

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Scott James Matheson called the Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Thomas McIntyre, Eric Howard, Sandra Tooley, Andy Gibbs, Tim Carroll, AND Nick Harden. Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody was absent. The invocation was given by Councilman Nick Harden, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Special Called Meeting held on October 16, 2024 and the Regular Meeting held on October 24, 2024 were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO SIX GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION (GLPC) CASE REQUESTS ADVERTISE FOR THE SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 GLPC PUBLIC HEARING WHICH WAS CANCELLED

Consideration of Ordinances pertaining to six Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC) Case Requests advertised for the September 30, 2024 GLPC Public Hearing which was cancelled. These Case Requests were tabled at the October 16, 2024 Special Called Council Meeting and were re-advertised to be heard at the November 7, 2024 Regular Council Meeting.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC) Meeting scheduled for Monday, September 30, 2024 was cancelled due to on-going recovery activities relating to Hurricane Helene. The following six (6) GLPC Agenda Items scheduled for Public Hearing by the GLPC on September 30th, with Public Hearing and action by the Valdosta City Council on October 10, 2024, will now be re-advertised for Public Hearing with the GLPC on October 28, 2024, with Public Hearing and final action by the Valdosta City Council on November 7, 2024: (1) File No. CU-2024-06, request by JB2 Partners LLC, (2) File No. VA-2024-14, request by Julian and Norma Cloud, (3) File No. VA-2024-15, request by Four Bee Development LLC, (4) File No. VA-2024-16, request by Marian Leonard, (5) File No. VA-2024-17, request by Park Hawthorne Development LLC, and (6) File No. VA-2024-18, request by James Warren. Mayor Matheson entertained a motion to take this request off the table.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Harden, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to take this request off the table and allow the six Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC) Case Requests to be heard.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-22, AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) FOR A DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN A LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (M-1) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Distribution Center in a Light Industrial (M-1) Zoning District as requested by JB2 Partners LLC (File No. CU-2024-06). The property is located at 805 Bimbo QSR Boulevard. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval subject to one condition (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that JB2 Partners LLC is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Distribution Center in a Light Industrial (M-1) Zoning District. The subject property consists of 15.99 acres and is located at 1805 Bimbo QSR Boulevard. This is at the Southwest corner of the intersection of Bimbo QSR Boulevard and South St. Augustine Road. It is directly across the street from the Bimbo commercial bakery and is part of the Phase 2 area of Westside Business Park which is managed by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority (VLCDA). The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to construct a

shipping Distribution Center facility of about 65,000 square feet. It is termed as a “last mile” package delivery facility that will operate on a 24/7 basis. Packages will arrive on large trucks mainly during the overnight hours. They will be off-loaded via ten receiving bays, sorted within the facility, and then systematically loaded onto smaller delivery trucks/vans for distribution to customers. The applicant anticipates utilizing 85-140 delivery vehicles during the day, depending on the time of year (see attached Project Narrative for further description). The subject property is located within a Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The subject property is part of the Westside Business Park, which is managed by the VLCDA, and is a relatively large area that is planned for industrial development (mostly warehousing and light manufacturing including some distribution type uses). The reason for the proposed use triggering a CUP review as a “Distribution Center” is that it is an all-purpose kind of Distribution Center for a variety of manufacturers/vendors rather than just for one industry. Such facilities have the potential to become quite large and generate very high volumes of truck traffic which can produce significant negative impacts on the local street system as well as nearby development. In this particular case, the proposed use will operate 24 hours a day and is seemingly rather busy; however, it will actually generate a relatively minor amount of traffic compared to the amount of traffic that is already being generated by other industrial uses in the Westside Business Park and the other industrial parks a little farther south. According to the applicant’s traffic study, the proposed use will add less than 5% additional traffic volume to what is already existing on South St. Augustine Road (approximately 11,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic “AADT”) and which is well-within the capacity limits of the roadway. Also, because this is a 24-hour facility, the traffic impacts are somewhat spread throughout the day, and the use will certainly be consistent with the scope and manner of operation of adjacent and nearby industrial uses. The proposed site plan shows a near 100% buildout of the existing 16-acre site, and therefore, the site boundaries themselves will reasonably limit and prevent very large future expansions of the use that could cause significant impacts. Other than a customary expiration date, there is no need for additional conditions of approval. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria and recommended approval subject to the following condition: (1) Conditional Use approval shall expire five (5) years from the date of approval if the proposed use is not fully constructed and operational by that date. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the same condition as recommended by Staff (8-0 Vote).

