

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS PLANNING & ZONING BOARD MEETING

321 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024 – 5:00 PM



MINUTES

Chairman Danley called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Board Member Henrietta Francis, Board Member Justin Hall, Board Member Phil Vetter, Vice Chairman Joshua Hobbs, Chairman Josh Danley

Staff Members Present: Steve Kennedy, City Manager, Mike Null, Assistant City Manager, Michael Daniels, Development Services Director, Gabriel Barro, Staff Planner, Lyndie Knowles, Development Services Representative

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the Minutes of the May 28, 2024 Meeting

Motion was made to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2024 meeting.

Motion made by Board Member Francis, Seconded by Board Member Hall.
Voting Yea: Board Member Francis, Board Member Hall, Board Member Vetter, Vice Chairman Hobbs, Chairman Danley

Motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. Review of Special Exception application for use of the south portion of the property for Springs Chapel as off-street parking

Staff Planner, Gabriel Barro presented the request for modification of the Special Exception for Springs Chapel. Staff recommended approval with the conditions of meeting all conditions within specified timeframes.

Chairman Danley opened the public hearing.

The applicant, James Whitehouse, was present and presented his case before answering questions from the board members.

It was noted by Development Services Director, Michael Daniels that the closing of Grove Street at St. Johns Avenue will require City Council approval.

Several neighboring property owners were in attendance to speak against the modification. Beverly Beauregard asked questions regarding the closing of Grove Street. Mr. Daniels

clarified that it would be a permanent barrier. She also inquired about the lights within the new parking area. Mr. Daniels noted that the lighting will be addressed during site plan approval which will come back before the board. Ms. Beauregard asked if the church decided to move, could someone else come in and set up in the same manner. The special exception is specified to the current property owner and if a new owner came in, they would have to apply for a new special exception. Ms. Beauregard stated for the record that she would prefer the proposed parking/drop off area to remain grass.

Regina Horwath brought up that there are no sidewalks on St. Johns Avenue so when she walks her dog, it is scary with the traffic. She stated that previously there were houses on the southeast portion of the lot. She took issue with the statement on the application that said the change would increase property values and noted that the statement was subjective, and she disagrees. She also stated that she did not care for the applicant proposed fence/ landscaping. She has questions regarding the existing trees and Mr. Daniels noted that we have tree preservation requirements and that will be addressed during the site plan review. Ms. Horwath also had issues with the dumpster location and is concerned with the additional noise it may cause. She would prefer that the area in question remain vacant or be homes and stay residential. She inquired about the gate that was mentioned. The gate referenced is existing and the conditions to the special exception would require that gate to be closed during school hours including drop off and pick up.

Eileen Ott noted that she lives across from the school. She and her husband were present for the 2016 special exception and doesn't feel that the conditions of that special exception were not adhered to. She said she was under the impression that the school was for originally 30 children and up to 100 children that were special needs. She said that she cannot figure out how many children are enrolled by visiting the school's website. She feels that the issues have been addressed only when the residents raise concerns. She doesn't think that the location can support 156 students. Board member Francis asked if when she raised concerns, were they addressed. Mrs. Ott said that eventually, but that additional concerns continue to exist. She feels that as the number of children attending, the traffic will increase and that will include students that will drive.

Richard Ott reiterated the concerns of the previous residents. He provided an email outlining his concerns and a copy of the minutes of the 2016 meeting regarding the current special exception for the school. He noted the issues and violations that had been brought against the church over the years. He does not understand why the church/school needs an additional 70 spaces for parking. He feels that this is a prelude to more growth. He asked if parking will be paved. Mr. Daniels responded that it will be paved, and that stormwater will be addressed during the site plan approval process. Mr. Ott inquired on the timelines of the conditions which were outlined in the presentation. He also mentioned the conditions of the previous special exception have not been met. He also raised concerns regarding the noise of the children throughout the school day and during dismissal. He feels the school is "out of control". Board member Francis asked what Mr. Ott suggests. He said he would like to keep them under control, but he thinks the residential lots should stay residential. Ultimately, he feels it should be shut down. Vice Chairman Hobbs inquired on the history of the church and how long it has been in operation. He asked if Mr. Ott would prefer it to stay a grass lot. He would like to see a solid wall but against their commercial portion and not against the residential lot. He does not want a paved parking lot on a residential zoned lot.

