

Perry Planning Commission  
Minutes – December 14, 2015

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Martin Beeland called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

**ROLL:** Chairman Beeland; Commissioners Clarington, Jefferson, Poole, Williams and Yasin were present. Commissioner Mehserle was absent.

**STAFF:** Lee Gilmour – City Manager, Steve Howard – Chief Building Official, and Christine Sewell – Recording Clerk.

**GUESTS:** Mr. Dexter Davis, Pastor Jamie Powell, Jim Langston, Bev Abney, Terre Walker, and Diana McConnell.

**INVOCATION:** was given by given by Commissioner Yasin.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 09, 2015 MEETING:** Commissioner Jefferson motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; Commissioner Williams seconded; all in favor and was unanimously approved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Campaign Notice, per O.C.G.A. 36-67A-3

Please turn cell phones off

**PUBLIC HEARING** (Planning Commission Decision)

1). #V-15-10 400 Riley Street

Christine Sewell - Planning Commission Secretary read the applicants' request which was for a variance to PLDO Section 106.10 for the size of a sign in a residential district, along with staff responses.

Chairman Beeland opened the public hearing at 6:04pm and called for anyone in favor or opposed; there being none the hearing was closed at 6:05pm.

Commissioner Yasin inquired of Mr. Davis how the neighborhood is learning about the church services; Mr. Davis stated through word of mouth mostly. Mr. Davis advised when he received notice on the sign being too large he thought it was due to the fact the sign was in a horizontal position; he was advised by City staff it could be no larger than four square feet. Mr. Davis also asked if he could place the sign anywhere else on the property in its' current size; it was advised no.

Commissioner Poole motioned to deny the application as submitted; Commissioner Yasin seconded; all in favor and was unanimously denied.

2). #V-15-06 – 1104 Swift Street (petitioner requested tabling matter until December 14, 2015)

Chairman Beeland called for a motion to remove the variance case from the table. Commissioner Yasin motioned to remove from the table for discussion the variance application; Commissioner Clarington seconded; all in favor was unanimously approved.

Chairman Beeland advised the matter before the Commission was a variance for an electronic reader board sign in a residential zoning district. Chairman Beeland opened the public hearing at 6:12pm. Pastor Jamie Powell provided a revised sign design for the board's review and advised he had tried to reach out to Ms. Abney that day but she had not been home. Pastor Powell noted the revised design the reader board sign would be in a monument type casing and the lighting will be amber in color and display solid messages regarding church events.

Chairman Beeland then called for anyone opposed. Mrs. Terre Walker stated in 2005 she had been requested by the former Mayor to serve on the Downtown Development Authority and since that time including the present she has served on a number of boards/committees and with the City's recent Master and Strategic plans two items came to light one being the need for downtown housing and the other tourism, which is one of Perry's main attractions. Mrs. Walker advised she has been told by downtown business owners that a large percentage of their business is from out of town visitors. As well, the City is undergoing a branding initiative and in their studies when asked about Perry some words that come to mind are quaint, traditional, and unique. Mrs. Walker also advised when she is downtown eating or shopping she often asks visitors what brings them to Perry and is most often told its' because its quaint, traditional, neat and clean, the tree and flowers. Mrs. Walker states if the request is approved it will set a precedent as the area is residential and in the historic district and what makes Perry unique will be lost with an approval as well as lower the surrounding residential property values. On conclusion Mrs. Walker advised she was born and raised in Perry and is very passionate about its' future.

Mrs. Bev Abney advised there were several residents of Swift Street in attendance this evening and as she had stated previously she is against the proposed sign and if its' approved in the historic residential neighborhood, what can be done when additional applications come forward when a precedent has been set.

Mrs. Diana McConnell was opposed to the request and inquired of the church why the sign couldn't be placed on Main Street.

There being no further comments Chairman Beeland closed the hearing at 6:28pm.

Commissioner Clarington motioned to approve the request as submitted; Commissioner Yasin seconded; Commissioner Jefferson was opposed; resulting vote was 4-1 for approval.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### 1). Determination about signage or structural decoration

Mr. Howard advised direction was sought in regards to corporate logos being an integral part of a building or should they be treated as signage or an architectural design as it was becoming more common practice. An example was Grace Church where there is a large cross on the building façade. Another example provided was the current project in review for Hardee's restaurant where four stars are incorporated on the side of the building

which are either troweled or recessed into the exterior façade. The board concurred for staff to make them aware of on a case by case basis. Mr. Howard advised in regards to the Hardee's project once a sign packet was received it would be clearer on what was to be provided.

2). Discuss possibility of the use of gravel surface parking lots under certain circumstances through the variance process

Mr. Gilmour advised current practice for new parking lots being installed is they must be paved and requests input from the board if this should remain or allow by the variance process gravel or some other type of acceptable surface. It was advised from an environmental standpoint gravel was preferred but some situations may not warrant such as the Walmart shopping center. An example was given of where gravel could be utilized at the new Heritage Park that is currently undeveloped. If gravel was acceptable it would have to be maintained. If considered the area would have to be a low volume traffic area and not the standard commercial areas, shopping centers, apartment complexes, etc. as well paving aprons would need to be installed, along with other conditions if warranted. Mr. Howard advised grass type parking lots may also be an alternative, which consists of the open paving blocks with grass in between. The board concurred with staff input and additional information would be brought back forth for further review and discussion.

#### **OTHER**

Mr. Gilmour provided an update on the Westwood Trailer park and advised the owner had not complied with the approved regulations outlined in the Planned Unit Guidelines. The City is currently addressing the matter by cancelling water services for vacant lots and no new service connections or certificate of occupancies are being issued. It is the hope of the City these measures will encourage the owner to comply with the regulations approved.

**ADJOURN**: there being on further business to come before the board the meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.