

MINUTES

A meeting of the Planning Advisory Commission was held Wednesday, November 20, 2024, in the Council Chambers of the Citizens Service Center.

Commissioners Present:

Chairperson:

Vice Chairperson: Larry Derby

Commissioners: Brad Baker, Rick Stallings, Lakshmi Karthik, Gloria Thomas, Patrick Steed,

Absent: Ralph King, Xavier McCaskey, Michael Ernst

Staff Members: Morgan Shepard, Principal Planner
John Renfroe, Assistant Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. All in attendance stood for the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag. He explained the rezoning process to the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairperson asked for a motion on the minutes. Chairperson made a motion to submit the minutes as accepted. No changes or additions by other commissioners. Motion carries, minutes accepted.

ZONING CASES:

- 1. EXCP-10-24-2223:** A request for special exception use located at 2913 Reese Road. Current zoning is Single Family Residential – 2 (SFR2). The proposed use is a Daycare, Type III. Brandon Isome is the applicant. This property is located in Council District 1 (Hickey).

Brandon Isome has submitted an application for the Special Exception Use cited above. The property is located in a Single Family Residential – 2 (SFR2) zoning district. The site for the proposed Daycare Type III located at 2913 Reese Road. The purpose of the Special Exception Use is to allow for the operation of a Daycare Type III located within the Single Family Residential – 2 (SFR2) zoning district:

- (1) Access:** Is or will the type of street providing access to the use be adequate to serve the proposed special exception use?

Reese Road will provide adequate free flow movement.

- (2) Traffic and Pedestrian Safety :** Is or will access into and out of the property be

adequate to provide for traffic and pedestrian safety, the anticipated volume of the traffic flow, and access by emergency vehicles?

Access into and out of the property in question will provide for adequate traffic and pedestrian safety and emergency access.

(3) Adequacy of Public Facilities: Are or will public facilities such as school, water, or sewer utilities and police and fire protection be adequate to serve the special exception use?

Services such as water, utilities, police, and fire protection are adequate.

(4) Protection from Adverse Affects: Are or will refuse, service, parking and loading areas on the property be located or screened to protect other properties in the area from such adverse effects as noise, light, glare or odor?

The property is surrounded by Single Family Residential – 2 (SFR2). Noise, light, flare and odor should be limited due to the nature of the business.

(5) Hours of Operation: Will the hours and manner of operation of the special exception use have no adverse effects on other properties in the area?

The hours of operation for this use will not have an adverse impact on the neighboring properties in the area.

(6) Compatibility: Will the height, size, or location of the buildings or other structures on the property be compatible with the height, size, character, or location of buildings or other structures on neighboring properties?

The church and daycare facility are existing buildings.

Council District: District 1 (Hickey)

Fifty-Five (55) property owners within 300 feet of the property have been notified by mail of the proposed Special Exception Use. The Planning Department received no calls and/or emails regarding the rezoning.

Approval: 0 Responses

Opposition: 0 Responses

Additional Information: N/A

Brandon Isome confirmed intent to operate daycare in existing separate building, previously used for this purpose.

Commissioner clarified building is adjacent to, not part of, the church

Commissioner Baker moved to approve the proposed rezoning due to consistency with the surrounding land uses and Commissioner McCaskey seconded; Case is approved (6-0 Physical / 0-0 Virtual).

- 2. REZN-10-24-2210:** A request to rezone 111.56 acres of land located at 5201 Macon Road. Current zoning is Single Family Residential – 2 (SFR2). Proposed zoning is Single Family Residential – 3 (SFR3) with conditions and Residential Multifamily – 1 (RMF1). The proposed use is Single and Multifamily Residential Development. Wizer Home Builders, LLC is the applicant. This property is located in Council District 1 (Hickey).

