

City of Orangeburg  
Planning Commission Minutes  
April 18, 2024  
6:00 pm

**Members Present**

Guy Best – Chairperson  
Paula Payton  
Stephon Edwards II  
Vincent Pendarvis  
Jeanna Reynolds  
John Wolfe

**Members Absent**

Dr. Shirlan Mosley-Jenkins – Vice-Chairperson

**Staff Members**

Theresa Williams, Assistant City Administrator  
Kenith Salley, Jr., Administrative Coordinator  
Clayton Bozard, Director of Innovation & Technology  
Olivia Singleton, IT Support Technician  
David Epting, Building Official

**Citizens from the community**        **3**  
**Press present**                                **0**  
**Guest (Developer)**                        **2**

**PUBLIC HEARING 1**

Chairman Best opened Public Hearing 1 for consideration of a Conditional Use Land Development other than a Subdivision for property located off Boulevard Street. **Parcel ID 0056130, TMS# 0173-10-03-007.000.**

Ben Elbe, (property owner/developer - 1603 Bayhill Drive, Charleston, SC) addressed the Planning Commission. He stated, “I do not have any presentations, but if anyone has any questions, I am more than happy to answer.”

There were no questions asked.

Chairman Best asked three times if there was anyone else to speak at the Public Hearing. There was no one to speak. Chairman Best closed Public Hearing 1.

**PUBLIC HEARING 2**

Chairman Best opened Public Hearing 2 for consideration of a Zoning District Map change from B-1, General Business District to B-2, Central Business District for the properties belonging to Fred Felder, TMS# 0152-20-01-005.000, TMS# 0152-20-01-007.000, TMS# 0152-20-01-002.000, TMS# 0152-20-01-006.000.

Sarah Niemann, (property developer – 322 Tattersall Court, Sugar Hill, GA) addressed the Planning Commission. She stated, “I am a workforce and affordable housing tax credit consultant. It is all I do. I do live in the state of Georgia, but I submit solely in the state of South Carolina. I have spent my entire career

building this exact type of product and this type of housing for the residents of South Carolina. I have been in this field since 1997, I started in an office and later became a consultant. I am also going to be part owner in the proposed development. I currently own about 11 properties, and I partner with Preswick Development Company, and they own about 50 workforce housing communities in the Southeast such as Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Texas. What I brought today are some samples of products and rendering elevations that shows different examples within South Carolina and Georgia so that you will see the different types of products we build. We built a development that is close to you named Peaks at Manning. It was built in 2018 and it is very similar to the location of where the property sits in Manning, SC, which is one block off from the downtown area. In proximity to where I am proposing to put the community here in Orangeburg, the Peaks at Manning has the exact same type of setup. It has one building, three stories, great walkability for residents to walk to employment, shopping, local businesses, and government offices. Inside your packets are letters of support from the city manager of Manning, SC giving us a glowing recommendation on how well we manage our projects and how well integrated we have become inside their community. We also have support letters from Senator Brad Hutto, City of Columbia, and 27 local businesses that are within proximity around the proposed location where we walked into different businesses explaining what we are proposing. When we build property, we look for selective services where tenants can walk to. In a multi-family community, not everyone has two vehicles. We look for things that have a walkability to our community. When we talked to other businesses in the area, we informed them we are proposing to bring more residents to the downtown area, economically for their businesses, grocery stores, and pharmacies. We are proposing to build an L-shaped-style building with 68 units all mixed between one-, two-, and three-bedroom units inside the community. We do conditioned stairwells which help keep sound down to a minimum. Within the building, in the center of the L is where we house our common area and inside our common area we will have a community room with a full kitchen, leasing office, bathrooms, fully equipped fitness room, and a business center. Although all units will have washer and dryer capabilities, our common area will include a laundry facility for all residents. Most of our one-bedroom units are usually housed by senior residents and most prefer to have a one-way in and one-way out. We are managed independently by (NHE) which is an affordable housing management company. We have hired this company to help us put our staff in place with an on-site property manager that will be on site at all times. If you can see the entry door on your printout there is a photo of the front door from the Peaks at Manning building, and I stopped by this property the other day and could not access it because the doors were locked. I was not able to get into my own property that day. You are only able to access the units with a keypad or key fob, this prevents random people entering as well as extra security for the residence that lives inside the building. So, if you have guests, you will have to come down and physically let them in. The parking lot would also have security cameras for added security. The property has a slope towards Riverside Street and there are a ton of easements for water, gas, and sewer that runs on the side closer to Seabourn Street. I brought renderings, one that shows two examples of a three-story and a four-story so it gives you an idea of what it would look like from Russell Street. The second rendering is in Hanahan, SC, a suburb area in Charleston, SC which is still under construction. This has the same concept as an L-shaped model without a covered entrance, but all the community amenities would be housed inside the common area. These renderings were brought to give you an idea of the quality of construction and what we would like to present to you here in the City of Orangeburg."