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Howard to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Distribution Center in a Light Industrial (M-1) Zoning District for property located at 805 Bimbo QSR Boulevard as requested by JB2 Partners LLC subject to the following condition: (1) Conditional Use approval shall expire five (5) years from the date of approval if the proposed use is not fully constructed and operational by that date. Councilman McIntyre seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-22, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-23, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.71 ACRES FROM DUPLEX RESIDENTIAL (DR-10) TO RESIDENTIAL-PROFESSIONAL (R-P) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.71 acres from Duplex Residential (DR-10) to Residential-Professional (R-P) as requested by Julian and Norma Cloud (File No. VA-2024-14). The subject property is located at 212 West Park Avenue and 211 Wayne Avenue. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Julian and Norma Cloud are requesting to rezone two (2) parcels totaling 0.71 acres from Duplex Residential (DR-10) to Residential-Professional (R-P). The subject properties are contiguous and located at 212 West Park Avenue and 211 Wayne Avenue, respectively. This is in the area to the east of North Oak Street between West Park Avenue and Wayne Avenue. The properties are currently vacant and the applicants are proposing to simply market them for professional office development in conjunction with their existing landlocked R-P parcel (0.21 acres) that is contiguous to the east. The applicants have submitted two different conceptual layout plans for these properties (see attached), but these are for

illustration and marketing purposes only. They are not actual site plans being proposed for development at this time. The subject properties are located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-P Zoning. The southern parcel facing West Park Avenue is also currently located within the local Historic District. In their application, the applicants state that *“The purpose of the rezoning is to replace the now-defunct DR-10 Zoning classification on two of our three parcels to R-P, which matches the current zoning on the third parcel, thereby giving all three parcels a zoning classification of R-P. After owning the property for 40 years, we are now ready to sell it and want to get all three parcels zoned the same so that a prospective purchaser can present a development plan that is permitted under the R-P Zoning classification.”* The subject property is part of mixed-use, but relatively low intensity development area that has been trending toward non-residential. The overall surrounding zoning pattern is dominated by R-P Zoning, with O-P Zoning on the abutting properties to the west, R-15 zoning to the north of Wayne Avenue, and additional DR-10 zoning to the south across West Park Avenue. The surrounding land use pattern is slightly more residential than expected by virtue of many nearby R-P properties having residential uses instead of offices. However, the only undeveloped properties in the area do belong to the applicant. These are immediately bordered exclusively by either O-P or R-P Zoning. Therefore, either R-P or O-P would seem to be the only logical choices for the subject properties in order to facilitate a logical infill development. With the applicant’s adjacent vacant property already being R-P, and from a strictly “zoning map consistency” perspective, R-P seems the more logical choice. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Julian Cloud, 1114 Cloverhill Road, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Cloud stated that he and his wife have owned three parcels for over 40 years. Thanks to aging health issues and a huge clobbering by Hurricane Helene, they now need to sell this property. With the zoning of two of the three parcels not being in conformity or valid zones anymore, it makes the issue of marketing the property complicated because whoever buys the property does not go into it knowing fully what they might could do with the property without having to change the zoning themselves. On the Zoning map, the entire block is already zoned R-P as well as one of their three parcels with the exception of the two corner lots on Oak Street. They are requesting to make all of their property R-P which seems like a natural fit with the rest of the block and the neighborhood. They are asking Council’s consideration to help put them in a position where they have a uniform zoning across the board on the entire property so that whoever is looking at it to purchase it can better assess what they may or may not do with it.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-23, an Ordinance to rezone 0.71 acres from Duplex Residential (DR-10) to Residential-Professional (R-P) for property located at 212 West Park Avenue and 211 Wayne Avenue as requested by Julian and Norma Cloud, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-24, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.29 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-10) TO OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL (O-P) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.29 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Office-Professional (O-P) as requested by Four Bee Development (File No. VA-2024-15). The subject property is located at 1214 Baytree Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Four Bee Development LLC is requesting to rezone 0.29 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Office-Professional (O-P). The subject property is located at 1214 Baytree Road which is along the north side of the road about 150 feet east of the intersection with Green Circle. The property is currently vacant and recently cleared, and the applicant is proposing to develop this property with a professional office building consisting of about 3,300-sf floor area. The subject property is located within a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of O-P Zoning. The property is also located within the University Zone of the