Applicant:	Wizer Home Builders, LLC
Owner:	Calhoun Investments, LLC
Location:	5201 Macon Road
Parcel:	098-001-002
Acreage:	111.56 Acres
Current Zoning Classification:	Single Family Residential - 2
Proposed Zoning Classification:	Single Family Residential – 3 (100.88 ac) & Residential Multifamily – 1 (10.68 ac)
Current Use of Property:	Vacant/Undeveloped
Proposed Use of Property:	Single and Multi Family Residential
General Land Use:	Inconsistent Planning Area E
Current Land Use Designation:	Vacant/Undeveloped
Future Land Use Designation:	Single Family Residential
Compatible with Existing Land-Uses:	No
Environmental Impacts:	The property does not lie within the floodway and floodplain area. The developer will need an approved drainage plan prior to issuance of a Site Development permit, if a permit is required.
City Services:	Property is served by all city services.
Traffic Impact:	Traffic Impact Study not submitted. A preliminary traffic study projects a trip generation of approximately 2,960 total net new daily trips (1,480 in and 1,480 out), 211 AM peak hour trips,

		and 284 PM peak hour trips, once fully developed.
Traffic Engineering:		This site shall meet the Codes and regulations of the Columbus Consolidated Government for residential usage.
School Impact:		The School District does not have any concerns; they have anticipated development in this area and have been preparing for additional growth.
Buffer Requirement:		<p>The site shall include a Category B buffer along all property lines bordered by the SFR2 zoning district. The 3 options under Category B are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 15 feet with a certain amount of canopy trees, under story trees, and shrubs / ornamental grasses per 100 linear feet. 2) 10 feet with a certain amount of shrubs / ornamental grasses per 100 linear feet and a wood fence or masonry wall. 3) 20 feet undisturbed natural buffer.
Fort Moore's Recommendation:		N/A
DRI Recommendation:		N/A
Surrounding Zoning:	North South East West	Single Family Residential – 2 (SFR1) Single Family Residential – 3 (SFR1) Residential Multifamily - 2 (RMF2) Single Family Residential – 1 (SFR1)
Attitude of Property Owners:		<p>One Hundred and Twenty (120) property owners within 300 feet of the subject properties were notified of the rezoning request. The Planning Department received 49 calls and/or emails regarding the rezoning.</p> <p>Approval 0 Responses Opposition 849 Responses (Petition with 800 names opposed was submitted)</p>
Additional Information:		84 townhomes and 253 single family homes proposed. A total of 337 residential units.

Conditions Proposed by Applicant:

1. Oversize boundary lots - 10,000 sq. ft. minimum area for all lots touching immediately adjacent to existing SFR2 lots along Sears Road, Brentwood Drive, Saddle Ridge Drive and Wilmington Drive (herein referred to as Boundary Lots). Shown as yellow lots on revised site concept plan.

2. Boundary fencing - If an existing fence is not already in place, developer will install a fence along the common boundary with the Boundary Lots noted in #1.

3. Planted screening - A planted screen will be installed along the common boundary of Boundary Lots in #1 above. Screen to be tall growth Holly plants or similar evergreen plants planted five (5) feet on center.

4. Identifying subdivision signs - An identifying subdivision sign shall be installed at each entrance to the 5201 Macon Road development with the subdivision name. **Home Owners Association** - A Home Owners Association will be in effect for the subdivision.

5. Modified front setback - A 20 feet front setback will be in effect for all lots.

6. Fifty (50) foot right of way dimension - A fifty (50) foot right of way within the subdivision shall be approved for road A, B and C assuming not more than 30 lots are served from any one of these roads.

7. Modified Stream Buffer - The state of Georgia twenty-five (25) foot stream buffer will be the default standard for stream buffering along the stream corridor from point X to point Y as shown on the revised site concept plan.

8. Flag lot variance approval - Flag lots are approved as a condition of the rezoning approval are noted on the concept plan as supplemental pages Var B, Var C and Var D (entry locations noted in RED).

9. Macon setback variance - A variance shall be approved for a setback along Macon road consistent with the SFR3 zoning setback plus future widening requirements per UDO 7.3.5 F.

10. New Macon Road intersection entry point -

For the new subdivision entry off Macon Road, the new street requirement shall be at the discretion of the Georgia Department of Transportation per UDO 7.9.6, the approved entry shall satisfy the street separation requirement of UDO 7.3.

Conditions Proposed by Staff:

1. Remove Condition number 7 and 8.
2. Revise Condition number 9 to state Access onto a State Road will require compliance with both City's and GDOT requirements.
3. Include streets stubbed out to the tracts east and north for future development.

