

Planning Commission

City of Rock Hill, South Carolina

June 4, 2013

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was held Tuesday, June 4, 2013, at 7:00 P.M. in City Council Chambers, City Hall, 155 Johnston Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT Randy Graham, Duane Christopher, Gladys Robinson, Jeff Greene and Georgia Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT Tom Roper, Sherry Easley

STAFF PRESENT Leah Youngblood, Josh Reinhardt, Justin Westbrook

1. **Approval of minutes of the May 7, 2013, meeting.**

Mr. Greene made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2013, meeting. Mrs. Thomas seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

2. **Hold public hearing and consider a recommendation to City Council on petition M-2013-08 by McDonald's USA LLC to rezone approximately 3.38 acres located at 1995 Celanese Road, 2005 Celanese Road, 1761 Mt Gallant Road, and 1778 Monterey Drive from General Commercial (GC), Planned Unit Development (PUD_ and Single-Family 3 (SF-3) to Limited Commercial (LC). Tax parcels 634-01-02-001, 634-01-02-002, 634-01-01-001 and 634-01-01-017.**

Mr. Hawkins presented the staff report.

Mr. Christopher asked Mr. Hawkins if the site plan presented in December 2012 has changed any in regards to what is being presented. Mr. Hawkins replied that it had not.

Mr. Greene asked Mr. Hawkins if the properties' current zoning, by-right, would be allowed. Mr. Hawkins stated that the current zoning would allow similar uses, except for the property on Monterey Drive.

Mr. Christopher asked Mr. Hawkins if McDonald's USA LLC had gone before the Zoning Board of Appeals in December 2012. Mr. Hawkins replied that they had not.

Mr. Christopher asked Mr. Hawkins if McDonald's USA would have to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance from the buffer requirements. Mr. Hawkins replied that they would.

Mr. Greene asked Mr. Hawkins if the buffer would only be applied to the Mt. Gallant side. Mr. Hawkins confirmed that it would.

Mr. Craig Givens, 4601 Six Forks Road, Suite 200, Raleigh, North Carolina, applicant, was available to answer questions.

Mrs. Thomas asked Mr. Givens in regards to traffic concerns, if the entrances to the site would be too close to other intersections. Mr. Givens answered that the existing access to Celanese Road will be closed and the only access points will be from Mt. Gallant Road and Monterey Drive. A pork-chop island will be placed in the Monterey Drive access to prevent left turns from the site. Based on McDonald's analysis, access to the site will be adequate. Mr. Givens stated that McDonald's has a site plan that doesn't include the property at 1778 Monterey Drive, but it is not preferred. Access and circulation wouldn't work as well and the buffer would be smaller.

Mr. Givens said there would be a fifty (50) foot landscaping buffer to the rear of the property along with a six (6) foot high brick wall to help alleviate their impact to residential neighbors.

Mr. Christopher asked Mr. Givens what elements were present for McDonald's to move to this particular site. Mr. Givens replied that McDonald's has done extensive site selection research, and that they try to be good neighbors. Mr. Givens stated that McDonald's uses metrics and demographics, ease of access and intrusion to neighbors as factors in determining a site selection, a process that takes twenty-four (24) to thirty-six (36) months. Mr. Givens stated that McDonald's does not take site selection lightly as they try to protect the interest of the owner/operators and neighbors.

Mr. Christopher asked Mr. Givens, given the traffic concerns, is the site location a positive for McDonald's? Mr. Givens replied that the primary reason for this site selection was the accessibility, and that people would not come to the restaurant if they couldn't easily access it.

Mr. Christopher asked Mr. Givens, if the rezoning did not happen, could the site still work for McDonald's? Mr. Givens responded that they could make the site work, however it would cause additional issues such as meeting setback requirements, reducing parking, decrease the residential buffer. Mr. Givens explained that the current zoning would work, but McDonald's would not prefer it, and purchasing the residential lot might not be worth it.

Mr. Greene asked Mr. Givens if there was a design that could fit the current zoning.

Mr. Givens answered yes.

Ms. Sarah Cholewinski, of 2010 Downey Street, spoke in opposition to the application. She noted that with the addition of a McDonald's, the streets in her neighborhood would suffer more traffic and safety concerns. Ms. Cholewinski stated that trucks servicing other businesses along Celanese Road already have issues with parking and McDonald's would create more traffic concerns along an already congested Celanese Road. She stated her concerns of her home values being decreased due to the restaurant proximity, as well as her concerns on water and air quality.

Mr. Ernest Leger, 2161 Belle Chase Drive, spoke in opposition to the application. He voiced his concerns of the traffic volume through his neighborhood and the flow of traffic that could occur on to Mt Gallant should the McDonald's be built. He voiced his concern about disturbance from a 24-hour operation and the increase of litter and debris the restaurant would create in the neighborhood.

Ms. Wadene Gordon, 1728 Monterey Drive, spoke in opposition to the application. She spoke on how McDonald's would create an unsafe neighborhood, decreasing the quality of life of the area and for the elderly that reside in the neighborhood. She also voiced concern about the possible increase of traffic on Monterey Drive, as well as recent automobile wrecks in and around this neighborhood. She stated that there were numerous locations McDonald's could go instead. Ms. Gordon also voiced opposition to the covenant release forms, asking if the signatures were actual residents of the neighborhood.

Mr. Graham closed the public hearing.

Mr. Greene stated that he owned property on Franklin Street, on the far end of the neighborhood, but felt that this was not a conflict of interest.

Discussion was held regarding the reoccurring concerns, such as other possible sites for McDonald's, hours of operations, traffic and safety.

Discussion was held regarding the future use of the site should McDonald's not locate there, that

current zoning would allow other like uses such as another fast food restaurant or a gas station.

Mr. Greene made a motion to approve the rezoning of the properties to Limited Commercial (LC). Mr. Christopher seconded the motion.

Discussion was held regarding the possible additional traffic that could be seen.

Discussion was held regarding the addition of the SF-3 lot to the overall vision of the proposed restaurant, with conversation regarding the landscaping of that particular parcel.

Mr. Givens stated that the curb cut on Mt. Gallant would be pulled back helping to alleviate traffic concerns.

Mr. Payman Nadimi, McDonald's Construction Manager, discussed possible tree and landscaping scenarios if the restaurant were to move forward without rezoning the residential lot.

Mr. Christopher asked if there was a smaller site, would there be a smaller restaurant? Mr. Nadimi said the options might be seeking a variance or reducing the parking spaces.

There was discussion about landscaping requirements and impervious reductions.

Mr. Green requested that trash pickup would occur during normal business hours, to which Mr. Nadimi said they would consider it, especially since most trash pickup occurs then anyways.

There was discussion on the size of the building and possible effects of this prototype building for the restaurant.

There was discussion regarding the protocol for delivery trucks accessing the site.

Mr. Graham repeated that there was a motion on the floor.

There was discussion about the entrances to the proposed restaurant be substantially different if the rezoning were not to occur.

The proposed motion failed by a vote of 2 in favor to 3 opposed, with Mr. Graham, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Thomas dissenting.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Other Business.

Mr. Hawkins stated that he had sent a memo for the Cherry Road Revitalization meeting tomorrow, June 5th, at 4:00 pm in City Hall Room 373. The meeting is planned to discuss Cherry Road between Mt Gallant Road and Anderson Road.

Mrs. Youngblood stated there are still vacant seats on the Zoning Board of Appeals and to spread the word as there is a need to fill them.

4. Adjourn.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.