

MINUTES

Valdosta-Lowndes Zoning Board of Appeals

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room

300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

December 5, 2017

2:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Paul Alvarado
Nathan Brantley
Victoria Copeland (Left
at 4:04 PM)
Nancy Hobby

John "Mac" McCall
Gretchen Quarterman
Allan Strickland

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Hogan, III

STAFF PRESENT

Carmella Braswell
Tracy Tolley
Debra Tulloch

VISITORS PRESENT

Doran Bland
Peggy Bland
Coleman Brice
Steven Bristow
Travis Catlan
Kyle Coppage
Mitch Cothron
Mitchell Cothron
Teresa Curry

Jason Davenport
Kerry Eason
Gregory Fielding
Julie Fielding
Mike Fletcher
Jody Hall
Thad Heaney Sr.
Thadrick Heaney Jr.
Kevin Hollis

John Ingram
Rhonda Ieracitano
Milbrey Jones (Quitman)
Milbrey Jones (Valdosta)
Susie B. Lane
Burke Sherwood
Joshua Stevens
Sarah Varnedoe
Mark Wisenbaker
Elaine (spoke on behalf of
APP-2017-07 but did not give
last name nor sign the sign in
sheet)

Agenda Item # 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Strickland at 2:30 p.m. 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. Chairman Strickland also noted that Lowndes County case VAR-2017-22 from Dale and Susan Poirier had been withdrawn by the applicant and would not be heard by the Board.

LOWNDES COUNTY CASES

Agenda Item # 2: VAR-2017-22 --- Dale & Susan Poirier (4668 Rudy Way, Hahira)

***Withdrawn by applicant

Agenda Item # 3: VAR-2017-23 --- Kevin Hollis on behalf of Edward Jennings, LLC (1529 Madison Highway)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Mrs. Braswell stated that the applicant is asking for a variance to the minimum side yard setback (ULDC Table 4.01.02 (E) to accommodate a speculative metal building for a commercial prospect. The subject property is located at 1529 Madison Highway, consists of 0.70 acres, and is zoned C-G (General Commercial). The applicant is requesting a side yard variance of 10 feet instead of the required 20 feet. They are requesting to be 10 feet from the northern lot line (the side yard) of the parcel. The parcel is in an Institutional Activity Center (IAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. These IAC areas may be characterized by high degrees of access by vehicular traffic, large amounts of on-site parking, and low degrees of open space. Provisions within the ULDC will protect the neighbor to the east with landscape and buffering requirements. The applicant's conceptual site plan shows a proposed 50 feet by 125 feet building located mostly in the NE corner of the lot. If the subject property is developed commercially per existing regulations, the minimum buffer required on the eastern property line would currently be at least 15 feet wide and

include a 6 feet tall opaque privacy fence, 3 shade trees per 100 linear feet, and 19 shrubs per 100 linear feet. Staff reviewed the request and recommended for its approval.

Chairman Strickland asked if there were any questions. Mr. Brantley asked how the northern lot line was determined to be the side yard. Mrs. Braswell stated that Madison Highway was an arterial and the front yard, which determined that the northern lot line would be the side yard. Mr. Brantley asked if this northern lot line was the rear setback, what would the setback be? Mrs. Braswell stated if it was considered the rear lot line, the setback would be 12 feet. Mrs. Hobby asked what the buffer requirement along the eastern property line would be if Madison Highway was considered the front yard. Mrs. Braswell stated that a 30 feet buffer would be required due to the residential zoning, but if an opaque fence was used, then the planting numbers and the width of the buffering would be reduced. Mrs. Hobby asked if any buffering would be required along Lineberger Drive. Mrs. Braswell stated no buffering was required. Mrs. Hobby asked if staff knew what type of business might be located on this parcel. Mrs. Braswell stated they were unaware of any prospective businesses at this time, but that C-G allowed offices, and commercial uses. Mr. Brantley asked where the curb cut would be. Mrs. Braswell stated that there was a current curb cut on Lineberger Drive.