- **Applicant Presentation (Dave Erickson, representing Wiser Homes Builders LLC):**

- Proposed rezoning aligns with Columbus's need for housing per the Comprehensive Plan.
- Emphasized 91% single-family (SFR3), 9% townhomes (RMF1) as a transition to adjacent RMF2.
- Previous Planned Unit Development (PUD) proposal (~85% rentals) was withdrawn after PAC rejection.
- Engaged HOA leaders, boundary owners, and hosted community meeting to address concerns.
- Conditions (e.g., oversized lots, fencing, screening) exceed requirements to blend with neighborhoods.
- Development timeline: 10-12 years (~25-30 houses/year).
- Traffic designed to funnel to Macon Road, minimizing impact on Sears Road.
- Detention ponds to manage stormwater, potentially reducing downstream flooding.
- Mandatory HOA to maintain common areas; sidewalks included.
- Townhomes designed for sale, with two-car garages, minimal traffic impact.
- Argued rezoning aligns with Comprehensive Plan's housing and land use goals, citing mixed zoning examples citywide.

- **Public Comments (Opposition):**

- **Wes Ezel (Sears Woods, 4526 Sears Road):** Represented Sears Woods; opposed due to character mismatch, lack of fit, traffic concerns, and chronic flooding. Cited petition and community resistance.
- **Brian Newman (Windtree, 5351 Pine Needle Drive):** Opposed due to traffic through Windtree and school overcrowding; questioned emergency vehicle access to private drive and townhomes.
- **George Morey (Shanadoa Forest, 4831 Yeoman Drive):** Highlighted cut-through traffic to Reese Road as a safety hazard; opposed increased traffic from SFR3 and townhomes.
- **Gregory Foster (Chattam Woods, 5446 Chattam Woods Court):** Cited study showing rental properties reduce single-family home values; suspected hidden PUD agenda with adjacent RMF2.
- **Tony Morrow (Willow Bend Run, 3616 Willow Bend Run):** Opposed due to flooding exacerbated by Macon Road widening and poor drainage maintenance; referenced 2014 city study.
- **Donna Vick (Sears Woods, 555 Sedona Court):** Opposed due to Erickson's unprofessional conduct at community meeting, flooding, and distrust in Wiser Homes; preferred SFR2.
- **Jeff Lamar (Sheran Forest, 349 Marriott Drive):** Opposed rezoning, supported maintaining SFR2.
- **Rose Kennedy (Sears Pond, 3800 Pond View Court):** Opposed due to speeding and traffic concerns.
- **William Kimbro (Farmington, 4307 Salary Drive):** Opposed due to traffic safety risks at Salary Drive; supported development but preferred SFR2.
- **Ben Saxon (Sears Woods, 4570 Sears Road):** Questioned housing demand, citing 20% vacant homes and declining industry; opposed rezoning to maintain SFR2.
- **Sammy Barnes (Columbus, GA):** Opposed rezoning; requested 100 ft natural buffer if developed as SFR2 and questioned Wiser Homes' reputation.
- **Sharon Bond (Sears Woods, 4014 Timber):** Opposed due to springs causing flooding, urged investigation before development.

- **Janet Barr (Farmington, Westfield Court):** Questioned timing of adjacent RMF2 development and suggested traffic access via Woodruff Farm Road to reduce Macon Road congestion.
- **Applicant Rebuttal (Dave Erickson):**
 - Addressed Woodruff Farm Road access: Discussed with RMF2 owners, but costly due to large drainage bridge.
 - Encouraged HOA leaders to collaborate on community-friendly conditions.
 - Clarified misunderstanding with Saxon, accepted apology.
 - Defended housing need, citing Comprehensive Plan; argued SFR2 lots outdated for modern homes.
 - Disputed rental property concerns, as proposal is for-sale.
 - Highlighted maintenance issues causing flooding (e.g., clogged pipes), not rezoning.
 - Traffic study shows Macon and Reese Roads have ample capacity; opposition concerns exaggerated.
 - Wisser Homes is new but well-funded; contingency plans include SFR2 development or sale to another builder.
- **Commission Discussion:**
 - Clarified SFR2 vs. SFR3: SFR3 allows smaller lots (7,500 sq ft, 60 ft wide) for modern, vertical homes vs. SFR2 (10,000 sq ft, 75 ft wide) for wider ranches.
 - Concerned about traffic through single-family neighborhoods from RMF1 townhomes, unlike other mixed-use areas (e.g., Maple Ridge).

Commissioner Baker moved to deny the proposed rezoning due to consistency with the surrounding land uses and Commissioner McCaskey seconded; Case is denied (5-1 Physical / 0-0 Virtual).

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

ADJOURNMENT: 11:45 A.M.

RECORDING: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiU2YVsJLb8>

Larry Derby, Chairperson

Morgan Shepard, Principal Planner