

**CITY OF RICHMOND HILL PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 24, 2020 7 P.M.
MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Billy Albritton, Triple Cooper, Ron Elliott, Charles Blanks, Lavetris Singleton

STAFF PRESENT: Scott Allison, Randy Dykes, Amanda Styer

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT: None

GUESTS PRESENT: Alonzo Brown, John Baggett, Sharyn Baggett, Kenneth Rushing, Wesley Brown, Stephen Wilson, Julie Frazier, Shelly Harrell, Rusty Ross, Rob Rayner, Teresa Rayner, Theresa Poinsett, Hubert Quiller, Johnnie Quiller, Donald Singleton, illegible signature

1. Chairman Albritton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Vice-chairman Cooper provided a brief invocation.
3. Commissioner Blanks recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Approval/Disapproval of the August 10, 2020 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 10, 2020; motion seconded by Commissioner Cooper and carried by all.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. A petition has been filed with the City of Richmond Hill by Savannah Health Services, LLC dba Memorial Health University Medical Center, requesting to rezone 46.16 acres located at the intersection of Port Royal Road and Highway 144, with a map & parcel number of 061-055, from Unincorporated Bryan County Zone A-5, Agricultural District to City of Richmond Hill Zone C-1, General Commercial District.

Assistant City Manager Scott Allison stated the petition to annex went before City Council during their last meeting and this public hearing is for the rezoning that must take place if the property is annexed. He explained following tonight's recommendation, the rezoning will require two readings by City Council, with the first reading being Tuesday, September 1 and the second reading being Tuesday, October 6. Mr. Allison explained the annexation has not been approved at this time, but would need to be approved just prior to the rezoning being approved.

Mr. Allison explained a conceptual layout is within the Planning Commission packet, along with the rezoning standards and criteria section of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). He explained the commercial district uses are also shown in the packet and reminded the board that once rezoned to C-1, General Commercial, any use listed as permitted for that zone would be allowed on this property. Mr. Allison stated the permitted uses for a C-1 district are similar to the uses located within the adjacent Publix Shopping Center.

Mr. Allison explained City water and sewer are already located nearby, in the Publix Shopping Center and the applicant would be responsible to connect City water and sewer to this property. He added that the City is not responsible for the cost to connect City water and sewer to this property.

Julie Frazier came forward as the architect on this project explaining the intent is to annex, rezone to commercial, and to use the property for medical facilities. She stated the plan is to have a freestanding emergency department (ED) on the property, which is similar to an urgent care facility, but an ED offers lifesaving abilities. Ms. Frazier explained the property may have a hospital and other medical offices eventually. She stated it is important for the ED to be located close to the intersection for visibility and wayfinding, but they want to do their best to make adjacent residents comfortable.

Shelly Harrell with Memorial Health came forward explaining the facility will offer 24/7 emergency care to citizens.

Wesley Brown who resides at 280 Fox Road came forward asking why not put the project further down at the corner of Port Royal Road and Harris Trail. He also stated he would like to see the buffer be 50ft. instead of the required 30ft. He was concerned about light pollution, flashing lights, and stated he would like to see a berm, natural buffer, cyclone fence, and a wood fence on the Memorial property. Mr. Brown also asked if the sirens can be turned off as emergency vehicles approach the ED, so that he and neighbors are not disturbed while sleeping.

John and Sharyn Baggett who reside at 282 Fox Road came forward asking if the nearby historic cemetery will be disturbed. Mrs. Baggett was concerned with possible flooding this project may cause and she was concerned about the biohazards a hospital can bring to the area.

Theresa Poinsett came forward stating she is the current owner of the Patterson Cemetery that abuts this property and she wanted confirmation this project will not encroach on the cemetery.

Ken Rushing who resides at 141 Fox Road came forward asking if it was possible for the ED building to be moved further down on the 46.16 acres, instead of being located right behind homes. He suggested the medical offices be placed behind the homes instead, since they are not operating 24/7 like an ED would be.

Wesley Brown asked if there will be a stormwater plan and Julie Frazier replied there will be an approved stormwater plan and a retention pond will be addressed.

Chairman Albritton asked if anyone else would like to speak for or against the request. With nothing further, the public hearing closed at 7:27pm.

PUBLIC HEARING RECOMMENDATION:

1. Recommendation for approval/disapproval of the petition filed with the City of Richmond Hill by Savannah Health Services, LLC dba Memorial Health University Medical Center, requesting to rezone 46.16 acres located at the intersection of Port Royal Road and Highway 144, with a map & parcel number of 061-055, from Unincorporated Bryan County Zone A-5, Agricultural District to City of Richmond Hill Zone C-1, General Commercial District.

