

# MINUTES

## Valdosta-Lowndes Zoning Board of Appeals

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room

300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

January 9, 2018

2:30 p.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Paul Alvarado  
Nathan Brantley  
Victoria Copeland  
Nancy Hobby

John "Mac" McCall  
Gretchen Quarterman  
Allan Strickland

### MEMBERS ABSENT

John Hogan, III

### STAFF PRESENT

Carmella Braswell  
Tracy Tolley

### VISITORS PRESENT

Lola Moore  
Paul McNeil  
Mike Williams  
Rick Williams

### 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 Chairman Strickland announced that VAR-2018-02 had been withdrawn by the applicant.

## LOWNDES COUNTY CASES

### Agenda Item # 2: VAR-2018-01— Joan F. James (Mable Road, Valdosta)

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Mrs. Braswell stated that this case was a request for a variance to minimum lot width. Mrs. Braswell stated a similar case was considered by ZBOA about a year before regarding property nearby; the applicant's brother was the applicant in that case. The property is located on Mable Road in a R-1 zoning district, consists of 1 acre, and is asking for a variance from ULDC 1.01.01(E) and Table 4.01.01(G). The applicant wants to record a survey plat and the plat depicts 105 feet of lot width rather than the required 120 feet. Therefore, a variance of 15 feet is being requested to the minimum lot width in R-1 zoning. The property was originally owned by the applicant's mother, who wanted the subject property divided evenly among her six children upon her demise. Staff reviewed the request and is recommending approval as the variance does not appear that it would negatively affect the surrounding properties nor cause a substantial detriment to the public good.

Chairman Strickland asked if there were any questions. Mrs. Hobby stated that this request appears to be close to the existing mobile home. Mrs. Braswell stated the plat doesn't depict an encroachment. Mrs. Hobby asked if the mobile home was owned by a family member. Mrs. Braswell stated it was. Mr. McCall stated the drawing they were given was out of line with the actual property lines. Mrs. Braswell stated those tax parcel lines could be off somewhat. Mrs. Quarterman stated that any new structures would need to meet setbacks. Mrs. Braswell stated that was true. Mr. Brantley stated this property looked familiar. Mrs. Braswell stated that the property labeled as "Tract 3" underwent a similar variance request about a year before, which ZBOA granted, and was created by a deed, which had no survey plat.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland asked if there was any more discussion or any more questions. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak in support of the application. Lola Moore, 603 S. College Street, Hahira, said she was there in support of the application as the applicant's friend. Mrs. Braswell noted that the applicant lives in Sacramento. 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 a neighbor called with questions, not really in support or opposition.

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

**Agenda Item # 3: VAR-2018-02 --- SEEP, LLC (4232 Dasher Grove Road, Hahira)**

This case was withdrawn by the applicant.

**CITY OF VALDOSTA CASE**

**Agenda Item # 4: APP-2017-08 --- Williams Investment Company (1003 N. St Augustine Rd)**

Chairman Strickland announced the case. Ms. Tolley stated that this was a case regarding a proposed high-rise sign at 1003 N. St Augustine Rd. Williams Investment Company is proposing a high rise sign located at 1003 N. St Augustine Rd. The property consists of 4.15 acres and is zoned C-C. The property contains a 4 story extended stay hotel currently under construction. The applicants are proposing a high rise sign that is 120 feet tall and 248.61 square feet in size. High-rise signs are intended to be visible from I-75 ROW in order to advertise to travelers rather than to locals, and are limited to a distance of 1500 feet from the interstate's ROW. This particular sign is proposed to be about 4000 feet from the nearest on/off ramp at Exit 18, and about 3200 feet as the crow flies from I-75's ROW. Staff reviewed the request, found no hardship, and recommended for denial.

Chairman Strickland asked if there were any questions. Mrs. Hobby asked how tall a sign would be in that location. Ms. Tolley asked if she was referring to a high rise sign or not. Mrs. Hobby stated she was not referring to a high rise sign. Ms. Tolley stated that a single tenant sign could be no taller than 24 feet in height, and for multi-tenant signage, the maximum height would be 35 feet. Chairman Strickland stated that his understanding was that high-rises were required to be in the rear of the property, and this high rise's location was in the center of the location. Ms. Tolley stated that no variance was needed for the proposed location of this particular high rise, other than its location outside of the 1500 feet requirement. Mr. Brantley asked if the property had been subdivided. Ms. Tolley stated that no plat had been submitted for this property, and she was not sure if the applicant had any intent to subdivide in the future.

There being no further questions, Chairman Strickland asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mike Williams, 4611 Ridgeview Circle, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Williams stated they were trying to get above the trees on the neighboring property, and that the high rise sign was a piece of their marketing plan for the hotel. Their hotel was one of the few hotels outside of the 1500 feet perimeter, but interstate travelers were important to their hotel. Mr. Williams stated the only way that people would know where they were, other than removing the trees, would be a high-rise sign. Mr. Williams stated that the front portion of the property was on the market, but they had not found the right client yet. Mr. Williams stated they did want to have a 24 ft. tall sign along N. St Augustine Road. Mrs. Hobby stated that a high rise sign was to get attention of interstate travelers as well as those getting off of the interstate. Mrs. Hobby stated she was impressed with how nice the hotel was looking, but had concerns about the aesthetics of a high rise at that particular location. Mr. Williams stated if they thought they were doing anything to damage the aesthetics of the property, they would not do it. Mr. Williams stated they wanted to keep the N. St Augustine address. Chairman Strickland asked if they would be accessing the property from Hickory Road. Mr. Williams stated they had a curb cut off of N. St Augustine. Chairman Strickland stated that, given that it's an extended stay, his understanding was that the clients would be there for a while, maybe a month, and would not utilize the Williams' other hotels, as they were intended more for those staying a night or two. Mr. Williams stated that was not always necessarily the case, that about 60 percent of the clients utilized the facility for an extended stay, while the other 40 percent were interstate travelers using the facility for a night or two.

Chairman Strickland asked if there was any further discussion. Ms. Tolley stated she had double-checked the regulations regarding the location of a high rise sign, and that they were to be at least 150 feet from any street right of way and preferably located in the rear yard setback area of the parcel—but that as long as they were at least 150 feet from a street right of way, which this sign was proposed to be, the location was sufficient. Mr. Brantley asked if the sign would be oriented as shown. Mr. Williams stated it would be. Mr. Williams stated it served as an introduction to their customers, and that they would not spend \$80,000 on the sign if they thought it would be a detriment to the property. Chairman Strickland stated he had concerns about other businesses in the area asking for a similar variance for high rise signs. Mrs. Quarterman asked what signage would be there if they

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didn't get approval for the high rise sign. Mr. Williams stated they would have a 24 ft. tall freestanding sign. Mrs. Quarterman asked if they would have a wall sign. Mr. Williams stated they would have wall signage, but you have to be close to see the wall sign.

Mr. Rick Williams, 3331 Plantation Drive, approached the podium. He stated their business was a family business and based out of Adel. He said they moved to Valdosta years ago and built a Comfort Inn and Suites recently, and this Candlewood Suites was their first venture into extended stay facilities. He stated he would estimate their business to be about half interstate travelers and half extended stay. He stated you couldn't really see the signage because of the trees. Mrs. Hobby asked who owned the trees. Mr. Rick Williams stated there were several owners. Mrs. Hobby asked if they had spoken to the owners about trimming the trees. Chairman Strickland stated he wasn't sure they could do that because of buffering and landscaping regulations. Mrs. Quarterman stated that the hotel property was commercial, and the adjacent property is commercially zoned as well. Ms. Tolley stated that Mrs. Quarterman was correct in the sense that both properties were commercially zoned and that the city arborist and landscaping staff would need to be consulted to find out what options are available.

Chairman Strickland asked if anyone else would like to speak. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone wanted to speak in opposition. No one spoke. Chairman Strickland asked if anyone had contacted the office. Ms. Tolley stated no one had contacted her office.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Strickland opened the floor for a motion. Mrs. Quarterman made a motion to deny the request as presented. Mrs. Hobby seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 4 to 3, with Mr. Alvarado, Mr. Brantley, and Mr. McCall voting against the motion. The applicants thanked the Board for their consideration.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Agenda Item # 5: Approval of Minutes: December 5, 2017**

Chairman Strickland said it was time to consider the minutes. He stated there were a few grammatical errors, which he had called Ms. Tolley about. Mrs. Braswell stated she had noticed a few grammatical errors, but would talk to Ms. Tolley afterward. Chairman Strickland called for a motion. Mr. McCall made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Mrs. Copeland seconded the motion and it was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote).

#### **Agenda Item # 6: Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

/s/ John McCall  
John "Mac" McCall, Vice-Chairman

February 6, 2018  
Date