“Baytree-University Corridor Overlay District (BUCOD).” The subject property is part of a mixed office and light commercial corridor along Baytree Road west of Jerry Jones Drive and immediately across from the City of Remerton. The land use pattern along this portion of the corridor is dominated by professional offices along the north side, and a variety of commercial businesses along the south side. Zoning patterns in the area reflect a very similar pattern with Commercial Zoning on the south side (Remerton) and mostly all O-P on the north side with a few scattered parcels having C-N or C-C Zoning. The subject property is one of only two remaining parcels that still have Single-Family Residential Zoning along this portion of the corridor. These are the last remnants of a former residential land use pattern in this part of the corridor that began vanishing 30+ years ago. With this side of Baytree Road being designated a NAC character area and all of the adjacent properties along Baytree already zoned O-P, rezoning this vacant property as infill to O-P for office development is very appropriate. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Bill Kent, Innovate Engineering, 2214 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Kent stated that he will be the Project Engineer for this Project and would be glad to answer any questions Council may have.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman McIntyre, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-24, an Ordinance to rezone 0.29 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Office-Professional (O-P) for property located at 1214 Baytree Road as requested by Four Bee Development, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-25, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.23 ACRES FROM DUPLEX RESIDENTIAL (DR-10) TO RESIDENTIAL-PROFESIONAL (R-P) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.23 acres from Duplex Residential (DR-10) to Residential-Professional (R-P) as requested by Marian Leonard (File No. VA-2024-16). The subject property is located at 112 West Moore Street. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Marian Leonard is requesting to rezone 0.23 acres from Duplex Residential (DR-10) to Residential-Professional (R-P). The subject property is located at 112 West Moore Street which is along the north side of the street about 100 feet east of the intersection with Jeanette Street. The property currently contains a two-story single-family residence (1,820-sf) and a rear year yard detached accessory garage with a small upstairs apartment. The applicant is proposing the R-P Zoning in order to make the property eligible (via future CUP request) for a proposed Art Studio in the main building. No physical changes are currently being proposed for the site. The subject property is located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-P Zoning. The property is also located within the local Historic District, as well as the Brookwood North National Register Historic District (NRHD). The subject property is part of the historic neighborhood area directly to the north of the Valdosta State University (VSU) main campus whereby most buildings along this street are classified as a “contributing historic resource” to both the local and the Brookwood North NRHD historic districts. Over the past 20+ years, both VSU and the VSU Foundation have been acquiring properties along this street and converting most of them to office type uses. This, in addition to the private sector conversion of other properties to offices, has transformed the character of this street from residential to that which is now dominated by offices. However, the zoning pattern along this street is still dominated by DR-10 Zoning. This is deceiving in that it does not reflect the current land use pattern, due in part to acquisition by VSU (which is exempt from zoning requirements). The applicant’s purpose in requesting the zoning change is to make it eligible for a possible “Art Studio” usage of the existing building, which is something that would be reviewed separately under a future CUP request. In the meantime, while only considering just the request for R-P Zoning, it should certainly be noted that there is already existing R-P and O-P for some properties along the street and that the surrounding land use pattern has already changed from its prior

residential dominance. Choosing R-P instead of O-P will help recognize this transitional land use pattern, while still being consistent with the remaining Residential Zoning dominance along the street. It will also preserve the possibility of duplex usage while also keeping out some of the little more intensive uses of O-P such as banks and medical clinics, etc. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

