

**MINUTES OF THE  
TUPELO PLANNING COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, September 12, 2022  
6:00 PM Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Pam Hadley called the meeting to order. Committee members Scott Davis, Patti Thompson, Leslie Mart, Chair Pam Hadley, Mark Williams and Bentley Nolan were present. Lindsey Leake and Gus Hildenbrand were absent. Staff members present included City Planner Jenny Savely, Director of Development Services Tanner Newman and Zoning Administrator Russ Wilson. Chair Hadley asked Bentley Nolan to open with a prayer and Mark Williams to lead the pledge. Chair Hadley then presented an opening statement of the committee purpose and reviewed how the committee would conduct its business. The Staff and Committee were then asked to introduce themselves and did so.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Leslie Mart made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2022 Planning Committee Meeting. Seconded by Bentley Nolan and passed unanimously. Hadley then opened the regular session section of the meeting.

**REPORT ON COUNCIL ACTIONS**

City Planner Jenny Savely reported that the City Council had accepted last month's minutes, but TA22-02 remains in legal review. As part of those minutes, The Major Site Plan for The Presley was approved.

**Old Business - None**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**COMP22-12 Compatible Use Appeal Hearing – RV Park Campground in Southern Heights Neighborhood Postponed until the October 3, 2022 Planning Committee Meeting at the request of the applicant and his legal counsel.**

**FLEXVAR22-01 – Self Storage Flexible Use Request for 100 Briar Ridge Road Postponed until the October 3, 2022 Planning Committee Meeting at the request of the applicant.**

**RZ22-03 Rezoning of parcels along Main Street within the Existing Mixed Use Commercial Corridor (MUCC) and Mixed Use Activity Center (MUAC).**

Hadley asked City Planner, Savely to provide the Staff Analysis. Savely said she was presenting two proposals to the committee tonight on behalf of the Department of Development Services, Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and The Tupelo Redevelopment Agency. These organizations have come together to propose for the Planning Committee tonight, and the City Council to review these interesting opportunities. There are two applications which overlap somewhat between the rezoning and the text amendments.

**TA22-02 Text Amendments A comprehensive update to Overlay Districts.**

Savely stated that she would be presenting both at the same time since they overlap.

The rezoning is part of what we are proposing in conjunction with the Text Amendments. The rezoning covers parcels that front along Main Street and are already included in the Mixed Use Activity Center and the Mixed Use Commercial Corridor zoning districts between the current MUD Zoning District and Veterans Boulevard on the east, and parcels from Madison Street on the west in our current MUD Zoning District to Crosstown which is not currently in the MUD District. We'll explain the benefits of including that in our Mixed Use Downtown. What is being proposed tonight is including those two areas within our Mixed Use Downtown District and then we are required to place those areas in a Mixed Use sub-district, which is being proposed to be Gateway West from Madison to Crosstown, and Gateway East from Hwy 45 to Veterans Boulevard. Inclusion in those sub-districts will give the benefit and oversight that are already enjoyed by the current mixed use parcels within Mixed Use Downtown. Each sub-district has its own specific allowed uses and those would be expanded into the MUCC and MUAC districts.

Scott Davis asked for clarification on a map in the packet. Savely apologized for the error of leaving off the new Gateway East and Gateway West sub-district shading on the map and pointed out that the correction will be included in the maps included in the minutes. The map included in the RZ22-03 packet is the correct one.

Director Newman suggested that if the committee approves, and since one of the presenters has not yet arrive, could Savely go ahead and present some of the highlights of the TA22-03 proposal. This began as a review of our current overlay districts, some of our overlays were acting without their process being codified, which is part of the proposal, to codify these processes and procedures consistent across different overlays. There are also many uses within our overlays which do not have clear definitions, so that's been clarified and codified these definitions within the proposed codes, such as multi-family definitions, drive-thru service, hotels and motels, parking garages and carports, murals, and more that needed to be updated. Simplified procedures for establishing and overlay district have been created, bylaws for overlay operation have codified, standards for response, and guidelines for operations have been established and codified. This helps establish and communicate the guidelines to the public consistently across the various overlays.

Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association oversees development in the MUD district. Savely asked if there were any questions or comments at this point. Newman suggested continuing with the additional presentations before a vote is taken. Newman added that it was evident with the new administration early on that the Downtown efforts had been tremendously successful, but that the question now is "What's Next?" This question led to conversations with Debbie Brangenberg, Lucia Randle, Pat Falkner, Neal McCoy and others, working together as a team to answer that question. After months and months of collaboration, trial and error, tonight we have a joint effort between all these groups and individuals and will all be sharing information tonight in this proposal with the Planning Committee's input to put a plan forward. Newman asked Brangenberg to come forward with her presentation.

Brangenberg thanked all who had participated, saying this has been a long project, beginning in 1991. All the vision and planning previously was based on what already existed, market assessments of what could happen, and then taking a look at land use and how we could use that for future development. This study identified, due to the investment in the old Downtown Mall area (New Coliseum/Arena) that we had property South of Main as a new frontier, which was a rarity to have that much land to develop, thus the Fairpark development came to be from this assessment. There were traffic studies and studies that looked at how to integrate this facility into Downtown and not be just a big box destination. Parking was built out with an eye toward walking to the arena. There were bumps in the road along the way, recessions, Covid and we've continued to push on with the vision included in the master plan, looking toward complementary businesses that could be recruited. We've stayed on plan through 7 administrations since the beginning and kept pushing forward. In 1999 funding was made available to get the infrastructure in place. That investment has leveraged over \$180

million in private investment in the Downtown area and that does not included land acquisition, just building permits alone. \$22.68 Million in Urban Renewal Bonds has yielded a great opportunity for Tupelo and has really stabilized our downtown area. Moving forward we've had great demand for housing. You have to have density for successful commercial development, and we are not quite there yet, but there are so many opportunities. In 2018, Brangenberg stated that the photos of the Old City County Building, now the Belfry is in place, Main Street-Birthplace Trail received funding to link Downtown to the Birthplace, our #1 Tourist draw. All of these things we have been leveraging our investment to link Downtown. 2018 Main Street Refresh identified 4 strategies which are being targeted and implemented at this time. All of these things came through study, changes in definitions have given more flexibility and has helped lay the groundwork for Lucia and DTMSA to further enhance the product we have here in Tupelo to expand our tax base and the success we have had over the last 30 years. We've maintained the vision, remained true to it, and set the table for the next 30 years.

Newman then asked DTMSA Director Lucia Randle to come forward for her presentation. Randle thanked the committee and those present for the opportunity to speak. The improvements enjoyed today, came from studies done earlier. Randle explained the benefits to those in the proposed expansion areas of the MUD district proposed for Gateway East and Gateway West. Randle mentioned that DTMSA has a four point approach, a comprehensive plan for revitalization, which has been the foundation for all the work going on before and going forward. 1. Economic Vitality, 2. Design, 3. Organization, and 4. Promotion. If these needs are met in all four areas, it results in transformation of an area. With the partnership of the National Main Street organization, the Mississippi Main Street organization, with Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association which is a Great America Main Street Winner, and this partnership with the City of Tupelo and private investors, we can provide the needed resources to Gateway East and Gateway West to bring economic vitality and a visually pleasing connection to Downtown Tupelo for our citizens and guests. Newman then introduced Convention and Visitors Bureau Director, Neal McCoy for his presentation.

Neal McCoy mentioned that his organization can be described as a DMO, which has stood for "Destination Marketing Organization". Place an ad and hope that folks show up. In today's competitive environment, it now stands for "Destination Management Organization". It's not enough to place an ad and hope people show up, you now must create experiences through events. McCoy said you would be hard-pressed to find another community in MS that has a better "front porch" than right here in Downtown Tupelo. Our presentation on Main Street is second to none when you arrive. What CVB looks for now is "What's Next?" We've stuck to the plan, revitalized Downtown Tupelo and now must look to what the next 15-20 years looks like for us. When we invite folks from all over the world to the Birthplace, we want to connect the dots. We do a great job at the Birthplace, but there is an opportunity to connect the dots between the Birthplace and Downtown Tupelo. The City has done the heavy lifting, but the MDOT grant that Debbie referred to means the infrastructure is in place, and now we work with the private sector to create opportunities for commerce along East Main Street. The same thing goes for the western part extending out to Crosstown. So when visitors are arriving into the Downtown area, we want to extend the aesthetically pleasing Main Street presentation. It's all about Destination Management, place making, creating experiences. If a community is a great place to visit that means it's a great place to live.

