

**Planning Commission
Minutes
July 26, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Moore, Brittany Johnson, Bob Sizemore, Bernard Jones, Winfred Pieterse, & Paul Smith

MEMBER ABSENT: Gerald Williams

OTHERS PRESENT: Rick Martin, Matt Millwood, & Janet Grant

I. Call to Order

II. Minutes: The minutes for June 28, 2016; **Mr. Chris Moore made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Paul Smith; the motion carried unanimously.**

III. Public Hearing: Mr. Pieterse asked that it be limited to 3 minutes

1. **Brother Willie Singleton** told the Commissioners that he owns 7 lots on the West End and have no intention of placing mobile homes on his lots but is present to support the residents on the West End. He feels that the previous Comprehensive Plans has not benefited the property owners in the area.
2. **Mr. Wesley Gibson** a member of the Empowerment for Change/one of the speakers representing the 150 petitioners of the West End. Mr. Gibson said the Re-development Plan of 2004 did not work then and will not work now;
 1. Banks did not loan monies then (2004) and will not loan now
 2. The Plan calls for the City to buy small lots combine them into bigger lots and sell them to prospective homeowners to build, however with the closing of the Steele Mill and the lack of jobs the economy would not allow that.
 3. The Plans states the City should assist the residents to get clear titles for their heirs properties, however this was not done as of yet.
 4. The Plan has acknowledged that home purchasing and home improvements financing are difficult to obtain for people who are in seasonal jobs.Mr. Gibson said that he did not feel that this is a good solution for the residents of the West End, and feels the redevelopment of the Steele Mill may pose an unfavorable change for the residents on the West End.
3. **Mr. Sheldon Butts**, Mr. Butts asked to reserve his comments until item 2/A was addressed.
4. **Ms. Crystal Milton** said she is a mobile home owner on the West End and her mobile home was purchased new. Ms. Milton said she lives on Butt Street and it has 25 stick built homes and 15 mobile homes, approximately 80% of the stick built homes are dilapidated with roofs falling in and properties not being kept up. Ms. Milton said she feels not allowing mobile homes on the West End is unfair to future generations that want to own their homes, and she does not feel the mobile homes are depreciating stick built homes.
5. **Ms. Cynthia Hazel** said she oppose the change of the existing zoning, she would like to see the West End developed with homes and not be the only area suitable for

mobile/manufactured homes. Ms. Hazel said most of the owners of the mobile homes does not live in the West End and are not affected by its presence. The issue is much greater than just property value but very personal. Ms. Hazel asked the Commissioners to take into consideration when casting their votes that the impact will not only greatly affect that area but the entire City for years to come.

6. **Ms. Virginia Alston** of 1809 Hawkins St. said she had a large home on Hawkins Street that burned and the City told her she could not rebuild the house because of her setbacks, so she bought a new mobile home in 1980. Ms. Alston said everyone cannot build a home or can be approved for a loan, and she is in favor of allowing mobile homes.
7. **Ms. Patrice Brooks** said she lives on Gilbert Street and has two children and was told she could not put a mobile home on her lot.
8. **Ms. Carol McCants** said she is lifelong resident of the West End and a member of the Empowerment for Change Group, the group gave the City Council a petition with 150+ names at the March meeting asking for a rezoning of the R-5 district back to R-3, at that time the Council sent a request asking the Planning Commission to assist with doing that. It is believed that Mr. Pieterse has been against that request for rezoning. Ms. McCants feel that it would be against the civil rights of the residents of the West End if the rezoning is not considered. Ms. McCants asked how could the Commissioners in good conscience deny the manufactured homes with the same look and characteristics of a home; vinyl siding, shingle roofs, underpinning, and skirting. All homes would have to be inspected by the City Housing & Development Department before coming in and it is their duty to approve or deny, and if a denial is unwarranted then the process of appeals should be in place for a case by case bases. For example there was a denial of a mobile home on Gilbert Street and the mobile home had to be removed as it should have been handled. Ms. McCants felt like there should be a fairness and mixture of classifications for communities.