John Leonard, 2610 Winding Way, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Leonard stated that he and his wife bought the property before they even moved to Valdosta because their daughter worked as an Artist and had an Art Studio in a barn. After the barn was renovated, the owner sold it. They then purchased this property. Their daughter has kilns in the garage apartment and they use the upstairs for painting. Their granddaughter is a student at Valdosta State University and she also lives in one of the upstairs rooms. It is Residential Zoning but they would like for it to be Residential-Professional Zoning. They call it an Art Studio but it is mostly a production facility. They are looking for approval from Council to be able to have “by appointment only” wholesale customers to come and view the art so that they could potentially place orders. It would not be a retail environment at all. It would not have any traffic coming through unless it was by appointment. There is room to park five vehicles behind it for the employees and then there is a circular driveway for three more vehicles in the front.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-25, an Ordinance to rezone 0.23 acres from Duplex Residential (DR-10) to Residential-Professional (R-P) for property located at 112 West Moore Street, as requested by Marian Leonard, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-26, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 3.46 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-15) TO RESIDENTIAL-PROFESSIONAL (R-P) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 3.46 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Residential-Professional (R-P) as requested by Park Hawthorne Development LLC (File No. VA-2024-17). The subject property is located at 4506 Inner Perimeter Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (7-0-1 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Park Hawthorne Development LLC, represented by Jerry Stoker, is requesting to rezone 3.46 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Residential-Professional (R-P). The subject property is currently vacant and located at 4506 Inner Perimeter Road. More specifically, it is the southerly landlocked portion of a proposed 10.20-acre parcel that is currently split-zoned R-P and R-15. The applicant is proposing to have all of the property zoned R-P and develop it as a townhouse residential development with about 75 dwelling units and its primary point of access connecting to East Park Avenue. The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-P Zoning. The property is also located within the Inner Perimeter Road Corridor Overlay District. The surrounding zoning patterns in the area are dominated by mostly C-H Zoning around the intersection of Inner Perimeter Road and East Park Avenue, as well as R-15 Zoning on most of the subject property and the abutting large tract of land (185 acres) for Valdosta High School. There is also the existing parcel to the west which was rezoned last year from R-P and R-15 to all R-M (file No. VA-2023-05) to allow construction of a high-density single-family subdivision. The surrounding land use patterns in the area are dominated by mostly vacant/ undeveloped land with a few small commercial uses along Inner Perimeter Road, the existing Church across the street to the north, the High School to the south, and the developing single-family subdivision to the west. Given the CAC Character Area in the area and the subject property being part of a yet, un-subdivided “pocket” of land at the corner of East Park Avenue and Inner Perimeter Road (which will grow to a major intersection), development of this property should logically become something between high-density residential >> professional >> commercial. Although Commercial Zoning and development is preferred here, it should be noted that most of this proposed property for development is already zoned R-P. The applicant’s proposal would unify the zoning on the property and eliminate some more of the R-15 Zoning which is non-

compliant in the CAC character area. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matthew Inman, Advanced Engineering, 4560 Val North Drive, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Inman stated that these are townhome units and there will be a center drive through the entire property for more residential and pedestrian access. The main access to all the garages will be through the rear of the units so it is a little bit different. There would be 79 units and they are asking for rezoning of 3.46 acres in the rear of the overall property which is 10.2 acres total. They will have a secondary access at a later date. They are tying in at one spot on the corner with originally two driveways, one for this one and one for commercial. In conversations with the City Engineer Ben O'Dowd and his Staff, they want to limit the number of additional connections to Park Avenue due to the traffic between there and the High School. They will have one access point for there and commercial along Inner Perimeter. At a later date, there will be some other connection to Inner Perimeter. They do not know where that will be yet but the Master Plan for all of the commercial will have a future connection to that. These units will be for sale and are 24 feet wide and have two parking spaces in the garage and two in the driveway. That is a lot more than they are required to have. There is always a concern with these units not having enough parking. They are going to do three to six unit buildings and the Developer feels that four unit buildings will be the right density for this development. They are approximately 1,600-1,700 square feet heated but that does not include the garage. They are two-story units.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Harden, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-26, an Ordinance to rezone 3.46 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Residential-Professional (R-P) property located at 4506 Inner Perimeter Road as requested by Park Hawthorne Development LLC, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-27, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP OF THE GREATER LOWNDES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY CHANGING THE CHARACTER AREA DESIGNATION OF THREE PARCELS TOTALING 0.78 ACRES FROM ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL (ER) TO COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the Future Development Map of the Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan by changing the Character Area Designation of three parcels totaling 0.78 acres from Established Residential (ER) to Community Activity Center (CAC) as requested by James Warren (File No. VA-2024-18). The subject property is located at 202 Denmark Street. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that James Warren is requesting to amend the Future Development Map of the Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan by changing the Character Area designation of three (3) contiguous parcels totaling 0.78 acres, from Established Residential (ER) to Community Activity Center (CAC). The subject properties are located in the Little Miami neighborhood at 202 Denmark Street which is along the north side of the street about 300 feet west of the intersection with Pendleton Avenue. The properties are currently zoned R-6 and collectively contain an existing commercial/warehouse building (11,100-sf). The applicant is proposing the Character Area change in order to make this property eligible for Commercial Zoning (future rezoning request) and bring the property out of non-conformity so that it can be properly marketed for commercial uses. The subject properties are part of a residential neighborhood that was one of the unincorporated islands (# 85) that were annexed by the City in 2006. These properties had Cluster Residential (R-C) Zoning in the County which was the County's Multi-Family Residential Zoning District at that time. They were given R-6 Zoning in the City upon annexation (which was the City's Multi-Family Residential Zoning District at that time). With the adoption of the LDR, the City's rules for R-6 changed such that Multi-Family is no longer a permitted use in R-6. Despite the previous zonings allowing multi-family development, virtually none of the properties in the Little Miami area developed with multi-family uses but instead remained as mostly single-family with some scattered mobile home development occurring while in the County before the time of annexation. There were also a number of existing