There being no further discussion from the Board, Chairman Strickland asked if Mr. Kevin Hollis would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Kevin Hollis, 2741 Cooper Road, Barney, spoke. He said he was available to address any questions or concerns. Mrs. Quarterman asked why they were not proposing to locate the building closer to Lineberger Drive. Mr. Hollis stated that they had located the building where it was because of where the driveway's location was, to attempt not to have traffic slowing down on Madison Highway. Mrs. Quarterman stated C-G zoning could accommodate a store similar in nature to a Dollar General, which might have truck traffic loading and unloading. Mr. Hollis stated yes, that was a possibility. Mrs. Quarterman asked what the parking standard was for such a use. Mrs. Braswell stated that 1 parking space per every 200 square feet would be required. Mrs. Quarterman stated about 24 or 25 parking spaces would be required, based on the proposed square footage. Chairman Strickland stated that the parking numbers might change, based on the use of the property. Chairman Strickland asked if the plan was to build and sell, or build and lease. Mr. Hollis stated it was to build and lease at this time. Mr. Hollis stated it would be office space and warehouse space, which would require minimal parking. Mr. McCall asked if they were going to leave the existing building or demolish it. Mr. Hollis stated the building had been moved and was no longer on the parcel.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak in support of the application. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition to this request. There was no response. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone contacted the Zoning office. Mrs. Braswell stated there was no contact.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland opened the floor for a motion. Mr. Alvarado made a motion to approve as presented, citing criteria "d." Mrs. Hobby seconded the motion and it was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote).

Agenda Item # 4: VAR-2017-24 --- Mitch Cothron (5310 Tucker Road, Valdosta)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Mrs. Braswell stated that this was a request for a variance to the minimum standards for home occupations as it pertains to employees and the number of commercial vehicles used in the conduct of a home occupation. The subject property consists of 12.54 acres and is located at 5310 Tucker Road in an E-A zoning district. Chapter 5.01.02 of the ULDC provides standards for home occupations. Home occupations are allowed by right in all zoning districts for occupants of the dwelling. They are to be incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling for residential purposes. In this case, the applicant has a business, formally known as Milo Septic Tank & Portable Toilets, that he wants to run from his residence. The business use is allowed, but it is the supplemental standards that is the object for the variance request. Employees for home occupations are limited to the occupants of the dwelling, and no more than 2 commercial vehicles may be utilized for the home occupation (and must be parked in the rear yard). The applicant wishes to have 1 non-resident of the dwelling work there, and wants to have 4 work vehicles. (The applicant is also undergoing a rezoning request to be able to subdivide the property.) Primarily, the business activities on the subject property will be the storage of the portable sanitary units and equipment within an accessory building that is planned to be constructed. Currently, the portable units are stored outside and the current use has triggered a codes enforcement case. Staff and the applicant talked about various options, including a rezoning; the applicant chose the variance route. The Board of Health and EDP will be involved to ensure that the business meets the minimum standards for public health. Additionally, staff has received a number of phone calls and visits from adjacent property owners relating to concerns for potential nuisances (noise, odor, cleanliness, disposal of human waste, etc.). Staff reviewed the request, and is

recommending approval of the variance relating to only one non-resident working on site, and denial of the variance relating to the requested number of commercial vehicles on site.

