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JANE WEST, ESQ.
CITY ATTORNEY

SUNNI KRANTZ, CMC
CITY CLERK



MINUTES
CITY OF PALATKA
September 3, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER at 4:00 PM.

a. Invocation

led by Chaplain Mulberry.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

led by Ms. Wilson.

c. Roll Call

Present:

Edie Wilson

George DeLoach

Earl Wallace

Chase Barnes

Ed Killebrew

Absent:

Caitlin Owens

Andrew Burnett

Also present: Lorenzo Aghemo Planning Director, Sunni Krantz, City Clerk, Jane West, City Attorney, Renee' Brown, Planner I; Alonzo Mulberry, City Chaplain (present via telecommunications technology); Cheryl Roach, Sara Cavacini, Palatka Daily News; Ben Bates; Terrill Hill, former Mayor; Allegra Kitchens, former City Commissioner; Jim Troiano; Bernard Meehan; Elizabeth van Rensburg; Preston Sloan; Dannise Kemp

d. Appeal Procedures & ExParte Communication

Time was allotted for ex parte communications. The appeal procedures were read.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. August 6, 2024

Mr. Wallace asked the word "encryption" in the first paragraph of page 5 be changed to "restriction". The Clerk made the change in the official record.

Motion to approve by Mr. Barnes. Seconded by Ms. Wilson. The Motion passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. **Public Comments** - (Speakers limited to three minutes - no action taken on items)

The floor was opened to public comment. Upon hearing no comments, the floor was closed to public comment.

4. REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. PB Case 24-17: Conditional Use application to allow a new restaurant to serve alcohol within 100-feet of a church. Owner: Palatka RTG, LLC; Address 801 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177; Parcel #42-10-27-6850-0630-0050

Mr. Aghemo addressed the Board on this request to serve alcohol within 100 feet of a religious institution. While Staff recommended approval, subject to the conditions in the staff report, particularly the amount of parking spaces and that the conditional use commence within 6 months of issuance. Staff also included finding of facts for the Board's consideration. Mr. Aghemo advised the neighbors were notified of today's hearing and the site was posted.

Mr. Jim Troiano 620 S State Rd 19, Ste. 2, Palatka, FL 32177 addressed the Board on behalf of Palatka RTG, previously known as Beck Sloan Properties. Breck Sloan and Brad Sloan are still the majority shareholders. This is the old "Texaco Station". They are within 100 feet of two churches, they have reached out to the Church across the street and have reached out to the Church to the West and shared their business plan with them. This will be a full-service family-oriented restaurant. They will have 70% food to alcohol-type restaurant, not a bar. Mr. Troiano advised they are open to working with the City, concerning parking needs and they are looking at opportunities to work with the City regarding parking. They are in agreement that the permit should commence within 6 months.

Tim Flannagan (spelling?) addressed the Board, provided a handout, spoke regarding the restaurant's menu, such as the "smash burgers". He advised the restaurant will have a small bar with about 7 seats, while the remainder of the space will be dining. They have retained an old hand-painted Texaco sign they will incorporate in the decor.

Board discussion commenced. Mr. DeLoach spoke in support. Chair Killebrew expressed concern there are not letters of support from the AME Church. Mr. Troiano advised the AME Church is about 262 feet, not 100 feet from the proposed site. He also spoke regarding receiving a letter of support from the Pastor of Holy Word Revival Center and from members of the St. Mary's Church.

The floor was opened to public comment:

Ms. Allegra Kitchens 1026 S. 12th St., Palatka, FL 32177 - advised the owner of the churches, not the members would need to give approval. She advised there is no support or opposition from Saylor's or Terrill Hill, PA. There is a City requirement for buffering or screening around the alcohol serving part outside.

Hearing no further requests to comment, the floor was closed to public comment.

Mr. Troiano responded there would be certain buffering with pavers. He advised if fencing is deemed appropriate by the City, they will make it happen. Mr. Aghemo responded at the site plan level they will review buffers.

Motion to approve the conditional use incorporating the findings of fact [below] and including the two conditions [below] by Mr. Barnes. Seconded by Mr. DeLoach. The Motion Passed unanimously.

Findings of Fact:

1. Whereas the application for the requested conditional use approval has been deemed complete;
2. Whereas the approval of the request as conditioned will not adversely affect the public interest;
3. Whereas the application meet the requirements for a conditional use approval as demonstrated by the staff analysis;
4. Whereas the application as conditioned is in general compliance with the comprehensive plan.

Conditions:

1. In consultation with the City the applicant shall make efforts to address the anticipated parking demand;
2. The conditional use approval shall expire six months from the date of approval unless, upon request, an extension of time is granted by the Planning Board.