Chairman Best asked, "What will the rent range from a one-bedroom to a three-bedroom?"

Sarah Niemann answered, "Roughly from \$700 to \$1000 for a one to two-bedroom units. That is comparable. You have four other comps here in the City of Orangeburg and all the other comparable projects that we will consider comparable from our market study, all of them are 100% occupied with a substantial waiting list. You have a great need here for this type of housing."

Chairman Best asked, "Are the apartments in Manning, SC fully occupied?"

Sarah Niemann answered, "Yes, Manning has been fully occupied with a 250-person waiting list. It is very difficult to compete within the state program and with a rural community. It has been 20 years since another company has built workforce housing in Manning, SC."

Commissioner Pendarvis asked, "Can you explain your definition of workhouse housing?"

Sarah Niemann answered, "We gear towards entry-level people in the workforce and retirees. How this is determined, the State of South Carolina gives an average median income per county and Orangeburg median income for a family of four is \$52,200. I reference my sources from the US Census website. We have to follow what the Government tells us, and we then gear our communities to people who earn between 50-60% of your area median income. So, we look for people that earn between \$31,000 up to \$43,000 annually. For example, your teachers, policeman, fireman, or new entry graduates. There is another community here named Willington Lakes which may be the only market rate community that has much higher rent. Our company tries to make it much more affordable for that demographic of person."

Commissioner Pendarvis asked, "What will it cost the city for your project?"

Sarah Niemann answered, "We self-finance, which means we get a construction loan then that construction will be brought out by a permanent loan, just as if you would to build your own home, you would have a construction loan then you will have a permanent 30-year mortgage. We finance ourselves, but we will pay taxes to the city. We are anticipating somewhere \$1000 a unit that we will contribute."

Fred Felder, 3055 Bragg Boulevard, knocked on the podium and asked commissioners, "Do you hear that? Opportunity is knocking. I think this is a wonderful opportunity. We have a group of people here that know what they are doing and want to make a thirty-five-million-dollar investment in downtown Orangeburg. I think it is a great idea for two primary reasons, economic impact, and new housing that we sorely need. As Sarah Nieman just stated, comparable housing in Orangeburg is full, there is nowhere for them to go. From the economic point of view, purchase price of land will stimulate, comparable sales will go up in value, increase the area values which I am sure any land or property owners would love, and increase property tax revenue for the City of Orangeburg. One of their plans is to include a multi-use building in the gardens for the city to use. That was going to be given to the City of Orangeburg and this project ties in with the gardens. From what I understand, we need to get the rezoning changed. It is not a big change from B-1 to B-2, which sounds similar to what took place with the Railroad Corner property, and we see the beginning of what will be a great project downtown. Think of it if we had a similar project on the other end of Russell Street. Maybe it can grow together and help bring Russell Street back. I think this is a great idea because this is entry-level housing that we need, and it will increase land value and increase property tax base and it will be the beginning of new growth for downtown Orangeburg. I think this will benefit everyone; it is a win-win. Opportunity is knocking at the door, let's let him in."

Chairman Best asked three times if there was anyone else to speak at the Public Hearing. There was no one to speak. Chairman Best closed Public Hearing 2.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

### Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Edwards, seconded by Commissioner Payton to approve the minutes for March 21, 2024. The motion was unanimously approved.

### New Business

Chairman Best stated, "Under New Business to consider a Conditional Use Land Development other than a Subdivision for property located off Boulevard Street. Parcel ID 0056130, TMS# 0173-10-03-007.000."

Assistant City Administrator, Theresa Williams stated, "The only comment that I have is that the representative for the property has met all the requirements for the City and does qualify."

A motion was made by Commissioner Edwards, seconded by Commissioner Payton to approve the request. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Best stated, "Our second item of business is to consider a zoning district map change from B-1, General Business District to B-2, Central Business District for the following properties: 761 Russell Street, TMS# 0152-20-01-005.000, TMS# 0152-20-01-007.000, TMS# 0152-20-01-002.000, TMS# 0152-20-01-006.000."

Assistant City Administrator, Theresa Williams stated, "The applicant did submit the required documentations needed for approval."

A motion was made by Commissioner Payton, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds to approve the request. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Chairman Best, seconded by Commissioner Edwards to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Williams', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Theresa Williams  
Assistant City Administrator