Mrs. Quarterman stated she had read the supplemental regulations to better understand them, and understood that if they had work vehicles, they needed to be parked in the rear of the property. She asked if there could have customers come to the house. Mrs. Braswell stated no, they could not. Mrs. Braswell stated this owner did two different things—he pumped septic tanks and he rented out portable sanitation units. Mrs. Quarterman asked how many home businesses there were in Lowndes County. Mrs. Braswell stated that half of the business licenses they review were for home occupations, that there are a lot of home businesses in the county. Mrs. Quarterman asked if a hair dresser could have a station in her home. Mrs. Braswell stated she could. Chairman Strickland stated that he worked with people who had home businesses—who were self-employed, but worked as brick masons, landscapers, or other such work. Mrs. Quarterman stated she understood that it might be cost prohibitive to have a brick and mortar office, but sometimes there was a threshold where it became too commercial for a residential area, and it seemed to be when they started employing non-residents. Mrs. Quarterman asked if the County required a conditional use permit for home businesses. Mrs. Braswell stated they did not currently. Mrs. Hobby asked who would be driving the additional vehicles the applicant wanted on his property. Mrs. Braswell stated she would let Mrs. Hobby ask the applicant that question. Mrs. Hobby asked if the applicant could, by right, store the portable sanitation units on his property. Mrs. Braswell stated he could. Mrs. Hobby asked if there was a limit to the number of units he could store. Mrs. Braswell stated there was no limit, but they had to be stored in a building, and that there was a limit to the size of the accessory structure. Mr. Brantley asked how the applicant accessed the property. Mrs. Braswell stated he had his own driveway off of Tucker Road. Chairman Strickland asked if there was a limit to the size of a commercial vehicle parked at a house. Mrs. Braswell stated there was not.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mitch Cothron, 5310 Tucker Road, spoke on behalf of his application. He said they served septic tanks and port-a-potties. He has a gentleman who drives one of his trucks to go service the port-a-potties by pumping them out and putting in toilet paper if needed. They have between 150 and 200 portable restrooms throughout the county. They said they pump septic tanks, and dispose of the waste at the Lowndes County facility. He said he wanted to put the portable restrooms in a three sided storage building on his property. He said he doesn't see a difference in what he has versus what folks throughout the county has—in terms of storing things outside—but he wants to abide by the rules. He said there was a race in Cecil, and had an emergency situation there. He stated they pump the toilets out, that the contents do not come out. He said that dirt and debris get in them sometimes, and they get clogged up, but on this particular day, they had to unclog it on the property. He thinks some neighbors took some pictures, but he will not let that happen again because he does not want to jeopardize his living. He said he's no different from a hog farm or a dairy, that he doesn't wash any manure out.

Mrs. Hobby asked Mr. Cothron asked who was going to be driving the additional trucks. Mr. Cothron stated they were back-up trucks—that one truck would be a primary, the second would be a back-up. Mr. Brantley asked how he accessed his property. Mr. Cothron stated he accessed it on Tucker Road. Mr. Brantley asked how long he'd owned this property. He said since December of last year. Mr. Brantley asked how long he'd been operating his business. Mr. Cothron stated he put his portable restrooms there last August. Chairman Strickland asked if he was renting a previous location for storage. Mr. Cothron stated that was true. Mrs. Quarterman asked if the business had the potential for growth, to possibly need more space. Mr. Cothron stated it had been the same size since 2008. Mrs. Quarterman asked where the business was located before. Mr. Cothron stated it was located on Ocean Pond Avenue in Lake Park.

Chairman Strickland asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak in support of the application. No one else spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the application. Coleman Brice, 1008 N. Patterson Street, an attorney, spoke in opposition on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Fielding, who live at 5332 Tucker Road. Mr. Brice expressed concerns about a wetland on the property, as well as wells in the immediate area. Mr. Brice expressed concern about contamination from run-off from the units. He also expressed concern about the potential runoff/waste impacting the neighbors who farm. Mr. Brice expressed concerns about another potential emergency that might require disposal of the waste, and the neighbors might not feel an impact until years later from contamination. Mr. Brice stated this was in direction conflict with standards set forth in 5.01.02. Mr. Brice read the definitions of home occupation and variances. Mr. Brice stated that Mr. Cothron owned commercially zoned property about 8 miles away where the business was before it moved to Tucker Road. Mr. Brice stated that there were criteria for home occupations—that they should not be noticeable but should blend in with the neighborhood. Mr. Brice stated that the storage of human waste did not seem to fit as a home occupation. Mr. Brice stated that, if the business were to grow, they might need another employee. Mr. Brice stated that home

