

SEARCY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 7, 2021

The regular scheduled meeting of the planning commission was held in the city hall chambers at 12:00pm.

Board Members Present:

Steven Jordan, Chairman
Lisa Wray
Jamie Mobley
Bill Patton
Charles Green
Larry DeGroat
Mike Cleveland
Jim Wilbourn

City of Searcy Staff Present:

Madison Lee, Recording Secretary
Jim VonTungeln, City Planner
Mark Lane, City Engineer
Jeff Webb, Code Enforcement
Phil Watkins
Guy Grady, Fire Inspector

Not present:

Jim House

I. The Chairman, Steven Jordan called notice of a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

Next item on the agenda was the approval from the November Minutes. Commissioner Patton moved that the minutes be approved. Commissioner Mobley seconded the motion.

III. Final Plat for Prestige Investments - Whitlow Engineering

Chairman presented a final plat for Prestige Worldwide Investments, represented by Whitlow Engineering Services. Adam Whitlow with Whitlow Engineering Services explained this is the final phase of the Rehoboth Edition. Whitlow states that this project was originally presented by Lemons Engineering and Whitlow Engineering Services is now taking over the planning for the final phase. Mr. Whitlow explained that he believes that they have met all the criteria they need to move on to the final phase of this project. Chairman asked Jim VonTungeln and Mark Lane if they are okay with moving on. Jim stated that he doesn't have any concerns. Mark stated that his only concern was the sewer system was not complete. Mr. Whitlow advised the sewer system is in they are just waiting for Entergy. Mark also added that the electrical is not in the ground yet to his knowledge. Chairman advised he is not going to sign anything until Mark brings him the paper saying the concerns are resolved and complete. **Commissioner Green moved to approve the Final Plat. Commissioner Patton seconded that motion. The motion was passed unanimously.**

IV. Rezone for Clay Hite- Whitlow Engineering

Adam Whitlow with Whitlow Engineering Services is speaking for Mr. Hite. Whitlow stated that he is presenting a proposal to rezone Mr. Hite's property from R4 to R3. This is going to be the new subdivision off of Sawmill Rd (Belmont Estates). Whitlow made it clear that there will be no changes to

the plat. Whitlow stated the main reason for the rezone is because of the side setbacks. He advised that set backs are important for builders. Whitlow said that the R3 is a more favorable side set back compared to R4. Commissioner DeGroat asked Whitlow if the plat he presented last time will stay the same. Whitlow answered it's going to be the same rear and front setbacks, just a slightly better side setbacks allowing them to build a bigger house. Commissioner Mobley, asked what the setbacks on R4 vs R3? Phil Watkins spoke up with the correct answer, 10' vs 7 1/2'.

At this time, Chairman Jordan opened the public hearing. Cathy Wortham, a concerned neighbor of the property, She advised that she just bought 5 acres of land right beside the new subdivision. She advised her concern is not with the setbacks but the potential it could change the square footage of the lots. Ms. Wortham is afraid that even though they are not presenting a plat change today, they might in the future. She states that if something ever happened to Mr. Hite and he doesn't complete the project, and someone else purchase the land, the new owners could then do a plat change with the Planning Commission. Her opinion respectfully, the City has not addressed the additional load that it's going to create on Sawmill and Country Club Rd. It's going to amplify the amount of traffic in the area. Wortham says it's already a problem and by adding more it will increase the problem. Wortham suggested that Hite complete his development, to let him build bigger house just don't change the zone to R3. **Chairman Jordan closed the public hearing.**

Discussion took place about the rezone and whether or not the staff is okay with moving on. Mark Lane added there are two engineers working to improve the traffic issue on Fuller Lane and Sawmill Rd. Chairman Jordan asked the staff if Ms. Wortham was right on her concerns about the possibly of bringing more lots in the future. Mr. Lane assured the commissioners that the only way that can happen is if proposal is brought back in front of the Planning Commission, as a replat. Whitlow added they would be okay with a variance request if that's the route they want to go. Mr. VonTungeln advised that variance are for individual property owners, not for entire subdivisions. Whitlow added that the roads are already being cut with or without the rezone. **Commissioner DeGroat moved to approve the rezone. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.**

