

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for their Regular meeting on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building with Chairman Robert Holland presiding.

Present: COMMISSION: Chairman Robert Holland, Vice Chairman Dustin Driggers, Commissioner Herbert Flick, and Commissioner James Thomas, Jr.; STAFF: Community Development Director Robert Fields, City Clerk Leona Holley, and City Attorney Tom Watkins; ABSENT: Commissioner John Thigpen, Jr.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Holland at 6:09 p.m.

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was given and led by Chairman Holland.

Determination of a Quorum: A quorum of the Commission was present.

Approval of the Agenda: Commissioner Flick made the motion to approve the Agenda as presented; 2nd by Vice Chairman Driggers. The motion carried with Commissioners Driggers, Flick, and Thomas voting in the affirmative.

Approval of the Minutes: Commissioner Flick made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 5, 2024 meeting as written; 2nd by Vice Chairman Driggers. The motion carried with Commissioners Driggers, Flick, and Thomas voting in the affirmative.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

RZ-2024-04-01 375 N. Louisville Street (R-1A to B-1): The applicant is the City of Harlem. The applicant is requesting the property at 375 N. Louisville Street be rezoned from R-1A Residential to B-1 Downtown Business District. The property is currently developed and is in the Downtown Center Character area which is a mixed-use activity center promoting building and site design features complimentary to the historic development patterns found in the city's central business district. After review of the application Staff is making the recommendation for the Approval of rezoning to B-1 Downtown Business District.

Applicant Comments: None.

Public Comments, For or Against: None.

With there being no further comments, Commissioner Thomas made the motion to recommend to Council approval of rezoning application RZ-2024-04-01 for the rezoning classification for 375 N. Louisville Street from R-1A Residential to B-1 Downtown Business District; 2nd by Commissioner Flick. The motion carried with Commissioners Driggers, Flick, and Thomas voting in the affirmative.

VAR-2024-04-01 Reduction in Landscape Buffer Requirements (Side) – Proposed Site for O'Reilly Auto Parts – 370 W. Milledgeville Road Parcel ID H03 139: The applicant is O'Reilly Auto Part, and the request is for a reduction inside the landscape buffer from 25-feet to 5-feet. The applicant is proposing to construct a 7,360 square foot structure on a .78 acres piece of property at 370 W. Milledgeville Road with 14,269 square feet will be the parking area. The applicant is requesting a variance from the required 25-foot side

PUBLIC HEARINGS (cont'd):

VAR-2024-04-01 Reduction in Landscape Buffer Requirements (Side) – Proposed Site for O’Reilly’s Auto Parts – 370 W. Milledgeville Road Parcel ID H03 139 (cont’d): landscape buffer to a 5-foot buffer due to the layout of the building where the east side of the building will be within 10 feet from the adjacent property line on the east. The property is in the Downtown Commercial Overlay District, Central Historic District with an underlying B-3 zoning. The current use of the property is a used car dealership.

The Staff recommendation is to recommend approval of the “Findings of Fact” with Conditions. The “Findings of Fact” are as follows:

- a. The proposed size of the structure will encroach into the eastern side landscape buffer.
- b. The site plans provided by the applicant show a 5-foot landscape buffer with a mixture of (22) shrubs, (3) trees and at minimum, a 6-foot-tall fence on the east side of the property.

The Conditions are as follows:

- a. Approval contingent upon Harlem’s Historic Preservation Commissions decision on the Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by the application for demolition of the structure.

Applicants Comments: Paul Engel, Professional Engineer with OWN Engineers, representing O’Reilly Auto Parts – Mr. Engle commented the reason for the Side Landscape Buffer Reduction request was due to the size of the lot and the placement of the building. They will include all the required plants and will be compliant with the landscape requirements.

Opposition to Request: N/A

Commission Comments: Chairman Holland asked if there are any issues as far as the property being in the Historic Preservation District; Mr. Fields replied the applicant has filed a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the structure on the property with the Historic Preservation Commission; this will go to the Historic Preservation Commission on May 9, 2024.

Vice Chairman Driggers asked what is on the east side of the property; Mr. Fields replied there is a residential structure with a building at the back of the property.

Commissioner Thomas asked who will maintain the plants; Mr. Engle stated there will be a landscaper to take care of the plants. Commissioner Thomas requested for the fence on the east side to be an 8-foot fence instead of the proposed 6-foot fence. Mr. Engle explained that with an 8-foot fence this would become a structural wall and would be difficult, more complicated, and more expensive. Mr. Engle stated, if possible, they would like to keep the 6-foot fence and use the plants for a screen in front of the fence. Vice Chairman Driggers commented with the landscape plan the plants will grow taller than the fence. After further discussion on the fence the Commission decided to allow the 6-foot fence rather than the 8-foot fence. Discussion was given on the trash receptacle pad being placed at the front of the property; the

PUBLIC HEARINGS (cont'd):

VAR-2024-04-01 Reduction in Landscape Buffer Requirements (Side) – Proposed Site for O’Reilly’s Auto Parts – 370 W. Milledgeville Road Parcel ID H03 139 (cont’d): Commissioners requested for the trash receptacle to be moved from the front of the property to the rear of the property. Mr. Engle agreed to move the trash receptacle to the rear of the property.

With there being no further comments, Vice Chairman Driggers made the motion to adopt the “Findings of Fact” with Conditions for VAR-2024-04-01 and recommend to Council approval of the Variance with reduction in landscape buffer requirements for 370 W. Milledgeville Road, contingent upon the Historic Preservation Commission decision on the Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by the application for demolition of the structure; 2nd by Commissioner Flick. The motion carried with Commissioners Driggers, Flick, and Thomas voting in the affirmative.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

Public Comments: None.

Legal Matters: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Fields reported on the following:

- Bowdre Street Townhomes – The developers are having to redesign the project due to stormwater issues. After the redesign it will come back in front of the Planning Commission.
- Heritage Ridge – Recently there was an onsite meeting with the Department of Transportation Inspector, Contractor, Developer and Staff to discuss the water realignment and decel lane.

Chairman’s Comments: Chairman Holland thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.

With there being nothing further before the Commission, Commissioner Flick made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Commissioner Thomas. The motion carried with Commissioners Driggers, Flick, and Thomas voting in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk