along every 50’ of public right-of-way, within 15’ of the edge of the right-of-way.
 - d. That the 25’ perimeter buffer planting be comprised of existing vegetation and landscaping/ and or fencing to ensure at least 60% opacity.

5. That an architectural plan be submitted for the townhouses with a mix of siding types such as lap board and batten, shakes and brick and that end units be comprised of windows and other architectural details.
6. That an easement be executed for the shared use of the driveway off of West Market Street.
7. That a master sign plan be submitted with the preliminary plat in accordance with the rezoning master plan.
8. That decorative street lights and signs be incorporated into the development and submitted with the preliminary plat.

Mark Hyde from 109 Britt Street asked what Britt Street would look like once the proposed development is completed?

Mark Helmer said the majority of the trees that butt up to Mr. Hyde's property will need to come down. However, they will be replaced with a 25-foot buffer consisting of new landscaping and fresh new trees.

Jordan Finch of 102 Isle of Hope Circle, Clayton, NC 27527 came forward. He is one of the developers from J & J Flowers Finch, Inc. He stated it was his personal preference to leave the woods as close to 15' of the edge of the right-a-way as possible.

Pam Lampe of 415 N. Second Street asked Mark Helmer to show her how much of a buffer 25' foot would be and also what a 50' buffer on the front would look like.

Mark Helmer stated that buffers are more critical between commercial and residential lots.

Debbie Howard stated that residential to residential lots don't require a buffer.

Mark Helmer said correct, they do not.

Pam Lampe said her recommendation would be for more landscape buffering and she doesn't like the ideas of a driveway being put between a commercial lot into a residential lot. She doesn't think it would be ideal to cut between the two lots.

Doris Wallace made a motion to approve the zoning map amendment, CZ-21-07, with all conditions of approval, finding the rezoning consistent with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and other adopted plans, and that the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest; seconded by Debbie Howard. Unanimously approved

ZA-21-05 Town of Smithfield: The Town of Smithfield is experiencing unprecedented residential growth and many new subdivisions. The Town Council has become concerned about the character of proposed developments and wants to ensure there is adequate landscaping with new development. The Council has directed staff to look into updating the Town's Landscape

Ordinance to include landscape standards for residential development. Currently, there are no standards for single family residential development.

Mark Helmer stated that the Town of Smithfield currently didn't have any landscaping requirements. If a commercial property were to move in next door to a residential property the responsibility to provide a buffer would fall onto the commercial property. The current ordinance reads if there are two like zonings and a 10-foot buffer is required; one developer is to plant a 5-foot buffer and the other developer would plant the other 5-foot buffer for a total of 10 feet like non-residential uses.

Mr. Helmer recommended that the board consider the addition of buffer yards around these planned developments or straight subdivisions by code. He suggested requiring landscaping per unit. That was done previously tonight, we required one tree and four shrubs per unit.

Debbie Howard asked if Mr. Helmer meant one tree in the front yard and none in the backyard.

Mr. Helmer said he discourages the board from over regulating the landscaping plan. Owners may have plans for their yards such as adding swimming pools, a pool house or a driveway that wraps around to their back yard. He thinks one tree between the house and the street would be sufficient.

Ashley Spain said any trees that you plant along the sidewalk and the curb will present a problem. He's looking down the road with root problems.

Mark Helmer said the Town has a tree preservation ordinance. It requires all flowering trees to be preserved or replaced.

Stephen Upton suggested the board review the material given to them concerning landscaping. We prepared to provide some feedback to Planning Staff.

Mark Helmer said Planning Staff will develop revised landscape regulations and bring forward to the board for review.

Pam Lampe stated that she was glad the town has directed the Planning Board to look at adding landscape regulations for single-family homes to the UDO. She would like to see the existing regulations for multi-family homes, commercial and industrial tightened. Mrs. Lampe would like to expand the use of landscape buffers, building setbacks and berms. Projects don't need to be put next to the road without appropriate landscaping, berms and barriers. If high density residential projects are placed beside a low-density single-family home, we need to make sure that berms, setbacks, fencing and buffers are sufficient. Smithfield has a blank canvas as far as growth. Mrs. Lampe would like to challenge the members of the Planning Board and Planning Staff to develop and require new landscape ordinances in the UDO that will make new development projects both good economically and aesthetically pleasing. We want Smithfield to have a more unified and vibrant plans to move us forward into the future. Mrs. Lampe also

wanted to point out towns such as Burlington, New Bern and Beaufort would be good references when seeking a new landscaping and buffer requirements.

Sloan Stevens asked how our commercial code stands up to others, landscaping wise?

Mark Helmer said it was more robust in previous versions of our ordinance. It has become watered down over the years, particularly the buffers. We have reduced the number of shrubs on commercial properties by 50% but didn't increase the number of trees required.

Emma Gemmell of 207 Hancock Street pointed out that Glen Lake Apartments off of Hwy 210 did a very nice job when creating their berms and developing their landscaping.

Debbie Howard made a recommendation for the Planning Department to proceed on with updating the landscaping ordinance has been presented, seconded by Ashley Spain. Unanimously approved.

Doris Wallace made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alisa Bizzell. Unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None

Adjournment

Being no further business, Doris Wallace made a motion seconded by Alisa Bizzell to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved

Respectfully Submitted,



Julie Edmonds
Administrative Support Specialist