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

Minutes from Zoning Board of Appeals
Thursday, August 18, 2016

1. Those present included:

    a. Board Members
        i. Vern Cargill, Chairman
        ii. Virgil Hughes
        iii. Johnathon Fisher
        iv. Laverne Gaskins

    Note: Board member Herman Ross was not present.

    b. City of Grovetown Staff: John Waller, Acting Director, Planning and Community Development

    c. Mr John Herman, applicant for variances for the Family Dollar; Mr Jerome Rouse, applicant for variance for the Volunteers of America

2. At 6:35 p.m. the Board Chairman, Mr Vern Cargill, called the meeting to order, followed by the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting began a few minutes late as we were waiting to see if Mr Ross would attend the meeting.

3. Following the invocation Chairman Cargill asked the board members if they had any questions on the variances submitted for the Family Dollar, either the sign variance or the parking space variance.

4. There being no initial questions Chairman Cargill asked Mr Waller to read the variance request for the signage. Mr Waller read the verbiage for this variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) packet and then explained the wall sign requirements as per the Form-based Code wherein it states that the height of wall signs may not exceed four feet.

5. Discussion followed:
    a. Mr Fisher, referring to the picture of an example Family Dollar store provided by the applicant, Mr John Herman, asked about the specific placement of the sign on the structure and whether or not the proposed store at the Shops at Summerfield would include the same type of signs shown in the picture. Mr Herman explained that there would be only one sign on the store, above the front doors. Mr Waller directed the board's attention to the BZA packets and the example sign Mr Herman wished to use (measuring four feet, four inches in height).

    b. Mr Fisher then asked about whether or not the Family Dollar store building would meet Form-Based Code transparency requirements. Mr Waller explained that all aspects of the code had been considered when reviewing the plans, that the transparency requirement had been met, and that the only two issues not in compliance with the code were those before the board this session, specifically the size of the sign and the lack of requisite parking spaces to meet code requirements for the entire plaza at the Shops at Summerfield. Mr Herman further explained that given the location and positioning of the Family Dollar store only two sides of the building will be visible to the public and that those sides will meet the transparency requirement of the code.

6. Following the discussion Chairman Cargill asked for a motion to vote on the Family Dollar sign variance. Ms Gaskins made the motion to approve the sign variance – allowing the placement of the Family Dollar sign that is four inches larger than what the code allows for wall signs – with Mr Hughes seconding the motion. No one opposed the motion, with <u>all members unanimously approving the motion</u>.

7. Chairman Cargill turned to the parking space variance request, again asking Mr Waller to read and explain the reasoning for the variance. Mr Waller explained that as per the International Business Code the square footage of the proposed Family Dollar would require 31 parking spaces, two of which needed to be handicapped accessible. While the plans for the Family Dollar include space for 31 required parking spaces, when added to the existing retail and warehouse space at the Shops of Summerfield the <u>overall</u> requirement for parking was 186 spaces. Adding 31 new spaces for the Family Dollar to the number of existing parking spaces in the Shops at Summerfield gives a total for the shopping complex of 133 parking spaces, fifty-three spaces short r the International Business Code requirement. The shortfall in parking at the Shops at Summerfield is a preexisting condition, not caused by the Family Dollar store.

a. Ms Gaskins asked whether or not there were any conditions associated with this variance request. There were none. Ms Gaskins also inquired about the calculation of required parking spaces and the difference between the requirements levied by the new Family Dollar as opposed to the entire Shops at Summerfield.

b. Mr Waller stated that the variance was not for the Family Dollar, per se, but for the Shops at Summerfield, as the plaza, as constructed, was short the required number of spaces for the existing businesses, and that since the calculation of parking spaces for the Family Dollar highlighted an existing code issue it was best to bring it to the attention of the board.

c. After clarifying for Ms Gaskins and Mr Fisher that the proposed Family Dollar would have the requisite parking spaces per code and that historically there has never been a shortage of parking for customers shopping at the businesses already present at the Shops at Summerfield, discussion on this variance request ended.

8. Chairman Cargill requested a motion to vote on the variance request for parking spaces at the proposed Family Dollar. Mr Fisher made the motion to approve the variance request for fewer parking spaces in the parking lot at the Shops at Summerfield than required by the code and Mr Hughes seconded the motion. Mr Cargill asked for vote and <u>all board members present voted unanimously to approve the variance request</u>.

9. Mr Cargill then moved to the conditional use variance requested by the Volunteers of America to operate a home at 906 Cannock Drive, Euchee Creek subdivision, for four developmentally disabled adults.

10. Mr Cargill asked Mr Waller to again read the variance request which he did before questions and discussion by the board members.

a. Ms Gaskins inquired as to whether there had been any canvassing of the neighborhood before the meeting. There had been none but the Volunteers of America operate two similar homes in Grovetown without incident or complaint.

b. Ms Gaskins asked if there had been any opposition to this variance request. Mr Waller responded that notice had been made to the public but the City staff has received no complaints or opposition.

c. Mr Fisher asked Mr Rouse who would take care of the property and grounds. Mr Rouse explained that the Volunteers of America will enlist a lawn care service for this property, similar to how they operate their other local facilities. Mr Fisher asked whether or not the property was fenced, and if so, the state of repair of the fence. Mr Rouse responded that a new fence had just been installed enclosing the back yard of the property.

d. Mr Waller asked the board whether or not they wished for him to read all seventeen conditions the Volunteers of America must meet in order for the board to grant approval. The board did not require the conditions to be read but Mr Rouse interjected that his organization had already begun addressing the conditions.

11. There being no additional discussion or questions Ms Gaskins made a motion to approve the conditional variance request including all seventeen conditions for the Volunteers of America to operate a home for four developmentally disabled adults. Mr Huges seconded the motion. Chairman Cargill asked for a vote on the motion and <u>all board members voted unanimously to approve the motion</u>.

12. Following the vote Chairman Cargill asked if there was any more business for the board. Mr Waller reminded the board of the planning and zoning training to be conducted Tuesday, September 6, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Grovetown Fire Station #2 on Harlem-Grovetown Road.

13. Chairman Cargill asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr Fisher then made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr Hughes seconded, and <u>all board members voted unanimously to approve</u>. The meeting ended at 7:03 p.m.