

MINUTES
UNION CITY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017 7:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Robert Potts, Board Member Roslyn Crider, Board Member Sandra Hill, Board Member Antonio Andrews, City Attorney Patrick Stough, and Community Development Planner Larry Lucas

Absent: None

Meeting Called to Order: Chairman at 7:00 pm

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 19, 2016 (Approved Unanimously; Motion made by Roslyn Crider & Second by Sandra Hill)
- II. OLD BUSINESS:
None
- III. NEW BUSINESS:
 1. **Election of Officers for 2017:** Chairman Potts opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. He nominated Antonio Andrews. The nomination was seconded by Roslyn Crider and the vote was unanimous.

Ms. Sandra Hill nominated Robert Potts to remain as Chairman. Her nomination was seconded by Antonio Andrews and the vote was unanimous.

2. **Public Hearing** to consider a variance VAR17-001 for the property located at **Feldwood Road at Royal South Parkway** by **U-Haul**, represented by John Scofield, Marketing Co. President for Atlanta South, U-Haul Corporation for the following:

Request to exceed the maximum 20 vehicle storage (Article VI, Section 6-11(3) and increase the height of a mini-storage building from one story to three story (Article VI-Section 6-11(14))

Mr. Scofield, petitioner for the U-Haul Corporation in South Atlanta spoke and explained that they wanted to construct a three story building to provide inside storage. We are seeking this variance to go forward on the purchase of that property.

Mr. Potts: You are also asking to have more than 20 vehicles on the premises, right?

Mr. Scofield: Definite number is based on inventory, but no more than 50.

Mr. Potts: Now, these are U-Haul vehicles for rent, not motor homes or anything like that?

Mr. Scofield: No, we'll be renting out our trucks every day.

Mr. Potts: Is there anything else you would like to inform the Board?

Ms. Scofield: If the Board is interested, I have a full size plan or concept drawing of the facility. We look at neighboring properties, at their exteriors, and design our facility to blend in. (Petitioner approaches the panel to show them the larger size plans)

Ms. Hill: How many people will you hire from the community?

Ms. Scofield: Somewhere around 20-25 individuals, 4 full time and the rest moonlighters. You would think U-Haul would have a lot of cars and trucks coming in and out, but in reality people come in about once a month. We have welcome deals for folks just coming into the community, like the people moving in with the movie studio. It will take us about 2 years to do the drawings for construction and another 2 years to get it fully functional.

Mr. Andrews: The location is going to be at Feldwood and Royal South?

Mr. Scofield: That corner where the gas station is, there's a cut out and another one across from the park and ride. The elevation of the site is not bad, it has a slope of about 5 degrees. So, this will complement the appearance of the building so that it will look to have just 2 levels. It won't be so noticeable from the highway side.

Mr. Potts: You know this is a wooded site? You know a buffer zone can't be touched.

Mr. Scofield acknowledged the Chairman's statement and inquired about the codes governing the buffers.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mr. Potts: Is there anyone wanting to step forward in favor of the petitioner?

No one came forward.

Mr. Potts: Is there anyone in opposition to the variance?

There were multiple people in opposition to the petitioner. (Six persons raised hands)

Ms. Rosie Jackson: It took 20 years to get rid of the trailers at Banneker and this is something we don't want on Feldwood. We worked for 20 years to get Fulton School Board to move the trailers and we don't want a U-Haul business on this property

Ms. Bevelyn Parham: Expressed concerns about safety on the roads near this site because of the school buses and student pedestrians. She also felt the traffic in and out of this business would hinder emergency vehicles. She stated that the use was more appropriate for an industrial area.

Ms. Sandra Parham: Not in favor of having the business on Feldwood because of adding to the traffic congestion and that it would not be visually attractive.

Ms. Eleanor Kinlaw-Ross: She commented that the development was industrial and U-Haul is known to attract crime, meaning that it will have an adverse effect on the quality of life.

Ms. Elisha Garth: She also expressed opposition on the expectation of more crime and traffic.

Mr. Corey Reeves: He spoke about ingress and egress of the trucks, their emissions and the existence of 4 other storage businesses within a 5 mile radius. He also stated that the community of South Fulton would be better served without this business in the entry of their community.

Ms. Tiffany Calloway Ferrell: Her comments were in regard to the loss of trees that would occur if the building and parking lot were built.

Mr. Potts closed the public comment portion of the meeting. He then asked the petitioner if he wanted to offer any rebuttal to statements made by the public.

Mr. Scofield: He first addressed the word, "Industrial", which did not describe the type of trucks at the facility nor the dock heights or ramps found at an industrial facility. He described the business as, "mom and pop, do it yourself". He then added that the company has a commitment to going green and would follow all codes and requirements. Finally, he shared his experience with school traffic on Feldwood and that hopefully, the city was considering syncing traffic lights or developing some a plan for traffic improvements.

Mr. Potts: It appears that you will have two points of access, one on Flat Shoals and the other on Feldwood. This is my concern, the traffic into and out of these driveways.

Mr. Scofield: Addressed Mr. Potts comments by stating that the curb cuts would be one way in and one way out.

Ms. Hill: What is the cost of this project? How much revenue are you bringing to the City?

Mr. Scofield: \$2 million. On the issue of crime, Mr. Scofield spoke about his experience over the last 2 years as the manager of a facility on Godby Rd. that had no break ins. His theory is that a well-kept property with ample security reduces criminal activity. He went on to say that this building is all interior storage with no exterior doors. Access requires swipe cards and offers much better security than the typical ground storage units. Hours are 7 am to 7 pm, Monday thru Saturday, 9 to 5 on Sunday.

Mr. Potts: What are these extra parking spaces on the site?

Mr. Scofield: With the number of homeowner associations in the area that don't allow RV's, boats or campers, we provide secure storage for them.

Ms. Crider: If the traffic at this location is as low as you stated, why do you need the extra vehicles?

Mr. Scofield: We want to insure adequate coverage during the weekend, when a lot of moving takes place.

Mr., Stoughton: The variance being requested is from the minimum requirements for a conditional use, which according to the Ordinance cannot varied if it would constitute an illegal use in that district. The increase in height and number of cars are only allowed in the industrial districts. As indicated in the staff report, the granting of these variances, is effectively rezoning the property.

Mr. Andrews: So, it's already zoned GC and the petitioner's variance request is outside the scope of this Board.?

Mr. Potts: My question is why didn't staff inform this gentleman of this before wasting his time and money on this application?

Mr. Lucas: Staff counsels applicants on the appropriateness of variance requests, but if they choose to proceed, staff does understands that they have the right to as public review as delegated to the Board by City Council.

Mr. Potts: In light of what we just understood, do I hear a motion to approve this variance.

There was none.

Mr. Potts then requested a motion to deny the variance. Ms. Roslyn Crider moved to deny the variance request. It was seconded by Sandra Hill and the vote was unanimous.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm

City Planner

Robert Potts
Chairman