Newman said that the success of Downtown and Fair Park speaks in and of itself and the goal of project is to expand access both east and west, and that is why we are requesting the rezoning of East Main from Hwy 45 to Veterans and West Main from Madison Street to Crosstown in the Mixed Use Downtown district and with that will come the Gateway East and Gateway West sub-districts which will allow any future development along those stretches to have the amenities and assistance of DTMSA and their design review team reviewing any type of development, exterior facades and assistance with the overall design of any new development. So one of the things we are shooting for is to connect the Birthplace with Downtown. The City has already done

the heavy lifting, the utility work, the street work, and now we are looking at the property along that stretch and how we can facilitate the revitalization of that stretch. So the same thing goes for the West Main parcels from Madison to Crosstown, offering them the same kind of assistance. Part of this overall project is that we are offering them 5-year tax abatement on any new development or redevelopment that spends \$10,000 that will receive a 5-year tax abatement that basically means that those that invest that, their property tax will freeze at the level they purchased the property for, so any increase in property value, they would not be taxed on that till that five-year period is over. It's a joint effort, we are all here to answer any questions the committee or the public might have.

Chair Hadley then opened the floor for questions, hearing none, the public input section was closed and opened up the meeting for discussion among the committee members.

Scott Davis asked a question about the closing times suggested for businesses staying open past 5PM. Savely responded that during review of Main Street Refresh, our Central Entertainment District emphasizes after 5PM business. There are certain streets already that have potential to expand what is already there drawing the after-hours pedestrian traffic and we want to encourage that. Newman stressed that current uses will be grandfathered in, but when those locations change occupancy, ownership or use, they would have to come into compliance with these requirements in order to accomplish the goal as we move forward. Leslie Mart asked about those currently under construction. Newman replied that if you currently have a construction permit for a use, or a certificate of occupancy, no changes would be required until any new construction permit came in or certificate of occupancy request after this is approved by the Planning Committee and City Council. Tax incentives are already in place and can be used.

Bentley Nolan asked why this stopped at Veterans instead of going all the way to the turn off of Main to the Birthplace. Neal McCoy said that the idea was to follow the path of the Birthplace Trail which turns off of Main north to at Veterans. It could be expanded later. Newman said he hopes that others Downtown will see the success and hope to expand areas all around the City. There was much other discussion but it came back to the same priority of following the pathway to the Birthplace where the infrastructure followed the grant for the Birthplace Trail. This is not being proposed now, but could be brought up later, since this path and legal notifications did not include those areas in the rezoning process. Newman said you could ask for it to be studied but could not be added in this request. Mart commended the team for their hard work, commitment and perseverance in getting this done.

Bentley Nolan made a motion to approve RZ22-03 (the rezoning), seconded by Scott Davis, with the vote unanimous to approve. After much discussion explaining the reason behind some of the text changes, Mark Williams made a motion to approve TA22-03 (updates to Chapter 2 Definitions and Rules of Construction and Chapter 5 Overlay Districts), seconded by Leslie Mart with the vote all in favor passing unanimously.

Leslie Mart made a motion for the Planning Committee to formally request that the Department of Development Services consider adding the three blocks from Briar Ridge Road/Elvis Presley Drive and Main Street to Veterans Memorial Drive to the Gateway East sub-district. Seconded by Bentley Nolan. All approved that motion except Mark Williams who voted against the motion.

Savely mentioned next steps would be for these motions to be presented to City Council in the form of the minutes and voted on by the Council October 4<sup>th</sup>, however a work session with the Council will be held tomorrow, September 13<sup>th</sup>. The Planning Committee Work Session will be Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 PM, and the October Planning Committee Meeting will be at 6PM on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. As of now, there are only two items on the agenda, those that were tabled here tonight. With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned after a unanimous vote.