occupations are to be incidental to the primary residential use of the property. Mr. Brice stated that items for sale or service should not be visible from the street for a home occupation. One can clearly see the port-a-potties from the road. Mr. Brice stated he does not think a good neighbor would place port-a-potties close to fruit bearing trees. Mr. Brice expressed concern about fumes from the port-a-potties migrating to neighbors' properties in spite of buffers. Mr. Brice stated that additional vehicles would promote vibrations and unsightliness, and the business would likely decrease neighboring property values. Mr. Brice stated his neighbors had been there for years, but Mr. Cothron had been there less than a year and wanted to change the dynamics of the area. Mr. Brice stressed that Mr. Cothron had options about his business location, but the neighbors did not.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition to the request. Greg Fielding, 5322 Tucker Road, spoke in opposition. He is in total opposition to this request. Mr. Fielding stated that Mr. Cothron called and asked if he would support a rezoning to commercial zoning. Mr. Fielding asked Mr. Cothron to walk in his shoes, and he was concerned about his property values being hurt. Mr. Fielding stated he and his wife have had steers, hogs, and chicken, and grown crops on the property, and were concerned about effects from waste next door affecting the crops and livestock. He tried to be a good neighbor and help as he could. Mr. Fielding stated that Mr. Cothron had other options and did not have to utilize this property for his business. Mr. Brantley asked what property the Fieldings own. Mr. Fielding indicated what property they own. Chairman Strickland asked how many acres they had. Mr. Fielding stated they had about 15 acres.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition. Doran Bland, 5721 Jumping Gully Road, spoke. Mr. Bland distributed pictures. He indicated on the map where his property and his sister's property was. He reiterated that this building was an existing business, not a business that has been recently started up. Mr. Bland stated that this business could spread pathogens and disease, and that is what the adjacent property owners are concerned about. He is not trying to put Mr. Cothron out of business, but he wanted everyone to understand their concerns. He stated that Mr. Cothron had been in business at this particular location for a few months, and no one knew about it until Mr. Fielding complained and it was discovered that Mr. Cothron had moved and there was a business in operation. Mr. Bland stated this business was inspected once a year due to lack of manpower. He stated there was a septic tank pumping business locally that disposed of the waste illegally which was not discovered till later, and that is what the neighbors were concerned about. Mr. Bland stated he had reviewed the variance guidelines and did not see where the business fit any of the guidelines to receive a variance. Chairman Strickland stated that the variance requests were not to start up a business, but to particular regulations within the ULDC,. Mr. Bland stated he did not see a hardship and respectfully asked the Board to deny the request.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition. Thad Heaney, 7391 Jumping Gully Road, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Heaney expressed concern about runoff waste contaminating water and ending up being consumed by livestock, which might end up on your tables. Chairman Strickland stated that the Board needed just the facts, not threats. Mr. Heaney stated that was not a threat, that if the cow drank the water, it might end up on any of our tables. Mr. Heaney stated it didn't make sense for a business that had an existing commercial location to relocate to an existing residential parcel and then ask for variances.

Chairman Strickland asked if there was anyone else who wanted to speak in opposition. Thadrick Heaney, 7391 Jumping Gully Road, spoke in opposition to the request. He had concerns about waste ending up in the aquifer, and strictly opposes the request because it will affect everyone.

There being no one else to speak, Mr. Mitchell Cothron, the applicant's father wanted to speak. Chairman Strickland stated they were currently listening to people who wanted to speak in opposition. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak in opposition, to share things that had not already been said. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland stated he would give Mr. Cothron a moment to speak. Mr. Mitchell Cothron, 5597 Railroad Avenue stated that all the talk about runoff was hogwash. Chairman Strickland told Mr. Cothron that his time was up, and there was no more time for rebuttals. Chairman Strickland stated the request to speak was out of order as Mr. Cothron had a chance to speak in support earlier in the meeting. Chairman Strickland asked if there was any response to Mrs. Braswell's office. Mrs. Braswell stated they had quite a bit of response. Mrs. Quarterman asked if he could store stuff by right. Mrs. Braswell stated he could. Mrs. Quarterman asked what he could store. Mrs. Braswell stated he could store personal items. Mrs. Quarterman asked if he had a home business, what could he store? Mrs. Braswell stated he could store items related to the home business. Mrs. Quarterman asked if he had a business license for the Ocean Pond location. Mrs. Braswell stated he did. Mrs. Quarterman asked if he had a business license for the Tucker Road location. Mrs. Braswell stated he did not.

Chairman Strickland asked if there was any more discussion. Mrs. Braswell stated they had Mr. Kyle Coppage from the Lowndes County Health Department available if they had questions. Mr. Coppage stated he thought they had a good idea as to what was going on. Chairman Strickland stated he realized that investigations were often complaint driven.

There being no more discussions, Chairman Strickland asked for a motion. Mr. McCall made a motion to deny both variance requests. Mr. Alvarado seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried unanimously with a vote of 6 to 0.

Agenda Item # 5: VAR-2017-25 --- H. Burke Sherwood (5449 Snake Nation Road, Hahira)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. The applicant is asking for a variance to the minimum standards for a home occupation as it pertains to employees of the agriculture home occupation. The subject property is about 9 acres and is located at 5449 Snake Nation Road, Hahira, in an E-A zoning district. Chapter 5.01.02 of the ULDC sets standards for home occupations, which are allowed by right in all zoning districts. Home occupations are intended to be carried on by occupants of the dwelling and incidental to the use of the dwelling. Agricultural home occupations are a little more intense use which has less restrictions than a customary home occupations and are limited to E-A and R-A zoning districts. In this case, the applicant wants to relocate the business, formally known as Denzer Tree Service. The home business is not a matter for consideration, but rather one standard that limits the employees to residents of the dwelling. The current plans are to maintain the employment of three full time employees outside the home. The business activities on the subject property will be the storage of the equipment and there will be no chipping of debris on site, or any repair of vehicles. Staff reviewed the request and is recommending for approval with the condition that the maximum number of outside employees be limited to 3.

Mrs. Quarterman asked how many vehicles they had. Mrs. Braswell stated two.

Chairman Strickland asked if someone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Burke Sherwood, 502 N. Ashley Street, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Sherwood stated it was a tree service. Mrs. Quarterman stated she understood there were 4 employees—one that lived there, and three that did not live there.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in support of the application. Mr. John Ingram, 5449 Snake Nation Road, spoke in support. Chairman Strickland asked if any of the debris would find its way to the property. Mr. Ingram stated any debris that came to the property would stay on the trucks, not in piles on the property. Mr. McCall asked how many trucks they had. Mr. Ingram stated they only had a couple of trucks. Mrs. Quarterman stated they drove to N. Valdosta Road and got the trucks. Mr. Ingram stated the employees took their trucks home with them. Mrs. Quarterman asked if they intended to move the business back to N. Valdosta Road. Mr. Ingram stated they would like to keep it at their house forever, if possible.

Chairman asked if anyone else would like to speak in support. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the request. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if there was any response to Mrs. Braswell's office. Mrs. Braswell stated there was a phone call. Mrs. Quarterman asked if the variance, if granted, ran with the property. Mrs. Braswell stated it did. Chairman Strickland stated it could be placed as a condition for this property that the variance, if granted, would be for this business only. Mrs. Quarterman asked if the business would grow. Mr. Ingram stated the business has been about the same size for the last 50 years.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to make a motion. Mr. Brantley made a motion that the variance be approved for this business only, citing criteria "d." Mr. Alvarado seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried with a vote of 6 to 0.

Ms. Copeland left at 4:04 PM.

CITY OF VALDOSTA CASES:

Agenda Item #6: APP-2017-05 --- Staten Station (NW Corner of Inner Perimeter Road and Lake Laurie Drive)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Ms. Tolley stated that this request was for a variance from LDR section 230-9(D)(4)(b)(i) as it pertains to the number of signs for a multi-tenant complex with multiple street frontages.