small commercial or industrial type uses in this area at the time of annexation, and most of these were likely in place before the County's initial establishment of Zoning in the early 1970's. These commercial/ industrial uses were already non-conforming uses in the County at the time of annexation and have remained completely non-conforming ever since. They are now subject to the City's rules for "non-conforming uses" which stipulates that once a non-conforming use is discontinued for a period of at least 12 months, it may not be re-established. For the subject properties, there is little to no business licensing history and the exact timeline of business usage is uncertain. However, based on Google imagery, it appears that the "South Georgia Garage Door" business occupied the premises for a number of years after the time of annexation; however, they have now been gone from the site for several years. As stated above, the applicant's primary purpose in requesting the Character Area change is to make the properties eligible for Commercial Zoning so that the property can be marketed to a wide range of potential uses. The applicant points out the subject property being adjacent to the CAC character area to the west. However, this portion of the CAC character area fronts South Patterson Street which is an intensive commercial corridor along a busy four-lane highway. CAC character area is certainly logical along the South Patterson Street corridor; however, in terms of physical access and frontage, the subject properties are physically isolated from this intensive corridor. The only way to access the subject properties from South Patterson Street is along Pendleton Avenue through the Little Miami neighborhood and the ER character area via "local streets." It is considered highly inappropriate for commercial uses (particularly the intensive ones.) to have their only means of access through a residential area, and therefore, such intensive Zoning Districts in these areas should not be approved as part of any redevelopment proposal. Consequently, a Character Area change that would allow the possibility of such intensive zoning classifications should not be approved as well. Staff understands the history of the property with its commercial/warehouse type buildings, and its current intensive non-conforming usage, but does NOT believe this situation justifies the potential negative impacts such a change could have on the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east and south. Staff would certainly encourage redevelopment of the subject properties, and even adaptive reuse of the existing buildings, but believes there are better alternatives such as an institutional use (many of which are allowed in R-6 with a CUP approval), or perhaps redevelopment as multi-family (requiring a rezoning to R-M which is eligible in the ER character area). Staff found the request inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Character Area map amendment review criteria and recommended denial. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Character Area map amendment review criteria, and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Bill Nijem, 1007 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Nijem stated that he represented the applicant for this request. This is an 11,000 square foot commercial building that they believe pre-dates County Zoning Codes because it was initially in the County prior to 1972. It was annexed into the City in 2006 and assigned a Residential Character Area and Residential Zoning; however, the warehouse has always been there with a commercial use. At the Planning Commission Meeting, there was no opposition. This use has been there for decades and any neighbors who live in that area are aware of it and use to it. One reason that he is here is because it is a legal non-conforming use. The applicant's hands are tied with what they can do with the property. The property is limited to the use as it is now. It is an auto body repair shop which is a little bit in disarray. There are cars parked out on the property and we look at this as an opportunity for change. They would like to market this property for other commercial uses that are consistent with something in the C-C Zoning. They would have to come back before Council and address that at a different time. They are envisioning a specialty trade business with a use like a HVAC company, plumbing company, or an electrician. There was a garage door company there for decades prior to its current use now. It would not generate a lot of traffic and would probably be a few service vans and trucks. There is a straight shot to the road to the east from Denmark Street and then connect to Patterson Street. On the other side of Ulmer Avenue is the Industrial Park and the Cowart property which has a solar farm development now. This is the first step for a Character Area change. They are asking Council's consideration in following the Planning Commission who recommended approval unanimously.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Harden, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-27, an Ordinance to amend the Future Development Map of the Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan by changing the Character Area Designation of three parcels totaling 0.78 acres from Established Residential (ER) to Community Activity Center (CAC) for property located at 202 Denmark Street as requested by James Warren, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-28, AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) FOR A CHURCH IN A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-6) ZONING DISTRICT