Mr. Allison explained he made note of about 13 concerns expressed during the public hearing and stated when the site plan comes before the board will be the time several of these concerns can be addressed. Mr. Allison stated a few things that can be considered are more strict buffer requirements, limiting flood lights, and adding berms possibly since pine trees don't make a great buffer. He explained a traffic impact analysis will be done concurrent with the site plan review. Mr. Allison stated the cemetery is on an adjacent property and not part of this project at all. Julie Frazier confirmed the cemetery is not part of the project and all plans will show the cemetery to ensure it is not encroached on.

Mr. Allison explained the City's stormwater ordinance has been in place for around 4-5 years which does not allow increased flooding from pre-development, so there will be a plan that meets the stormwater ordinance requirements which may include swales and ditches.

Wesley Brown stated he was also concerned about foundation cracking caused by the project.

Commissioner Elliott explained a lot of the concerns expressed during the public hearing will be addressed during site plan review. He asked if the board can approve the rezoning with conditions, such as a stricter buffer requirement, and Mr. Allison replied yes, but if too many conditions are required, the property may just need to be zoned something different.

Wesley Brown asked if the adjacent property owners will receive notice when the site plan meeting will be held and Mr. Allison replied site plan review does not require a public hearing, so typically notices are not sent out for site plan review, but he stated that Zoning Administrator Amanda Styer confirmed she will mail notice of the site plan meeting date to the residents that are in attendance tonight, so they can plan to attend that meeting as well.

Rob Rayner who resides at 24 Fox Road asked if the annexation has already been approved and Mr. Allison replied no. Mr. Rayner was concerned his property would be annexed into the City limits also and Mr. Allison explained he would have to petition the City if he wanted his property to be annexed, as annexation requests are made by property owners.

Wesley Brown asked if it is possible that Memorial Health may not move forward with the annexation and Shelly Harrell replied it was probable that they will move forward with the annexation.

Ken Rushing asked if there was a concern about the canal on the property and Julie Frazier replied a study will be done to address the canal.

Mr. Rushing was concerned that residents well water will be affected by this project. Commissioner Cooper explained tonight's meeting is strictly for the rezoning request and all of that will be looked at eventually.

Wesley Brown was concerned his property will be annexed into the City limits and Mr. Allison explained that would be his choice, as annexations requests are made by property owners.

Mr. Brown asked if the rezoning request could be tabled until the applicant can look into moving the project to the end of Port Royal Road and Harris Trail. Mr. Allison replied that the application is not for that property, explaining this 46.16 acres ends about 200 yards past Sterling Links Way. Mr. Allison stated staff will recommend changes for the site on this property, based on the concerns expressed tonight. When asked again by Mr. Brown if the item can be tabled, Mr. Allison replied that is up to the Planning Commission and reiterated the Planning Commission is only making a recommendation to City Council.

Commissioner Cooper stated he felt confident the applicant will come back with solutions to the concerns expressed tonight. Julie Frazier agreed a lot of the concerns expressed will be addressed during site plan review.

Commissioner Elliott stated tonight the board is only providing a recommendation to Council if the property should be rezoned to commercial or not.

Sharyn Baggett asked if it is possible that Port Royal Road will be made into a four-lane road and Mr. Allison replied it is possible in the future but, that is a county road, so they will be involved as well. He reiterated that a traffic analysis will be done.

Ken Rushing felt if the ED was built further down on the 46.16 acres it would not be such a burden to adjacent residents.

Commissioner Singleton asked if adding conditions to the rezoning would change the zoning and Mr. Allison replied no, unless too many conditions are placed, then a different zoning should be considered.

Chairman Albritton asked if there were any other questions or concerns. With none, Commissioner Elliott made a motion to recommend approval of the petition filed with the City of Richmond Hill by Savannah Health Services, LLC dba Memorial Health University Medical Center, requesting to rezone 46.16 acres located at the intersection of Port Royal Road and Highway 144, with a map & parcel number of 061-055, from Unincorporated Bryan County Zone A-5, Agricultural District to City of Richmond Hill Zone C-1, General Commercial District; motion seconded by Commissioner Cooper and carried by all.

Mr. Allison explained the first reading of the rezoning request will go before City Council during their meeting next Tuesday, September 1. He explained the second reading and decision will be during the Tuesday, October 6 City Council meeting. He added that staff will send notice of the site plan meeting date to the affected property owners.

Commissioner Elliott asked that a copy of tonight's meeting minutes be included in the planning commission packets during site plan review, so they can confirm the concerns expressed tonight have been addressed. Amanda Styer confirmed they will be included in the packet.

Commissioner Blanks made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Commissioner Singleton and carried by all. With nothing further, the meeting closed at 8:11 p.m.

Respectively submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Styer', written in a cursive style.

Amanda Styer
Zoning Administrator