- b. PB Case 24-18: Conditional Use application to add at least 7 hotel room suites to the 2nd floor of the property to expand services from the Hotel James, the anchor building. Owners: Palatka RTG, LLC; Address 211 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177; Parcel #42-10-27-6850-0120-0020

Mr. Aghemo addressed the Board. This is a conditional use to allow a hotel as our code is not specific regarding a hotel unit. The applicant is seeking to develop up to 7 hotel units/suites and to allow for a restaurant. Staff felt the applicant needs to verify the rooms will function as a hotel. While there is no requirement to provide parking in the DB and DR zonings, however Staff is asking for a condition that they address the parking demand that will be created by the hotel use. The application meets most of the Comprehensive Plan elements as well as egress. Staff requests the applicant address the location of the dumpster. The applicant has requested since the time of agenda publication that the matter not be contingent upon reestablishing the Hotel James. Staff requests conditional use to expire within 6 months if it does not commence in that time (or they can request an extension later). Mr. Aghemo advised this is a conditional use for a hotel, not for a site plan.

Mr. Jim Troiano on behalf of RTG, LLC 620 S SR 19, Palatka, FL 32177, addressed the board. The property has been transferred from Beck Sloan Properties to Palatka RTG, LLC. The major shareholders are Breck and Bradley Sloan. He spoke regarding the changing economic environment in the community. Quint Studer, the author, spoke regarding rebuilding downtown and build out from there as it sparks growth in the community. He spoke regarding this request being the second floor of the 211 St. Johns Ave., formerly known as the McCrory's Building. The applicant has requested site plan review with the City and building review with the County. He advised they will work with the City regarding the location of the dumpster to ensure the City's equipment can easily access the dumpster. They understand parking is a commodity and will look at parking issues with the City. There are existing parking spaces behind the boat ramp and next to the Church. They agree to the requirement to use the conditional use within 6 months. They will have a food court/hall downstairs and a hotel check-in with hotel rooms upstairs. Mr. Troiano advised this will happen before the Hotel James is ready. They are reviewing plans for Hotel James at this time. There are 6 suites each with a different configuration. He spoke regarding the suite on the bottom right corner of the site plan of 28 that includes two bedrooms. It has one green room, one large room, and then 5 subrooms.

The floor was opened to public comment:

Dannise Kemp 305 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - owner of "Ms. D's Quilts" spoke in support, asked for clarification on the connection with the Hotel James, expressed support of downtown becoming a historic district, asked what the final build will look like. Primarily, she had concerns regarding the quantity of parking spaces and also spoke of concerns with parking during construction of the buildings.

Ben Bates 3400 Crill Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - one of the owners of the Bingo Palace, spoke in support of revitalization of downtown.

Allegra Kitchens, 1027 S 12th St., Palatka, FL., 32177 - spoke of concerns with the number of suites.

Hearing no further requests to comment, the floor was closed to public comment.

Mr. Tim Flannagan (spelling?) advised the food court at 211 St Johns Ave. will have a small bakery, biscuit concept, pizza concept, small bar on the backside with wraps and bowls, and an area for pop-ups (small retail). They will be incorporating a small front desk for check-in for the hotel rooms upstairs.

Mr. Jim Troiano advised the Department of Business and Professional Regulation says a hotel is any public lodging for 25 or more guests, based upon the configuration, they can accommodate 25 or more guests. He advised Fla. Stat. 509 defines transient public dwellings. He advised the rooms at 211 and 229 will provide all services necessary, as the Hotel James comes online it will be incorporated, however they meet the requirements of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation and Florida Statutes as a hotel without using Hotel James as an anchor. Ms. West spoke regarding the municipal code definition of a Hotel. This will function as a hotel, not a boarding house, under the code. Mr. Troiano advised they are exploring opportunities for parking, including looking at their own properties and obtaining via a lease or Memorandum of Understanding with a neighbor to obtain more parking spaces. They have a parcel across the road, however it may need to be used as a lay-down yard.

Board discussion commenced. Mr. DeLoach spoke regarding the public's perception of parking. Ms. Wilson spoke regarding valet parking in other large cities. She spoke in favor of having public parking lots identified on a map.

approve the conditional use to add 6 - 7 hotel rooms to the second floor of 211 St. Johns Ave subject to the recommendation of staff striking condition 1 but to include 2, 3, 4 and the supplemental comments, incorporating the findings of fact,

Motion to approve the conditional use to add 6 - 7 hotel suites, referencing the findings of fact [below], and striking condition 1 [below], and approving conditions 2, 3, and 4 [below] by Mr. Barnes. Seconded by Mr. DeLoach. The Motion Passed unanimously.