Terry Kelly noted that the 2016 special exception limited their access to US 17, not Grove Street, St. Johns Avenue or Governors. He says there has been no compliance since 2016. He stated that his property value has decreased. He expressed concerns about the landscaping not being maintained, trash coming into his yard, lights bleeding into his yard and the noise from the children. He echoed the concern that the school remains non-compliant. He does not agree that the gate at St. Johns is being used for church use only. He would like to see a solid wall across the entire east side of the parcel. He does not feel there are any compliance enforcement capabilities. Chairman Danley expressed that he thought the solid wall would solve most of the issues. Mr. Kelly agreed that a "beautiful wall" would be agreeable for himself. Vice Chairman Hobbs also agreed that this would be a potential along with the limitation of the number of students. Vice Chairman Hobbs also inquired about code enforcement of the area and Mr. Daniels responded that code enforcement has cited the property regarding access, and they are currently under a code enforcement order which has led to this modification application. Mr. Kelly feels that moving the access to St. Johns Avenue would solve a lot of the issues. Discussion was had regarding the gate at St. Johns Avenue, but Mr. Kelly would like all access removed.

Mr. Whitehouse responded to a few of the comments and he and his client understands that the solid wall would be the more agreeable option. He feels that these issues can be addressed, and they can work with the neighbors during the site plan process. In response to the additional parking, the church is a 300-seat church, and they are trying to increase the parking for the church with this addition as well.

Mr. Ott objected that they need additional parking for the church.

Board Member Vetter asked Mr. Whitehouse about the number of students currently. Mr. Whitehouse stated that his client is asking for 156 students. Per the National Center for Education Statistics Private School Survey Data has the current reported enrollment at 156 but that was not confirmed by the applicant. Mr. Vetter also asked for a better definition of the decorative wall/permanent barrier. Mr. Daniels confirmed that it would be a solid block masonry wall and that would come back before the board during the site plan approval process. Mr. Vetter proposed an alternative stacking plan and Mr. Whitehouse argued why the current proposed plan is more desirable in the eyes of his client.

City Attorney Jim Arnold gave a reminder to the board regarding ex-parte communication.

Mr. Kelly came back to the podium to agree that the city is growing but that the residents are asking the City to protect them. He also brought the concern that a confirmed number of currently enrolled students was not provided by the applicant.

Mr. White house explained that the order and the conditions will protect the residents. He feels that these conditions will alleviate the issues.

Ms. Beauregard came back up to get clarification on the type of wall. It was again confirmed that it will be a solid block concrete block masonry wall. Again, it was reiterated that the design would come back to the board for approval during the site plan review process.

Chairman Danley closed the public hearing.

Board discussion followed. Board Member Hall expressed concern about closing off the access to Grove Street and the addition of a permanent parking area. Mr. Daniels explained that the residential area could go back to being residential, but it could not be a commercial use. Mr. Hall would prefer not to have a paved surface parking area and keep access on/off US 17. Mr. Daniels brought up the concern that stacking could potentially impact US 17. From the city's standpoint, it is required for parking to be paved.

Mr. Daniels explained the process for code enforcement violations on this type of property, the history of the code enforcement for this specific property and that the idea is to find a permanent solution.

Board Member Francis shared that she feels blocking off Grove Street now will prevent future issues. She also feels like once these conditions are in place, this will solve the current issues.

Vice Chairman Hobbs asked Chairman Danley his professional opinion as a real estate agent if the closing of Grove would negatively impact the properties real estate prospects. Chairman Danley's opinion was that it would not.

A motion was made to approve the special exception modification subject to the conditions and submittal timelines which are as follows:

Conditions-

- 1. Define the maximum number of students to no more than 156 students.**
- 2. Addition of or modification to any existing structure/facility on the site as of the approval of this modification, will require a modification to the Special Exception.**
- 3. Provide parking calculations along with site plans.**
- 4. Provide a tree survey showing the location of existing trees, comply with the tree preservation requirements set forth in Sec. 113-274~279.**
- 5. Secure permits from FDOT for state road access/driveway.**
- 6. Ingress and egress are prohibited on St. Johns Avenue. Provide a gate on the St. Johns Avenue driveway, to be closed during school hours.**
- 7. A 6' high wall and trees (1 per 25 feet) to be provided along St. Johns Avenue as part of the required landscape buffer per Sec. 113-243.**
- 8. Gate at access to St. Johns Avenue must be closed and secured during drop-off hours, school hours and pick-up hours.**
- 9. Provide vehicle stacking to scale, each vehicle should be 10' in width and 20' in length. A minimum of 200' of stacking shall be provided.**

10. . Grove Street must be closed prior to the start of the school year, which is August 13, 2024, subject to City Council approval.
11. Provide a temporary stacking plan for school drop off and pickup with no access from St. Johns Avenue.
12. Special Exception shall be limited to Springs Chapel Corp. Any change in ownership shall require modification to the Special Exception.
13. Upon approval, failure to comply will result in pulling of the current and past Special Exceptions.