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The property is located near the NW corner of Inner Perimeter and Lake Laurie and is zoned CH, and is in the Inner Perimeter Road Corridor Overlay District as well. The applicant is proposing to develop it as a multi-tenant commercial development with multiple parcels. The applicant is negotiating with retail tenants for this location, and is planning for signage for the development. The property can have two freestanding signs, one for each street frontage, both no more than 18 feet tall, and one being no larger than 125 square feet and one being no larger than 62.5 square feet. An administrative variance was granted for the primary sign to be no taller than 21.5 square feet. The applicant is asking for variances to allow monument signs along the internal access road towards the rear of the property. Staff understands that the property is larger than most C-H zoned parcels, and visibility is limited towards the rear of the property. This is a unique development with multiple parcels and multiple tenants with limited visibility, so staff recognizes hardship and recommends approval with several conditions: that the signs shall be monument only, no taller than 7 feet, and no larger than 40 square feet, and there shall be no directional signs, portable signs, electronic message signs, or other internal freestanding signs in this development.

Chairman Strickland asked where they intended to locate this particular sign. Ms. Tolley stated it was proposed to be located just off the internal access road, behind Dairy Queen. Mr. Brantley asked what they were entitled to as a matter of right. Ms. Tolley stated they were allowed to have one along Lake Laurie and one along Inner Perimeter. Mr. Brantley asked where the Wooden Nickel's sign was, and where the signs were for the bank and for Dairy Queen. Ms. Tolley indicated where those particular signs were, and that they were permitted before the owner started planning for the multi-tenant complex. Mrs. Quarterman asked if these tenants could have wall signs. Ms. Tolley stated they could. Mrs. Quarterman asked what the hardship was. Ms. Tolley stated the hardships were the size of the lots and distance from Inner Perimeter Road. Mrs. Hobby asked if the sign would be similar to the sign at the Dairy Queen. Ms. Tolley said it would be similar. Mr. McCall asked what constituted a directional sign. Ms. Tolley stated the LDR had specific regulations in terms of height and size for directionals.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Sarah Varnedoe, 3998 Inner Perimeter Road, said she was available for questions. Mrs. Quarterman asked if the developer planned on selling any property. Ms. Varnedoe said she was not sure. Mr. Brantley asked if a lot could be subdivided with access to an internal access road. Ms. Varnedoe said she wasn't sure.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak on behalf of the application. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition to the application. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone had called the Zoning office. Ms. Tolley stated a representative from the Property Assessor's office had called to find out more information.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland called for a motion. Mr. Alvarado made a motion to approve the request as presented with the conditions as recommended by staff. Mrs. Hobby seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried unanimously with a vote of 5 to 0.

Agenda Item #7: APP-2017-06 --- Axis Infrastructure (4109 Bemiss Road)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Ms. Tolley stated that the applicant was requesting a variance to LDR Section 230-9(E)(3) as it pertains to the size of signs—menu boards specifically—at drive through restaurants. The subject property consists of 1.54 acres and is located at 4109 Bemiss Road, on the SW corner of Bemiss Road and Skipper Bridge Road. The property is zoned C-C and contains an existing fast food restaurant and convenience store. The McDonald's portion of the building was being renovated, and some signage would be replaced. The applicant submitted a sign application, in which staff determined that the menu boards were too large to permit. The applicant proposed 2 pre-sell boards and 2 menu boards for a total of 53.13 square feet, which was larger than the 48 square feet that staff could permit and the 52.80 square feet that could be considered administratively. Currently, the restaurant had 2 menu boards at 50 square feet each. Staff reviewed the request, found no hardship, and recommend denial. Mr. McCall asked if it was less than 1 square foot that brought this case to ZBOA. Ms. Tolley stated that was correct.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in support of the application. Teresa Curry, 1111 Cambridge Square, Alpharetta, GA, spoke on behalf of the application. Ms. Curry stated there were two large menu boards currently existing. She stated that McDonald's was getting away from the large menu boards because most customers already knew what they wanted. Ms. Curry stated the sign manufacturer only made certain sizes of boards.