Findings of Fact:

1. Whereas the application for the requested conditional use approval has been deemed complete;
2. Whereas the approval of the request as conditioned will not adversely affect the public interest;
3. Whereas the application meets the requirements for a conditional use permit as demonstrated by staff analysis;
4. Whereas the application as conditioned is in compliance with the comprehensive plan;
5. Whereas the implementation of the proposed use along with the applicant's overall plan for St. Johns Ave will revitalize the downtown area generating economic growth in the City of Palatka.

Conditions:

- ~~1. Approval of the seven (7) hotel/motel rooms is contingent upon the re-establishment of the James Hotel;~~
2. The applicant shall submit a site plan indicating the location of the dumpster and maneuverability of the site for adequate collection by service trucks;
3. In consultation with the City, the applicant shall make all efforts to address the parking demand to be generated by the proposed use;
4. The conditional use approval shall expire six months from the date of approval unless, upon request, an extension of time is granted by the Planning Board.

- c. PB Case 24-19: Conditional Use application to add at least 8 hotel rooms to the 2nd floor of the property to expand services from the Hotel James, the anchor building. Owner: Palatka RTG, LLC; Address 229 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177; Parcel #42-10-27-6850-0120-0010

Mr. Aghemo presented the case. He advised it is the same as the previous item in that the issues presented and Staff's concerns are the same. He asked for condition number 1 to be stricken as it is not dependent upon Hotel

James (as in the case above).

Mr. Jim Troiano 620 S. SR 19, Palatka, FL 32177 addressed the Board on behalf of RTG LLC - they have worked with City Staff and asked the Board to mirror the vote was taken on Case 24-19 above. They are in agreement with Staff's recommendations. He advised there are 8 rooms that will be similar in design as what was a "store room" will be a room. There will be an elevator and stairs at the back. They intend the rooms to look appropriate to the time period of the building. In the old "Diana Shop" downstairs they will have a flex space to bring in entertainment or be used as a conference space.

Chair Killebrew advised this building used to have a 3rd floor before it was destroyed by fire.

The floor was opened to public comment:

Danise Kemp 305 St. Johns Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - owner of "Ms. D's Quilts" spoke regarding parking issues and expressed her customers are accustomed to parking at the Riverfront and walking, her concerns are on quantity of parking rather than distance. She spoke in support of more retail downtown.

Ben Bates 3400 Crill Ave., Palatka, FL 32177 - spoke regarding the efforts of Elevate Putnam, a project of the Chamber of Commerce, to revitalize our community. They have hired Retail Strategies to improve retail offerings. He spoke regarding the efforts to look into parking.

Allegra Kitchens 1027 S 12th St., Palatka, FL 32177 - provided photographs of the building when it had 3 stories. She spoke of the efforts of revitalization. She spoke in favor of the conditional uses being contingent upon the Hotel James. She advised this building was the "Kupperbusch Hotel and Restaurant".

Hearing no further comments, the floor was closed to public comment.

Mr. Jim Troiano spoke regarding giving back to the community.

Board discussion commenced. Chair Killebrew spoke regarding the revitalization of Apalachicola. He spoke of his opinion that Beck Sloan Properties is working to take us back to our roots as a "River Town".

Motion to approve the conditional use, adding 7 - 8 hotel rooms to the 2nd floor of 229 St Johns Ave, referencing the findings of fact [below] and subject to the conditions of the Staff report excluding number 1 but including 2, 3, 4 by Mr. Barnes. Seconded by Mr. DeLoach. The Motion Passed unanimously.

Findings of Fact:

1. Whereas the application for the requested conditional use approval has been deemed complete;
2. Whereas the approval of the request as conditioned will not adversely affect the public interest;
3. Whereas the application meets the requirements for a conditional use permit as demonstrated by staff analysis;
4. Whereas the application as conditioned is in compliance with the comprehensive plan.
5. Whereas the implementation of the proposed use along with the applicant's overall plan for St. Johns Ave will revitalize the downtown area generating economic growth in the City of Palatka.

Conditions:

1. ~~Approval of the eight (8) hotel/motel rooms is contingent upon the re-establishment of the James Hotel;~~
2. The applicant shall submit a site plan indicating the location of the dumpster and maneuverability of the site for adequate collection by service trucks;
3. In consultation with the City, the applicant shall make all efforts to address the parking demand to be generated by the proposed use;

4. The conditional use approval shall expire six months from the date of approval unless, upon request, an extension of time is granted by the Planning Board.
5. STAFF COMMENTS Mr. Aghemo recognized Renee' Brown has been promoted to the Planner I position.
6. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS Mr. Wallace asked Staff to look into the art work at the Race Trac at the corner of Hwy 20 and 19. Ms. West advised Code Enforcement has been notified of this and the other issues raised at the last meeting during board member comments.
7. ADJOURN **Motion to adjourn at 5:54 PM by Mr. Barnes.**