

MINUTES

Valdosta-Lowndes Zoning Board of Appeals

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room

300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

October 6, 2015

2:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Nancy Hobby
John Hogan III
Dr. Willie Houseal
John "Mac" McCall

Satrina Plyler
Gretchen Quarterman
Allan Strickland

MEMBERS ABSENT

Paul Alvarado

STAFF PRESENT

Ted Bilak
Carmella Braswell
Matt Martin
Mike Martin
Tracy Tolley

VISITORS PRESENT

Stan Crance
Mike Gray
Glenn Gregory
Tom Stalvey
Bobby Watford

Agenda Item # 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Strickland at 2:30 pm and it was determined that a quorum of members was present. Chairman Strickland thanked everyone for coming and reviewed the meeting procedures with those in attendance today.

LOWNDES COUNTY CASE

Agenda Item # 2: VAR-2015-13—Bill Grondahl DBA Electrical Test Labs of Georgia (6553 Lakes Industrial Parkway)

Chairman Strickland announced the case.

Mrs. Braswell stated that Electrical Test Labs of Georgia is proposing an addition to their existing facility. The subject property consists of one acre and is located at the SE corner of Lakes Industrial Parkway and Lakes Court in an M-2 zoning district. The applicant is requesting a variance to the minimum side yard setback along Lakes Court—also referred to as the secondary front yard. The minimum side yard setback has been calculated to be 96 from the centerline of Lakes Court, or 56 feet from the property line/edge of ROW. The application is proposing a 20 ft. setback from the property line, therefore asking for a variance of 36 feet for the minimum side yard setback. Staff reviewed the request and determined that the proposed addition did not present a safety or visibility issue based on its proximity from the intersection and its location with adjacent properties. As such, staff recommends approval, citing criteria "d" of the standards, based on the applicant's submitted site plan.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone had questions for staff. Mrs. Hobby asked if the addition would have any impact on the drainage easement. Mrs. Braswell stated it would not.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Stan Crance, on behalf of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority, 103 Roosevelt, spoke in support of the application. Mr. Crance stated that Stuart C. Irby had bought the business, which Bill and Linda Grondahl explained in a letter submitted to the Board. Chairman Strickland stated that letter would be a part of the minutes. (See attachment.)

There being no one else to speak in support of the application, Chairman Strickland asked for those to speak in opposition of the application. No one spoke.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else had questions. There being no further questions or discussion, Chairman Strickland called for a motion. Mr. McCall made a motion to approve the request as presented, citing criteria "d." Mrs. Hobby seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6 to 0.

CITY OF VALDOSTA CASES

Agenda Item # 3: APP-2015-06—Tacala GA Corp (Taco Bell) (1199 N. St Augustine Rd, Valdosta)

Chairman Strickland announced the case.

Ms. Tolley stated that Tacala GA Corp, located at 1199 N St Augustine Road on the NE corner of N St Augustine Road and Gornto Road, was asking for three variances. The property is 0.79 acres, is zoned C-H, and contains an existing 2,648 Taco Bell restaurant. The property is in the Baytree University Corridor Overlay also. The applicant intends to demolish the existing building and build a new restaurant, and is required to meet today's regulations. The applicant is asking for three variances—as they pertain to stacking spaces in a drive-thru, the number of parking spaces, and pronounced building entries as required by the Baytree University Corridor Overlay. Regarding stacking spaces, the LDR requires six stacking spaces in front of the order board. In this instance, four are being proposed. The intent of the ordinance is not to block traffic circulation on site, nor to block traffic off site in the public ROW. This proposed site plan depicts eight spaces from the pick-up window, allowing drive-thru traffic to be separate from other traffic on site, so it does meet the intent of the ordinance. Regarding the number of parking spaces, the LDR requires 14 spaces per 1000 sq. ft of GFA. In this instance, the proposed 2330 sq ft building would require a total of 33 parking spaces—and is proposing to provide 29. The parcel is a smaller parcel and is unable to meet all of today's standards (landscaping, parking, etc.) without relief. The third variance request relates to pronounced building entries required by the Baytree University Corridor Overlay. The intent of the overlay is to help create an attractive city, particularly among Valdosta's commercial corridors. The overlay requires an entry that is oriented towards a public street to be covered through means of an awning, projecting canopy, or within a tower projecting from the primary façade to protect customers from the elements. Upon reviewing the requests, staff found the requests concerning stacking spaces and the number of parking spaces to be consistent with the Variance Review Criteria and recommends for approval, and found the request for the relief for pronounced entries to be inconsistent with the Variance Review Criteria and recommends for denial.

Chairman Strickland asked the Board if they had any questions for staff. Mrs. Hobby asked what the reason was for Taco Bell to request relief from the pronounced entry requirement. Ms. Tolley stated she was unaware of a reason. Mrs. Hobby asked if a canopy could be used to meet the requirement. Ms. Tolley stated yes. Mrs. Hobby asked if the requirement extended to the pick-up window at the drive-thru. Ms. Tolley stated no, it applied solely to the entrances and exits. Mrs. Hobby asked if the Taco Bell on N. Ashley Street had covered entrances. Ms. Tolley stated yes. Dr. Houseal asked if denying the variance request would impede the process of plans approval. Ms. Tolley stated that, in staff's opinion, it would not. Chairman Strickland suggested that Dr. Houseal ask the same question to the applicant.

