



Legislation Text

File #: 2023-1142, Version: 1

Public Hearing: YES NO **Department:** Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): COMMISSION DISTRICT 3 SUPER DISTRICT 7

Application of Stix & Stones Homes for a major modification of zoning conditions #1 and #2 pursuant to Z-22-1245596 to increase the number of units and construct a single-family detached cottage development at 1484 & 1520 Columbia Drive.

PETITION NO: D3-2023-1142 CZ-23-1246630

PROPOSED USE: Single-family, detached cottage development.

LOCATION: 1484 & 1520 Columbia Drive, Decatur, Georgia 30032

PARCEL NO. : 15-186-04-028; 15-186-04-029

INFO. CONTACT: Adam Chappell, Planner

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PURPOSE:

Application of Stix & Stones Homes for a major modification of zoning conditions #1 and #2 pursuant to Z-22-1245596 to increase the number of units and construct a single-family detached cottage development within the R-60 (Residential Small Lot) zoning district.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: (Feb. 13, 2024) Approval with conditions. (Oct. 4, 2024) Denial.

PLANNING COMMISSION: (March 5, 2024) Full Cycle Deferral. (Nov. 2, 2023) Two-Cycle Deferral.

PLANNING STAFF: (March 5, 2024) Approval with conditions. (Nov. 2, 2023) Two-Cycle Deferral.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The subject properties were rezoned from the R-75 (Residential Medium Lot-75) Zoning District to the R-60 (Residential Small Lot-60) zoning district on July 26, 2022 (Z-22-1245596). This rezoning was approved with conditions that restricted the development site to no more than 11 single-family detached dwellings (see enclosed conditions, site plan, and other approved documents). The applicant proposes a major modification to modify Conditions #1 and #2 to allow for up to 16 single-family, fee-simple, cottage dwellings at a density of approximately 5.9 units per acre. The proposed cottage development is a permitted principal use in the R-60 Zoning District, subject to design regulations in Section 5.7.9. of the *Zoning Ordinance*, which was added as a text amendment by the Board of Commissioners on December 12, 2023. The original site plan with the proposal, dated August 24, 2023 and titled “*Columbia Cottages*”, showed clusters of cottage dwellings

centered around several courtyards which qualify as areas of enhanced open space typical of cottage developments. This site plan, however, contained numerous zoning deficiencies including a lack of streetscaping, lot compatibility, and compliance with cottage development standards that were in place at the time. Significant deficiencies with proposed stormwater detention facilities were noted by Land Development, Roads and Drainage, and Watershed. As a result, at its meeting on November 16, 2023, the Board of Commissioners granted this case a *two-cycle deferral* to give the applicant sufficient time to redesign their proposal. A revised site plan dated January 17, 2024 showed an updated design that addressed a majority of concerns raised by Planning Staff with the initial submittal. On February 15, 2024, a roundtable discussion was held with the applicant and other County departments; many of the previous deficiencies were deemed to be adequately addressed with the new proposal including underground stormwater detention. However, some concerns regarding the location of certain units and the distance from proposed off-street parking were raised by the Planning Commission at their meeting held on March 5, 2024. A third plan was submitted in response to these concerns on March 8, 2024. This plan relocates several of the proposed cottage units to be closer to Columbia Drive and reorients the overall development to be centered on a central common area that is perpendicular to the aforementioned right-of-way. The units and parking areas are located so that no unit is more than 200 feet from an off-street parking space, as required per Section 5.7.9. (F) of the *Zoning Ordinance*. From a land use and density perspective, the proposed single-family cottages appear to be consistent with the following strategies and policies of the Suburban Character Area policy of the *DeKalb County 2050 Unified Plan*: “Permit cottage court developments, accessory housing units, new well-designed, small-scale infill multi-family residences and other innovative housing types to increase housing choice, income diversity, and limited neighborhood density” (pg. 39). An increase in density may be appropriate on this property, which fronts a minor arterial road between commercial nodes located approximately 1,800 feet to the north (Columbia Drive/Belvedere Lane) and approximately 1,900 feet to the south (Columbia Drive/Peachcrest Road). Furthermore, an appropriately designed cottage subdivision with maximum building heights of one-and-a-half stories and unit sizes not exceeding 1,200 square feet would not be expected to adversely affect the existing character of uses in the general vicinity, which are primarily single-family dwellings of similar height and size. Therefore, upon review of Section 7.3.5., the Department of Planning and Sustainability recommends “Approval with the attached recommended conditions”.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: (March 5, 2024) Full-Cycle Deferral 8-0-0. Deanna Murphy moved, Jon West seconded for a full cycle deferral to the May 2024 zoning agenda to allow the applicant time to submit a design modification and assign parking spaces. **(November 2, 2023) Two-Cycle Deferral 8-0-0.** Vivian Moore moved, Edward Patton seconded for a 2-cycle deferral to the March 2024 zoning agenda, per Staff recommendation.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: (Feb. 13, 2024) Approval with conditions 7-3 -0 that 1) the Applicant revise the plan to provide for the maximum parking allowed by the cottage ordinance; and, 2) the Applicant to provide such parking conveniently located for each proposed cottage home. **(Oct. 4, 2023) Denial.** Discussion included that smaller cottage lots were not consistent with character and lot sizes of surrounding residential neighborhoods and potential lack of parking.