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 application. No one spoke.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to make a motion. Mr. McCall made a motion to approve the variance as presented. Mr. Alvarado seconded the motion. The motion was called and approved with a vote of 4 to 1, with Mrs. Quarterman voting against the motion.

Agenda Item #8: APP-2017-07 --- Messiah Lutheran Church (500 Baytree Road)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Ms. Tolley stated that Messiah Lutheran Church, 500 Baytree Road, was applying for a variance to LDR Section 230-9(E)(6)(a) as it pertains to the location of a variable message board. The subject property consists of 1.99 acres and contains an existing church. The property is zoned R-10. The church is requesting a variance to allow a variable message board on a residentially zoned property. In residentially zoned districts, institutional uses are permitted to have signs no taller than six feet and no larger than 24 square feet in size. This particular church's sign is 37.44 square feet and 8 feet in height, and they would like to replace the 21.84 square feet manual reader board with a variable message board. Variable message boards are intended for commercial districts such as C-C and C-H. This portion of Baytree Road is more residential. Baytree, as it approaches the Mall, becomes more commercialized and eligible for variable message boards. However, this area is more residential in nature and does not lend to the appropriateness of a variable message board. Staff reviewed the request and found no hardship. Therefore, staff recommends denial.

Mrs. Quarterman asked if they were C-C, if they could have the variable message board by right. Ms. Tolley stated they could. Mrs. Hobby asked why the church did not ask for a rezoning. Ms. Tolley stated the church was advised to apply for the variance rather than the rezoning. Mr. Brantley asked how common it was for churches to be in residential districts. Ms. Tolley stated that there were churches in a wide variety of zoning districts throughout Valdosta, not just commercial zoning districts. Chairman Strickland stated that this was a legal, nonconforming use at this particular location. Mrs. Hobby asked how many signs had been changed over from a manual reader board to a variable message board at a church. Ms. Tolley stated she had no numbers.

There being no more discussion, Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Elaine, 500 Baytree Road, spoke on behalf of the church. They do not want the sign to be any larger, but want the sign to be current with today's technology. There are businesses in the corridor where they are.

Chairman Strickland asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak on behalf of the variance. Rhonda Ieracitano, 1500 Mockingbird Lane, spoke on behalf of the application. She stated that the sign was outdated and they needed an updated version by replacing the static panel with the digital panel, not replacing the sign as a whole.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone had contacted the office. Ms. Tolley stated there had been no contact. Chairman Strickland asked for a motion. Mrs. Quarterman made a motion to approve the request as presented. Mr. Alvarado seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried with a vote of 5 to 0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item # 9: Approval of Minutes: November 7, 2017

Chairman Strickland asked if there were any concerns with the draft minutes. There being none, he called for a motion. Mrs. Hobby made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mrs. Quarterman seconded the motion and it was called and carried unanimously (5-0 vote).

Agenda Item # 10: Nomination of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Chairman Strickland stated that Allan Strickland was nominated for Chairman and John "Mac" McCall was nominated for Vice-Chairman at the November meeting. Mr. Brantley made a motion to accept this slate. Mrs. Hobby seconded this motion. The motion was called and carried unanimously with a vote of 5 to 0.

Agenda Item # 11: Adoption of 2018 Calendar

Chairman Strickland stated they had the 2018 calendar in front of them and asked if any changes needed to be made. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland called for a motion. Mrs. Quarterman made a motion to approve the calendar as presented. Mr. Alvarado seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried with a vote of 5 to 0.

Agenda Item # 12: Discussion Item: Holiday Gathering

Chairman Strickland stated that the holiday gathering was being planned. Mrs. Braswell listed who was coming and what food items they were bringing.

Agenda Item # 13: Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

/s/ Allan Strickland, IV
Allan Strickland, IV, Chairman

January 9, 2018
Date