Being that there were no further questions for staff, Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the applicant. Mike Gray, 3750 Corporate Woods Drive, Vestavia, AL spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Gray stated that Taco Bell altered their corporate architecture which removed the covered entry options due to sagging framework around previous covered entries, but he thought there was a way in which they could engineer an option to meet the covered entry requirement.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak in support of the application. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the request. No one spoke.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to make a motion. Mrs. Quarterman made a motion to approve a variance of two stacking spaces (for a total of 4 from the order board) and a variance of 4 less parking spaces (for a total of 29 parking spaces) and denial of the request for relief relating to the covering of entries. Mr. Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed 6 to 0.

Agenda Item # 4: APP-2015-07—Stalvey-Ace Properties (4387 Inner Perimeter Road, Valdosta)

Chairman Strickland announced the case.

Ms. Tolley stated that Stalvey-Ace Properties, LLC, is requesting variances to LDR Sections 210-2(L) and 214-7 as they pertain to the façade of a building. The subject property is in the Inner Perimeter Road Corridor Overlay District, is zoned C-H, consists of 5.23 acres, and is located at 4387 Inner Perimeter Road. The parcel contains an existing electrical and communications contractor (Ace Electric). The applicant is proposing to build a 15,000 sq. ft warehouse building in the rear yard of the property, and is proposing to utilize a mostly metal-clad building to match the 12,400 sq. ft existing building, which has masonry and metal siding. Section 214-7 of the LDR requires that the front façade and 10 feet back on each side of a metal-clad building to be covered with materials such as brick, wood, or stone to prevent an industrial type look in the City's commercial corridors. Additionally, the building is in the Inner Perimeter Road Corridor District, which requires a façade of materials such as stucco, wood, or brick on the elevations of buildings visible from parking lots and/or street frontages in order to help create aesthetically appealing commercial corridors within the city. The applicant is also requesting a variance for the existing building which is a metal clad building built under previous regulations and is currently nonconforming. The intent of the regulations prohibiting metal siding is to assist the city's main corridors to appearing commercial in nature rather than industrial. However, the circumstances in this instance are a little different. The proposed building will sit towards the rear of the property behind the existing building and a buffer of trees screens the existing building and rear yard from general traffic on Inner Perimeter. The proposed building will be seen by contractors and employees rather than the general public. The location and the screening help meet the intent of the regulations. In this instance, the applicant is meeting the intent of the regulations through other means, allowing staff to recommend approval with appropriate conditions. Staff recommends approval of the request for both buildings, subject to two conditions—that the approval shall be based on the building size and location as shown on the submitted site plan, and that the existing evergreen trees and landscaping across the front of the property shall be maintained for a distance of at least 125 feet from the front property line. (This is at the point on the side of the existing building where the materials change from masonry to metal siding.)

Chairman Strickland asked the Board if they had any questions. Mrs. Hobby asked why where were two or three trees marked with orange tape. Ms. Tolley stated she was unaware of the reason.

There being no further questions, Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in support of the application. Mr. Glenn Gregory, 3226 Stallings Road, spoke on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Gregory stated he didn't quite understand the two recommended conditions placed on approval of the request. Ms. Tolley stated that, if ZBOA were to approve the request, that they place a condition that the proposed building be the same size and in the same location as shown on the submitted site plan, and that the existing trees and landscaping be maintained across the front of the property for at least a distance of 125 feet from the front property line. Mr. Gregory stated he understood, and those conditions would not be problems. Mr. Gregory stated that there had been a tree inventory done, and some trees were marked with yellow tape. Mrs. Hobby stated that these were marked with orange tape. Mr. Tom Stalvey, 4387 Inner Perimeter Road, stated that the company had looked at the landscaping because they were going to move the power lines, and had identified one tree that would lean over the line and another tree that was partially dead. Mr. Gregory stated that, on the proposed building, there would be some masonry on the front part of the building. Chairman Strickland stated that a large part of the proposed building would not be visible from Inner Perimeter, and that the front portion of the building, that would be visible, would be clad with some masonry.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition. There was no one to speak in opposition.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland called for a motion. Dr. Houseal made a motion to approve the request for variances for both buildings with two conditions-- that the approval shall be based on the building sizes and locations as shown on the submitted site plan, and that the existing evergreen trees and landscaping across the front of the property shall be maintained for a distance of at least 125 feet from the front property line. Mr. Hogan seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 6 to 0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item #5 : Approval of Minutes: September 1, 2015

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone had any issues/corrections with the September 1, 2015 draft minutes. Mrs. Hobby mentioned that her name was in both the "Members Present" and the "Members Absent" columns. Ms. Tolley stated that she would correct the error and remove Mrs. Hobby's name from the "Members Absent" column as she was in attendance at the September meeting. Mrs. Plyer made a motion to approve with the correction. Mrs. Hobby seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 6 to 0.

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Chairman Strickland asked if there had been any progress towards getting ZBOA members some form of ID that they could carry when doing site visits. Ms. Tolley stated that Mr. Matt Martin would be having a discussion with Chief Childress to see if that would be an option, as the police department provides photographic identification for city staff. Mr. Matt Martin stated that if the PD was unable to provide identification, it might be an option to provide ZBOA members with letters that serve as a means of identification. Dr. Houseal stated that he would like to have something, as when he does site visits, he's in a personal vehicle rather than a government car. Mr. Matt Martin stated that staff could update the variance applications to reflect that ZBOA members may be visiting as a part of consideration of any variance requests.

Chairman Strickland asked the Board to think about whether they wanted a holiday party or not, and possible options for a gathering, and mentioned that the Board would need to look at, and adopt, a 2016 meeting calendar in the near future.

Agenda Item # 6: Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:13 pm.

/s/ Allan Strickland
Allan Strickland, Chairman

11/05/2015
Date