V. Rezone for Matthews Internationals – Davidson engineering

The next item on the agenda was a rezone for Matthews International, Bear Davidson with Davidson Engineering is representing. Bear stated that this rezone deals with Matthews International on Lincoln Ave. Matthews International is already under construction to expand the factory, that's how the rezone came to light. Bear realized that a part of the Matthews property is currently zoned commercial even though it has been used for industrial purposed for decades. The zone just doesn't follow the property line, well, so Bear and Matthews figured the best way to fix the problem is just to rezone the whole Matthews property. Bear stated that Buck Lane at the Chamber of Commerce really has been pushing the rezone for a while.

At this time, Chairman Jordan opened the public hearing. No one from the public came to speak. **Chairman closed the public hearing.**

Commissioner Green moved to pass the rezone from commercial to industrial 2. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

VI. Conditional Use Permit – Wade Roetzel

The next item on the agenda was a conditional use permit for Wade Roetzel. Roetzel wants to replace two barns on the property with a new one. Commissioners asked Roetzel if there is going to be any living accommodations in the new barn; Wade answered with a NO, he made it clear that it will only be used for maintenance equipment. There was confusion about the correct size of the building they would be approving. After some discussion they came up with a 50x50 square foot building. Questions were asked about the sidewalls, Wade couldn't give a straight answer on how tall the walls would actually be.

At this time, Chairman Jordan opened the public hearing. There was no one from the public that came to speak about the Conditional Use Permit. **Chairman Jordan closed the public hearing.**

Staff spoke about the Code and the rules on the square feet limits on an outside barn. Mark Lane answered 1200' square feet. Discussion about what if Roetzel sells the property, would the barn have to be torn down. Mr. VonTungeln advise whatever is already on the land can stay there, it's only if the new owner try's to change the dynamics of the barn; then there would be a problem. Wade added that it's not going to be exactly like the picture, he plans on adding porches to hang off the building. With all the confusion about the actual square footage of the building, the Chairman stated that in order to move on they need a number. Wade said no more than 3500 square feet. More was spoken about the confusion with the correct numbers, Von Tungelin said if the Commissioners chose they could place conditions if they want to approve it. Phil Watkins gave more information about the rules on how tall the building can be in total. Chairman suggested they table the request until they get more information and a correct drawing on the building. **Commissioner Patton moved to table it. Commissioner Green seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.**

VII. Whitlow Engineering Discussion Topic - Adam Whitlow

Before the meeting was adjourned, Whitlow with Whitlow Engineering asked to present a discussion topic. This replat was taken off the agenda for lack of communication and lack of information. Mr. Whitlow explained that this replat was tabled last month due to, too many concerns and no answers. Whitlow is requesting a lot line shift for the Fairways. Whitlow added the driveways, garbage pickup, and fire truck access were the issues last month. Whitlow was hoping to get the replat portion done today. Whitlow said he believes he's done everything he is supposed to do and has read over the Code, he also said he believes this can be handled with a staff level approval with the building permit. Whitlow suggested that the body be taken out of the equation and just let the staff handle the issues. VonTungeln advised this got thrown way out of proportion. Mark Lane said the only issue he has is with the driveway and he doesn't know if the drive will agree with the Code. Chairman Jordan said he doesn't have anything to look at, no examples. Staff advised the commissioners that there is already a plat there that was approved back in 2011. Chairman advised he is uncomfortable giving an answer, he doesn't know what he is being asked to do. Commissioners were unsure if they could even vote since this was not on the agenda. VonTunglin stated he has no objection to the replat; Mark Lane said his only concern was the setback line and the driveway. **Commissioner Jim Wilbourn said he is not comfortable making a motion. Commissioner Cleveland moved to take NO Action or Table the request. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion was moved unanimously.**

VIII. There being no further business before the commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Jim Wilbourn, Secretary