11/07/24 CONTINUED

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Church in a Single-Family Residential (R-6) Zoning District as requested by Abner Smith (File No. CU-2024-07). The property is located at 503 East Savannah Avenue. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval subject to one condition (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Mr. Abner Smith is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Church in a Single-Family Residential (R-6) Zoning District. The subject property is located at 503 East Savannah Avenue which is at the southeast corner of East Savannah Avenue and Holliday Street. The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to construct a Church facility on the property which will include a 3,900-sf building and a parking lot with 16+ parking spaces. The proposed floor plan indicates the Church sanctuary will have a seating capacity of about 60 persons. The subject property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within the local Historic District which means that any new construction will need to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) approval from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The subject property is part of a relatively isolated six-block area to the southeast of Downtown between East Savannah Avenue and the railroad tracks. This was once a vibrant residential area full of single-family homes many decades ago, but it later fell victim to intrusion of commercial and warehouse uses but has now become mostly vacant land. Less than ¼ of the total area is still developed with houses. There are still some old storage buildings along the perimeter area, as well as the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church properties in the western portion. The only new development that has occurred here is the Habitat for Humanity “Sweet 16” housing development from about 23 years ago. It was hoped at that time that such a development would be a catalyst for additional new development in the area, but it has yet to materialize. The applicant has been discussing his development proposal for this property for 13+ years with City Staff. Although the proposal is for an institutional type of use instead of being the preferred residential use, the Church is relatively small in scope and is deemed by Staff to be compatible with the surrounding land use pattern. It is also hoped that as “new development” it will serve as a catalyst for more new development in this area which is also a hope and desire of the applicant. Given the small size of the property and the slow-changing development trend of the area, there is no need for special conditions on this CUP approval other than a long-term expiration date. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria and recommended approval subject to the following condition: (1) Conditional Use approval shall expire ten (10) years from the date of approval if the proposed use is not fully constructed and operational by that date. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 28, 2024 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the same condition as recommended by Staff (8-0 Vote).

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilwoman Tooley to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Church in a Single-Family Residential (R-6) Zoning District for property located at 503 East Savannah Avenue as requested by Abner Smith with the following condition: (1) Conditional Use approval shall expire ten (10) years from the date of approval if the proposed use is not fully constructed and operational by that date. Councilman McIntyre seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-28, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-29, AN ORDINANCE FOR SCHEDULING THE CITY OF VALDOSTA’S WATER RATES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026, 2027, AND 2028 (SECOND READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance for scheduling the City of Valdosta’s water rates for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028. (Second Reading)

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system is need of significant repairs, improvements, and expansion. The City has experienced significant growth and needs to upgrade the system to meet the needs of the future. The City has planned a number of large projects that will meet this need and plans to utilize revenue bonds to finance them. These projects will position the City to meet the needs of an expanding customer base and serve industrial customers that will need specialized sewer treatment needs. The City will need to issue revenue bonds to finance the needed improvements to its water and wastewater system. The current rate structure is adequate to cover existing operating expenses and routine capital needs but will not provide adequate revenue to service the anticipated bond issue. In order to provide adequate revenues to service the new debt, the City will need to raise its utility rates over the next three years. The City routinely raises its rates 5% per annum to offset inflationary pressures on the system's cost of operation but will need an additional 3% per annum for the next two years to fund anticipated debt service. The attached Ordinance provides for these increases for the next three fiscal years. The rates for FY 26 and FY 27 will increase 8% (5% + 3%) while FY 28 will increase the usual 5%. The City typically adopts its rate increases annually in conjunction with the budget but the three-year Ordinance will provide confirmation to potential bond buyers the City's commitment to its financing plan. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the Ordinance scheduling the City's water rates for fiscal years 2026, 2027, and 2028.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-29, an Ordinance for scheduling the City of Valdosta's water rates for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-30, AN ORDINANCE FOR SCHEDULING THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S WASTEWATER RATES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026, 2027, AND 2028 (SECOND READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance for scheduling the City of Valdosta's wastewater rates for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028. (Second Reading)