IV. Consideration

1. **Review and approve a request from the City of Georgetown for a storm drainage easement through eight (8) properties from North Congdon Street to Palm Street.** **Matt Millwood/City Staff** said the drainage easement is for the City Storm Water and Sewer Department, this is being brought to the Planning Commission for approval. This easement will run from Palm St. to Congdon St. all property owners have been notified. The City needs an easement to be able to work in the area. Mr. Pieterse asked if piping would be installed or increasing the size of the ditches. Matt referred the question to the City Engineer, Orlando Arteaga. **Orlando/City Engineer** said the easement will include underground piping beginning at Congdon Street and an open drain will be done half way through, the plan is to increase the size of the pipe, catch basins that will led to an open ditch that will help with the drainage issues for the area.
Motion: Mr. Paul Smith made a motion to recommend approval of the easement, seconded by Bob Sizemore; the motion carried 6 to 0 by a roll call vote.
2. **Review and recommend a text amendment on Manufactured Homes in the Residential (R5) zoning district.**

Matt/City Staff told the Board that this is the forth meeting discussing this matter, there is no new information from staff, except the workshop that was held on last Tuesday, July 19, gave a soft recommendation on what should be recommended to City Council, in which City Council makes the final decisions. We will be looking at Article 419; 1-8, use chart in 703, and 908 (exceptions). A text amendment change may be included if needed. Matt also stressed that when looking at the West End Redevelopment Plan the housing element of the Comprehensive Plan should be utilized, to make sure the West End Redevelopment Plan is written into the updated City Comp. Plan.

Mr. Sheldon Butts/Councilman told the Board he has heard from both sides for and against the West End rezoning, however he said doing nothing is not an option, and living in inhabitable dwellings cannot continue to happen. The West End Redevelopment Plan of 2003 is very detailed and tells what should be done from 6 months to 13 years, and if this plan had been implemented at that time we would not be having this discussion, however the leaders (Council) has failed the community with reference to that. The citizens deserve better from their elected and/or appointed officials. Mr. Butts said he feels like it is almost criminal that the City paid for a plan to help a people and that plan never went into motion. He is now asking that we try to understand how to move forward and progress with this, Mr. Butts said his recommendation is to organize a sub-committee having 2 members from the Planning Commission, 2 members from City Council, and at least 4 members from the community. The dwelling unfit for habitation and slumlords can be addressed by other means and mechanisms under other chapters of the ordinance. He felt like it would be a disservice if any actions are done without the due diligence from the leaders. Mr. Butts asked that the recommendation to City Council should be to develop a subcommittee. **Mr. Pieterse** said he is only interested in making the West End better not to deny anyone housing, and agreed with Mr. Butts that the ball was dropped initially. He said he does not know if allowing mobile homes that will be an immediate solution is the answer or making a long term change that everybody can be proud of down the road, he does not have a problem with a subcommittee however, Council makes the final decision.

Mr. Sizemore went over the recommendation he made at the workshop on July 19th, he said several people spoke at the workshop and they were in favor of not changing the ordinance. Mr. Size more made the motion to recommend the following:

1. The ordinance should be left as it is today
2. West End Redevelopment Plan should be incorporated into the updated Comprehensive Plan
3. City Council appoints a sub-committee with members from Planning Commission, City Council, and residents to review the redevelopment plan of the West End.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Paul Smith; the motion carried 6 to 0 by a roll call vote.

Ms. Johnson said that she has ties on the West End and she does not take her position lightly and does not feel like the Council does either, she just feels like it was a lack of execution and at this point goals needs to be set and met. Ms. Johnson said everyone should come together and work together.

3. Discussion on the progress with the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element update. **Mr. Bob Sizemore** said a meeting was held with City Staff and WRCOG, and some changes have been made to the land use element and the changes have been sent to

the subcommittee, the subcommittee has a meeting scheduled for August 4 to review the draft, at that time recommendations will be submitted to the Planning Commission at the August meeting.

V. Adjournment: With there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted By,

*Debra Grant
Board Secretary*