

**Planning Commission
Minutes
June 28, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Moore, Brittany Johnson, Bob Sizemore, Bernard Jones, Gerald Williams, & Winfred Pieterse

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Smith

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

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Minutes:** The minutes for May 24, 2016; **Mr. Chris Moore made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Bernard Jones; the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Pieterse amended the agenda to allow the first consideration to be heard before the Public Input.

III. **Consideration:**

- 1. **The Georgetown Business Association (GBA) requests a text amendment to Article X (signage) Business Directional Signs for Side Streets.** (Ms. Brittany Johnson recused herself from casting a vote, because she is a business owner on King Street)
Matt Millwood/City Staff told the Board that Ms. Michelle Overton (President of the GBA) was present and because of another engagement she would speak first.
Michelle Overton/GBA President told the Board that they are trying to help side street businesses and businesses off of the main corridor to get more exposure. The business directional signs that are being proposed will be the same size of sandwich board signs and would like to put them at the entrance of the side streets. This will be a good way to notify the public of what's on the side streets. The signs would only go down to Screven Street, and will be available to all businesses on the side streets. The signs will not be seasonal but will be a permanent fixture. The signs are sandwich boards so they will be taken up every night if necessary.
Matt Millwood/City Staff told the Board that this text amendment would give a definition to business directional signs, the signs will be allowed on City sidewalks, they could not be placed in the site triangle or any place to impede traffic, all the sandwich board signs conditions will be applicable and the signs must be taken in every night. **Mr. Pieterse** asked about permitting for the signs and the timeline allowed. Matt said a \$25.00 permit is required annually also an encroachment permit with liability insurance would need to be obtained. All ADA areas would need to be kept open.
Motion: Mr. Chris Moore made a motion to approve the text amendment as presented, with the understanding that the signs would be removed every night, seconded by Mr. Bob Sizemore; the motion carried 5 to 0 (Ms. Johnson was recused)

IV. **Public Input:**

- 1. **Mr. Willie Singleton made comments about the allowance of mobile homes in the R-5 zoning district. Mr. Singleton said he was a member of the group who got the signatures on a petition. He also said he was not only in favor of the mobile homes but also to**

renovate old homes in that zone. Mr. Singleton read an article from the Sun News concerning affordability crisis in rental houses. Mr. Singleton said any plan or study done before 2006 is not accurate, and said there are monies available to repair homes on the West End. Mr. Singleton said if this request for mobile homes is passed it would be an abuse to the community, because of the landlords over-charging the tenants.

2. Mr. Shelton A. Butts came on behalf of the residents of the R-3 and R-5 district. Mr. Butts wanted to clarify the understanding of a “used” mobile home; saying that when some hear the word used they think of old, ugly, beat-down, not up to code, and not wanted. However older homes does not have to be in that condition, and there is a need for affordable homes. Mr. Butts said he is strongly against people being taken advantage of by slumlords that are placing inhabitable homes on the West End for people to occupy. City Council has guidelines that will address how to handle slumlords that take advantage of renters. Mr. Butts ask the Board to take into consideration the allowance of used mobile homes that will be inspected by the City and will give residents on the West End a opportunity to have affordable housing.

(Consideration)

2. Discussion on the progress with the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element update. Mr. Bob Sizemore gave the update; telling the Board that he and City Staff met with WRCOG last week and went through their draft (update to the Land Use Element) and found that there is still some work to be done to some of the tables and drawings, and a revised copy will be submitted sometime within the week, at that time the sub-committee will review it and a copy will be sent to the Planning Committee for their review.

Matt Millwood told the Board that a meeting with the Georgetown County will be held (June 29th at 2:30 pm) to discuss out-skirts of the City and how to best merge and to discuss any type of future annexation.

V. Board Elections:

Nomination for Chairman: Winfred Pieterse

Nomination for Vice Chair: Bob Sizemore

With there being no further nominations the Chair and Vice-chair for 2016-2017 will remain **Winfred Pieterse** and **Bob Sizemore**, with a 6 to 0 roll call vote.

VI. Board Discussion:

Mr. Pieterse referenced the West End Re-development Plan that was previously put together that included infrastructure, zoning, housing, street scape, recreation, crime and safety. Mr. Pieterse said the area has the potential to be something great and encouraged the Board to take time to look at the plan and all the information it gave and the recommendations. The housing section should be looked at closely for the upcoming meeting. **Mr. Moore** asked why the re-development plan was not fully developed in the past. **Rick Martin** said he felt like the plan was not fully developed because of the change in staff in the City. There is a wish now by the Mayor and Council to clean up the area and it is now being re-addressed. With removing dilapidated houses there has been a lot of vacant lots and the question came up to be able to put mobile homes in. Chris Moore asked if there is still an active West End residence association. Rick said yes there is an active group and they met with City Staff last week to address some concerns. **Chris Moore** asked about the property being tied up in heirs’ property, and what could the

Planning Commission or the City do to help the owners get clear titles. **Rick** said it is a lengthy process and he did not know how the City could help with the process. **Mr. Pieterse** said this Re-development plan gives lots of information and might give some insight to some of the questions asked. Rick said there are meetings and seminars that address heirs' properties. **Chris Moore** asked how many parcels of land on the West End is owned by the City. **Matt Millwood** said just a few are owned by the City. **Mr. Moore** asked if the City has money set aside to purchase property on the West End to help and improve the area. **Rick** said the City sets aside \$75,000 annually for demolition of dilapidated homes, which usually cost \$5,000 to have a home removed. **Mr. Moore** asked how could the Planning Commission help to get this re-development plan moved forward, and could the Comprehensive Plan be used to implement this. **Mr. Sizemore** said that's exactly how to move forward, by using the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Sheldon Butts suggested that the plan be implemented and said that this is going to be a process and City Council should be held accountable for getting the job done. Mr. Butts said he does not want a bandage solution but wants to resolve the issue by working with the Planning Commission or a special commission to deal with the plan of re-development. **Mr. Butts** also said he felt like some of the decision makers of the City may not be aware of this redevelopment plan. **Mr. Pieterse** said he didn't feel like a special commission could be put together within 30 day, because of the urgency of this matter that would be difficult to do, and this matter is too important to have it rushed or decisions being made that the City would regret in the future. **Ms. Brittany Johnson** said that she feels that a time restraint should be put on getting this project up and going. **Mr. Moore** suggest that the Planning Commission review and highlight the plan for the next few weeks and send some recommendations back to Council. **Mr. Pieterse** suggested that they focus on the housing part of the plan. **Mr. Sizemore** said there are some things that the Planning Commission does not have the authority to do, and the top of the list for the Planning Commission at this time is the updates on the Comprehensive Plan. **Mr. Gerald Williams** asked if the City has considered allowing used mobile homes and having them brought up to code. **Rick Martin** said no that is not the case at this time, and the Mayor and Council has asked that City Staff to inspect the used mobile homes before they come into the City and if they have to be worked on when they bring them in, they will not be allowed. **Mr. Jones** asked if the City has worked with developers to bring in affordable houses. Rick said yes a few years back the Staff worked with General Johnson to get variances on some lots and nothing was ever done, and there was another developer that wanted to do concrete homes and the Staff worked with them also, and nothing was done there either. Staff have been working with churches to get renovations done, and if all churches get involved that would make a difference. Mr. Pieterse asked for a special meeting/workshop before the next regularly scheduled meeting.

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

Submitted By,

*Debra Grant
Board Secretary*