Submittal timeframes:

1. Secure a Site Development Plan approval subject to the special exception requirements within 120 days; and
2. Completion of construction of the improvements set forth in the approved Site Development Plan and conditions within the Special Exception within 6 months subsequent to Site Plan approval; and
3. Not meeting these timeframes shall be considered a violation of the approved Special Exception and shall be grounds for the special exception to be returned to the Planning and Zoning Commission for revocation of the Special Exception; and
4. Any other violations of the Special Exception and Site Development Plan shall follow the Code Enforcement procedure set forth in Chapter 22 of the Green Cove Springs City Code.

Motion made by Board Member Francis, Seconded by Vice Chairman Hobbs.
Voting Yea: Board Member Francis, Vice Chairman Hobbs, Chairman Danley
Voting Nay: Board Member Hall, Board Member Vetter

Motion passed 3-2.

3. Review of Special Exception application to allow for a street wall along US 17 as a design option at the Clay County Economic Development Building site

Gabriel Barro, staff planner, presented the application for special exception.

Chairman Danley opened the public hearing.

Charlie Latham, Assistant County Manager, was present and thanked the board for their consideration.

Chairman Danley closed the public hearing.

Motion was made to approve the special exception to allow for a street wall along US 17 as a design option at the Clay County Economic Development Building site.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Hobbs, Seconded by Board Member Hall.

Voting Yea: Board Member Francis, Board Member Hall, Board Member Vetter, Vice Chairman Hobbs, Chairman Danley

Motion passed 5-0

4. Review of Zoning Amendment Request for Parcel 016579-000-00 from Mixed Use Highway, MUH to General Commercial, C2

This item was tabled until the July 23, 2024 Planning and Zoning meeting at the request of the applicant.

5. Review of Modification of Rookery (formerly Ayrshire) Planned Unit Development

This item was tabled until the July 23, 2024 Planning and Zoning meeting at the request of the applicant.

ACTION ITEMS

6. Review of a Site Development Plan for the Clay County Economic Development Building at 633 N Orange Avenue

Gabriel Barro, staff planner, presented the application for a Site Development Plan for the Clay County Economic Development Building at 633 N Orange Avenue. This was presented during the presentation for item # 3.

Motion was made to approve the Site Development Plan for the Clay County Economic Development Building at 633 N Orange Avenue subject to staff comments due to City Council approval.

Motion made by Board Member Hall, Seconded by Vice Chairman Hobbs. Voting Yea: Board Member Francis, Board Member Hall, Board Member Vetter, Vice Chairman Hobbs, Chairman Danley

Motion passed 5-0

BOARD BUSINESS

Development Services Director, Michael Daniels shared that the Community Redevelopment Agency would be holding a public art workshop on July 9th and that involvement from the board would be welcome.

The Live Local Act has been updated by the State. The changes and the proposed SOP presented at the July meeting.

Chairman Hobbs inquired about the Rivers House project. Director Daniels said that the last low bidder was disqualified and that it would be going back out to bid on July 18th.

Chairman Francis asked about the status of the renovation of the Augusta Savage auditorium. Assistant City, Mike Null spoke regarding that item and said it would be going back out for bid in the new few weeks.

Another project, Graylon Oaks, that was approved by the board previously will now be coming back to Council for final approval soon.

Assistant City Manager, Mike Null gave an update on the Walnut Street renovation. The full project should be completed by the end of August 2024. Vice Chairman Hobbs asked if there was any plans to add brick roadways in other areas of the city. Unfortunately the brick is less cost effective than asphalt but they will be using stamped asphalt in some areas.

City Attorney Jim Arnold reminded the board that they can make suggestions to change conditions of approvals on items if they think something may be beneficial to all parties.

Board discussion followed.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Danley adjourned the meeting at 7:14pm

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024 AT 5:00PM

CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Joshua Danley, Chairman

Attest:

Lyndie Knowles, Development Services Rep.