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system is need of significant repairs, improvements, and expansion. The City has experienced significant growth and needs to upgrade the system to meet the needs of the future. The City has planned a number of large projects that will meet this need and plans to utilize revenue bonds to finance them. These projects will position the City to meet the needs of an expanding customer base and serve industrial customers that will need specialized sewer treatment needs. The City will need to issue revenue bonds to finance the needed improvements to its water and wastewater system. The current rate structure is adequate to cover existing operating expenses and routine capital needs but will not provide adequate revenue to service the anticipated bond issue. In order to provide adequate revenues to service the new debt, the City will need to raise its utility rates over the next three years. The City routinely raises its rates 5% per annum to offset inflationary pressures on the system's cost of operation but will need an additional 3% per annum for the next two years to fund anticipated debt service. The attached Ordinance provides for these increases for the next three fiscal years. The rates for FY 26 and FY 27 will increase 8% (5% + 3%) while FY 28 will increase the usual 5%. The City typically adopts its rate increases annually in conjunction with the budget but the three-year Ordinance will provide confirmation to potential bond buyers the City's commitment to its financing plan. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve Ordinance scheduling the City's wastewater rates for fiscal years 2026, 2027, and 2028.

A MOTION by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-30, an Ordinance for scheduling the City of Valdosta's wastewater rates for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request for extraterritorial extension of water and sewer services for property located on Inner Perimeter Road in Lowndes County.

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that periodically, the Utilities Department receives water and sewer service requests from entities outside or bordering the City Limits. In these cases, those entities must present an

extraterritorial service request to the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County. Upon approval of both City and County governing authorities, the water and/or sewer systems may be constructed and connected to the City water distribution and sewer collection systems. The property consists of three Tax Parcels (0149A 036A, 149A 036B, and 0149A 036C). This request is from Amerco Real Estate Company of Arizona for a proposed project for a U-Haul business. The +/-five-acre property lies outside of the City Limits and within Lowndes County. The City has existing water main and gravity sewer main of sufficient size to serve this industrial project along the property frontage on Inner Perimeter Road. The 2022 Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) Agreement provides, "Any party may make an extraterritorial extension of water and sewer services upon approval of the affected party." Pending County approval of an extraterritorial extension of Valdosta water services, the property will be in Valdosta's water service area. The Owner/Developer has requested water services from the City of Valdosta. The City has adequate infrastructure and capacity to provide services to the property. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the extraterritorial water and sewer service request by the Amerco Real Estate Company to connect to City water services, followed by the appropriate request to Lowndes County for approval based on the language in the SDS Agreement.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman McIntyre, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the request for extraterritorial extension of water and sewer services for property located on Inner Perimeter Road in Lowndes County.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Consideration of appointments to the Central Valdosta Development Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA) has the following members whose terms will expire on December 31, 2024: (1) Susan Mullis, (2) Elissa Noyes, and (3) Jamie Phelps. Also, Kasandra Hasenauer, Merchant or Professional Operating a Business within the Central Valdosta Area, resigned due to personal reasons effective September 17, 2024. That term will expire December 31, 2025. Ms. Mullis, Ms. Noyes, and Mr. Phelps have all expressed an interest in remaining on the CVDA. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows in no order of preference: Downtown Property Owners: (1) Susan Mullis – Owner, Flower Gallery, (2) Elissa Noyes – Attorney, Georgia Public Defender Council (State of Georgia), (3) Jamie Phelps – Self Employed, Real Estate, and (4) Toni Miller – Event Coordinator/Owner, The Patterson; Merchant or Professional Operating a Business within the Central Valdosta Area: (1) Dean Gunsolus – Information Technology/President, Critical Network Solutions, (2) Richard McClary – Co-Owner, Looking Good, Inc. (Men's Clothing Store), and (3) Samantha Schreiber – Business Owner, Cottonwood Boutique.

