CITY OF GROVETOWN
103 Old Wrightsboro Road
P. O. Box 120
GROVETOWN, GEORGIA 30813

Minutes from Planning Commission Meeting
Thursday, April 14, 2016

1. Those present included:

    a. Commission Members
        i. Theo Knight, Chairman
        ii. Mary Ann Navarro
        iii. Michael Whittaker
        iv. Deborah Fisher
        v. Renee McDowell (new member)

    b. City of Grovetown Staff
        i. Frank Neal, Director of Planning and Development; Joe Holley, City Engineer; and John Waller, City Planner / Code Enforcement Officer

    c. Interested citizens of Grovetown, including City Council Member / Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Trudeau. Of particular note was the presence of several residents of the Big Sycamore subdivision in Grovetown.

2. At 6:35 pm the Commission Chairman, Theo Knight, called the meeting to order, followed by the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Mr Neal introduced a new Planning Commission member, Ms Renee McDowell, as well as two new City staff members, Mr Holley and Mr Waller.

4. Chairman Knight asked for a motion to vote to approve the Stonehurst Planned Unit Development (PUD) change from 10 townhomes to 8 single family dwellings. Mr Whittaker made the motion, Ms Navarro seconded the motion.

5. Before the vote was taken residents of the Big Sycamore subdivision, led by Ms Lynn Poythress, 918 Sycamore Drive, presented a petition to the commission to halt any development in the PUD area on the grounds that in 2013 the PUD that made the change

6. to 10 townhomes from 29 single family homes was never announced to the public and hence had been illegal. Ms Poythress and the other residents of the Big Sycamore subdivision are against any and all development in the PUD area. Their argument rests on the suitability of the area for building – too small an area for 8 single family homes, a precipitous drop off behind the potential homes, newly delivered and graded dirt on which to build – impact to the adjacent wetlands, potential drainage problems, increased vehicle traffic and associated wear and roads within the subdivision since there is only one entry/exit, the safety of small children with increased vehicle traffic, and the potential impact on their property values.

7. Bill Bailey, 803 Sycamore Court, stated that safety was among his greatest concerns given the large amount of dirt required to create the area to build the homes and the resulting drop off. Maureen Andrews, 805 Sycamore Court, agreed that she and the other Big Sycamore residents would have attended the Planning Commission meeting in 2013 when the PUD change was discussed (from 29 single family homes to 10 townhomes) so that they could then have stopped all development in the area. Ms Poythress reiterated her position that the public posting of the 2013 meeting was not done, or was not done legally, therefore any action taken at that meeting was illegal. Gloria Hammond, 909 Sycamore Drive, agreed with Ms Poythress. The group from Big Sycamore was present at this meeting to try to halt all development in the area, as far as they were concerned any action taken at the 2013 meeting should be null and void.

8. Mr Bill Cordeu, from Blue Water Engineering, the civil engineer for the project under consideration, addressed many of Big Sycamore residents' concerns. He began with some zoning history, as he has been involved with this project since before 2013. As per Mr Cordeu: In 2004 the PUD was for 29 single family homes. Due to the creek, wetlands, and other factors the developer proposed a change to the PUD from 29 single family homes to 10 townhomes, an action approved at the 2013 Planning Commission Meeting; even with the additional dirt brought to the site, as graded the area can safely accommodate either 10 townhomes or 8 single family homes; the access road to the subdivision, and specifically the part of the road leading to the PUD, has been patched and there are plans for continued improvement. As a civil engineer he believes the development plan is sound.

9. When Mr Cordeu finished Commission Member Fisher asked whether the City could speak to the 'incorrect / poor' sign placement preceding the 2013 Planning Commission Meeting where the PUD had changed from 29 single family homes to 10 townhomes, the

main point of contention of the residents of Big Sycamore. Mr Neal, Director of Planning and Development, stated signs were indeed posted, as required. There was no requirement to post a sign in the Big Sycamore subdivision since the PUD was for a tract of land outside the subdivision and by law the public notice must be placed at or as close as possible to the actual piece of ground under consideration for the PUD. To ensure the residents of Big Sycamore were made aware of the April 14, 2016 Planning Commission meeting Mr Neal placed signs for the PUD under consideration at or near the entrance to Big Sycamore, though he was not required to do so by law.

10. After continued discussion and complaints by the residents of Big Sycamore, Commission Member McDowell explained that the purpose of this meeting was whether or not to approve the PUD change from 10 townhomes to 8 single family homes. While expressing her understanding of Big Sycamore residents' concerns she explained that the commission could not overturn the 2013 PUD decision. She further explained that Ms Poythress and her fellow Big Sycamore residents could address the issue at the next city council meeting (May 9, 2016); the Planning Commission is a recommending body while the City Council, as the municipal legislative body, makes the final decisions on PUD and zoning actions. Commission Member Fisher and Chairman Knight reiterated that the residents could seek recourse through the mayor and city council, that the commission decision was not final.

11. Chairman Knight asked if there was any further discussion on the issue and then asked for a motion to vote for approval of the PUD from 10 townhomes to 8 single family homes. Chairman Knight reread the stipulations for the PUD and Commission Member McDowell made the motion to vote on the PUD with Commission Member Whittaker seconding the motion. Chairman Knight took the vote with all members voting unanimously to approve the PUD, as submitted.

12. Chairman Knight asked if there was any additional business for the commission. Mr Neal stated that he would coordinate a joint training session for the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. Chairman Knight then adjourned the meeting.