

**Town of Smithfield
Planning Board Minutes
Thursday, April 6th, 2023
Town Hall Council Chambers
6:00 PM**

Members Present:

Chairman Mark Lane
Alisa Bizzell
Doris Wallace
Wiley Narron
Ashley Spain

Members Absent:

Vice-Chairman Debbie Howard
Bryan Stanley

Staff Present:

Mark Helmer, Senior Planner
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Support Specialist

Staff Absent:

Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Doris Wallace made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Alisa Bizzell. Unanimously approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for March 2nd, 2023

Doris Wallace made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Alisa Bizzell. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

ZA-23-03 Town of Smithfield: The applicant is requesting an amendment to Unified Development Ordinances, Article 10, Part 1, Section 10.95, Airport Height Hazard Overlay (AHH) to help insure safe movement of aircraft near the Johnston County Regional Airport.

Mark Helmer stated that staff is requesting approval of an update to the Airport Height Hazard Overlay (AHH) regulations in Article 10, Section 10.95 and associated definitions in Appendix A. Planning Director Stephen Wensman participated in a stakeholder group to assist and guide the update to the Johnston County Regional Airport Master Plan. As part of this update, the consultants for the airport identified needed updates to local regulations per the FAA model ordinance. The updates to Article 10, Section 10.95 and associated definitions in Appendix A reflect the recommended changes.

He explained the amendment provides a clearer description and guidance on the various airport zones as it pertains to dimensional characteristics, height and lighting requirements. The amendment also updates certain terms found within the AHH Overlay ordinance.

The zoning text amendment as proposed is 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.

Planning Staff recommends approval of the zoning text amendment, ZA-23-03, with a statement declaring the request is consistent with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and that the request is reasonable and in the public interest.

Mark Lane asked what zone the proposed hotel would be in at the Blueline development?
Mark Helmer said zone D, 150 Ft.

Doris Wallace moved to recommend approval of zoning text amendment, ZA-23-03, finding it 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 Ashley Spain. Unanimously approved.

ZA-23-04 Town of Smithfield: The applicant is requesting an amendment to the Town of Smithfield Unified Development Ordinances, Article 6, Section 6.6, Tables of Permitted Uses and Activities that will remove government offices as a permitted use in the light industrial and heavy industrial zoning districts.

Mark Helmer said In the process of recodifying the UDO for publication online with Municode, staff noticed that government offices are a permitted use in the Light and Heavy Industrial zoning districts. Given the importance of industrial land to the tax base, staff is recommending the government offices be stricken as a permitted use.

Staff finds the zoning text amendment as proposed consistency with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and other adopted plans, and that the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest.

Planning Staff recommends the Planning Board recommend approval of the zoning text amendment ZA-23-04 with a statement declaring the request consistent with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and that the request is reasonable and in the public interest.

Doris moved to recommend approval of zoning text amendment, ZA-23-04, amending Article 6, Section 6.6 Table of Uses and Activities to strike “government offices” from the Light and Heavy Industrial Districts finding the amendment 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 Ashley Spain. Unanimously approved.

ZA-23-05 Town of Smithfield: The applicant is requesting an amendment to the Town of Smithfield Unified Development Ordinances, Article 10, Section 10.1 that will restrict the severe pruning of regulated landscaping.

Mark Helmer stated that Staff is requesting the Planning Board recommend approval of an ordinance amendment to Article 10, Section 10.11. Maintenance to prohibit severe pruning of

required landscape trees. As part of the Planning Board's quarterly review of the UDO they discussed and recommended that Staff update the landscape maintenance section of the UDO to address severe pruning of required trees. Pollarding/ topping crepe myrtles has been a common form of pruning for this species, however, this past season, the practice has spread to other required landscape trees that has negatively impacted required street yards throughout the Town.

The Town's landscape ordinance has requirements for understory, canopy trees and shrubs. Canopy trees are intended to get large and provide shade in the landscape. The landscape ordinance requires 2" caliper, 12–14-foot-high trees that will exceed 35 feet at maturity.

Understory trees are typically for ornamental purposes to be planted at about 8-10 feet in height and to remain under 35 feet at maturity. The purpose of the ordinance is to have a mix of shade trees and ornamental trees on a development site. By topping or pollarding, landscapers are attempting to keep the trees small, defeating the purpose of the ordinance. In many cases the topped trees are kept at a 5-6' height, the same height as a mature shrub. The proposed ordinance would prohibit severe pruning such as topping and pollarding such that the trees can grow with a natural form.

Alisa Bizzell moved to recommend approval of zoning text amendment, ZA-23-05, amending Article 10, Section 10.11., finding the amendment 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 Doris Wallace. Unanimously approved

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Julie Edmonds
Administrative Support Specialist