Mayor Matheson stated that he would take nominations for the Downtown Property Owners Slot (1). Councilman Carroll placed into consideration the name of Susan Mullis. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Susan Mullis to raise their hands. Susan Mullis was reappointed (6-0) to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that he would take nominations for the Downtown Property Owners Slot (2). Councilman Gibbs placed into consideration the name of Elissa Noyes. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Elissa Noyes to raise their hands. Elissa Noyes was reappointed (6-0) to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that he would take nominations for the Downtown Property Owners Slot (3). Councilman Howard placed into consideration the name of Toni Miller. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Toni Miller to raise their hands. Toni Miller was reappointed (6-0) to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that he would take nominations for the Merchant or Professional Operating a Business within the Central Valdosta Area. Councilman Howard placed into consideration the name of Samantha Schreiber. Councilwoman Tooley placed into consideration the name of Richard McClary. There being no other

nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Samantha Schreiber to raise their hands. Councilmen Carroll, Gibbs, Harden, Howard, and McIntyre voted in favor. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Richard McClary to raise their hands. Councilwoman Tooley voted in favor. Samantha Schreiber was appointed (5-1) to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Public Art Advisory Committee has a member, Vickie Everitte, who resigned due to personal reasons effective October 15, 2024. Ms. Everitte's term as the LVAC Board Member on the Public Art Advisory Committee will expire on June 1, 2027. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The only applicant to apply was Nancy D. Warren.

Mayor Matheson stated that there is one slot and one applicant and if there is no objection from Council, Ms. Warren will be appointed by acclamation. There was no objection from Council.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Tree Commission.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta Tree Commission has three members, Charles "Brent" Moore, Jr., Justin Jacobs, and Thomas Humphrey whose terms expired on September 6, 2024. Mr. Moore, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Humphrey have all expressed an interest in remaining on the Tree Commission. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows: (1) Charles "Brent" Moore, Jr. - Owner, Outdoor Living Southeast, Inc., (2) Justin E. Jacobs - Regional GIS Coordinator, Southern Georgia Regional Commission, and (3) Thomas Humphrey - Landscape Architect, Thomas Humphrey Landscape Architecture.

Mayor Matheson stated that there are three slots and three applicants and if there is no objection from Council, Charles "Brent" Moore, Jr., Justin Jacobs, and Thomas Humphrey will be appointed by acclamation. There was no objection from Council.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority has a member, Richard Oelkers, Lodging and Tourism, whose term will expire on December 31, 2024. Mr. Oelkers has expressed an interest in remaining on the Conference Center & Tourism Authority. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows in no order of preference: (1) Richard Oelkers - Independent Hotel Consultant, and (2) Jamie Phelps - Self-employed in Hotels and Real Estate.

Mayor Matheson asked for nominations. Councilman Carroll placed into consideration the name of Richard Oelkers. Councilman Howard placed into consideration the name of Jamie Phelps. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Rick Oelkers to raise their hands. Councilman Carroll voted in favor. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Jamie Phelps to raise their hands. Councilmen Gibbs, Harden, Howard, McIntyre, and Councilwoman Tooley voted in favor. Jamie Phelps was appointed (5-1) to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that on Friday, November 8, 2024, the Sounds for Lowndes Concert will take place with the gates opening at 4:00 p.m. at Unity Park. This Event is being hosted by the Greater Valdosta United Way and other underwriters in support of Hurricane Helene relief efforts. This is a free concert featuring several musical acts. On Saturday, November 9, 2024, the Girls on the Run Fall 5K Event will take place beginning at 7:00 a.m. at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse. On Saturday, November 16, 2024, the Makers Market will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse Square. Also, on November 16, 2024, we will host Movie Night at Unity Park with the movie Free Bird which will begin at 7:30 p.m.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that we have had three hurricanes, a straight line wind event, and now two rain events (one in April and one that we experienced last night). None of us thought we would be talking about water rescues in the City of Valdosta but that is what took place. Through all of what we have gone through in a 14-month period, we could not be more impressed of our Staff and the efforts that they have put forth each and every time. To our citizens who stand up each and every time with damage to their property, you have our heartfelt appreciation and we thank everyone for what they have done. These have been some extraordinary circumstances.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the November 7, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:25 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, November 21, 2024.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta