



**MINUTES  
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
(FIRST FLOOR OF CITY HALL)**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024  
4:45 p.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Public Hearing of the Commission of the City of Waycross was held on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 4:45 pm. in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Mayor James called the meeting to order at 4:45 pm. Those in attendance were Community Improvement Director, Marc Hawkins, Commissioners Katrena Felder, Sheinita Bennett, Shawn Roberts, Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson and Diane Hopkins (in 4:50).

**II. EXPLANATION OF PUBLIC HEARING RULES**

Mayor Michael-Angelo James

**III. CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARING PETITION:**

**A.** For the Purpose of considering an amendment to the zoning ordinance of the City of Waycross, Georgia.

**1.** Reading of Public Notice: City Clerk

Read by Assistant City Clerk, Marquis Nixon

**2.** Community Improvement Department Statement

Community Improvement Director, Marc Hawkins, spoke on the details of re-zoning Brunel Street at Howe Street and Haines Avenue, From C-2 Highway Commercial to R-50 Residential.

**IV. PUBLIC CONSIDERATION: \*\*\*SEE DISCUSSION NOTES\*\*\***

**A.** Support (Comments Limited to 10 Minutes)

Auroa Taylor, with Ethan Jackson Investments out of Cordele Ga., spoke in support of this project.

- B. Opposition (Comments Limited to 10 Minutes)
- C. Other Comments of Support (Limited to 3 Minutes)
- D. Opposition (Comments Limited to 3 Minutes)
- E. Other Inquiries by Commission

**V. COMMISSION CONSIDERATION OF ACTIONS**

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson to accept this action seconded by Commissioner Felder. All voted in favor

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson. Seconded by Commissioner Hopkins. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

**CITY OF WAYCROSS**

BY: *Michael Angelo James*  
**MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

*Jacqueline Powell*  
**JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk**



**\*\*\*DISCUSSION NOTES\*\*\***

**12/17/2024**

**PH-BRUNEL STREET**

**MAYOR:** Ladies and gentlemen, the format for conducting this public hearing will be in the following manner. The City clerk will read the notice that was published in the Journal Herald following the reading of the public notice. The appropriate department personnel will summarize a report regarding the petition. The petitioners shall have ten minutes to present reasons for the approval of the petition. Opponents of the petition shall have ten minutes to present reasons why the petition should not be approved. Anyone who wishes to speak in opposition of the petition should have registered with the City Clerk prior to the commencement of this hearing. The speaker should give his or her name and address. If more than one person registers in opposition to the petition, the one who registers first shall be entitled to use the ten minutes to present the reasons why the petition should not be approved. Following the ten-minute presentations, others will be permitted to speak. Each person so desiring to speak shall have three minutes to make their presentations. I will determine the order in which these presentations are made following the opportunity of all to speak. The City Commission will deliberate the issue and make its decision, or the decision will be deferred to a later date. At this time, I will designate our city is clear. Mr. Marquis Nixon at the hearings. Timekeeper. At this time, we will hear from Mr. Nixon. The public notice.

**CITY CLERK:** Public notice. The Commission of the City of Waycross has scheduled a public hearing to be held on December 17th at 4:45 p.m. at City Hall, 417 Pendleton Street, Waycross, Georgia, for the purpose of considering an amendment to the zoning ordinance of the City of Waycross, Georgia. A copy of the petition and a map of the area are available for public review in the office of the City Clerk at City Hall during normal business hours. Back to you, Mr. Mayor.

**MAYOR:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This time we will hear from our Community Improvement Director, Mr. Mark Olson.

**MARC HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Commissioners, this is a petition to change the Waycross official zoning map at parcel W, A1203035 from C2 highway commercial to R 50 residential. Again, that's going from commercial to residential. The applicant is True North Way LLC. They are the property owner. The purpose is to rezone property to allow multi-family residential on the property. The Waycross-ware County Planning Commission heard this request on November 14th of this year and adopted a motion recommending approval of the request. The size of the location is approximately 5.88 acres. Um, and they have subdivided that into 5 or 6 different lots. Um, the property is bordered on the north by C2 and R 50, and on the south, uh, it's bordered by GI General Industrial. On the east it's R 50 HD, which is the R 50 historic district in the west by General Industrial. Um, the owner wants this property to be rezoned to allow multi-family residential. And again, this property can be served with city water and sewer and city emergency services. This is an aerial of the property. And again, it's the outlined area in yellow. So, if you're going down Bruno, it's right before the tracks on the right. Um, to the north you have the red top building is fire station four. To the west is the old cigar factory in Aurora Box Company and CSX. To the south, you've got obviously the railroad tracks and again, General Industrial. And then to the east you have the historic district, uh, of Brunel and Gilmore Street. And again, this is the zoning map that shows that, again, the pink is the C-2 highway commercial, the green color is the R 50 HD, and the dark gray is the GI general industrial. And with that, any questions?

**MAYOR:** Make sure you have heard our director speak regarding this proposal. I will look to each director or Commissioner if you have questions or comments on this report. District two No, sir. District three No. sir, district Four no. sir.

**HOPKINS:** Is this that proper complex that I try to zone one time? It's got all that land, right.

**MARC HAWKINS:** So, this came up, uh, June of 2020, I believe it was 2020 to 2021. Um, and at that point, they wanted to do an apartment complex. At this point, as I've stated, they have subdivided this

**\*\*\*DISCUSSION NOTES\*\*\***

**12/17/2024**

**PH-BRUNEL STREET**

property into six different lots. And their proposal now is to build one structure on each lot. Um, and that structure will. And the developer agent is here. That structure will be a Victorian style. So it'll match the characteristics of the historic houses. Um, but it will be apartments inside that. So. And I think she's got some drawings that'll show that. But it will be, um, it'll look like a historic house to match the feel of the historic district. So, it's changed in scope from what was presented the original time back in 2020.

**HOPKINS:** Okay. Would this be Reynolds?

**MARC HAWKINS:** Yes, ma'am. It'll be apartments to rent. Okay.

**HOPKINS:** Thank you.

**MAYOR:** And district five? No, sir. Did we need to hear anyone or.

**MARC HAWKINS:** Uh, the developer's agents here. If y'all have questions, and then she can show you some drawings and such. So.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** I want to set this where y'all can see it over here. Um, so that way you can see the style of home.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** So just for some background. Um, I. My name is Aurora Taylor. I am actually from Baxley originally. My best friend lives on Dewey Street in a Victorian style home that has been converted into apartments, which inspired our newest design. Um, so for the city of Waycross, we realized last time that our previous design as an apartment complex wasn't what the city needed or what they wanted. The residents made that very clear. Um, and we took that feedback to heart. We didn't sell the property off. We took. And we redesigned this property based on what the rest of Waycross looks like. So these homes, there are 10 to 12 units per building. They are all workforce affordable for your 80 to 100% single family or single person earners. So these are for your prime workforce. These are for your 18- to 34-year-olds who are trying to move out or live on their own again, have a good quality of life. They do have stacked washer dryers in these units. Um, so they have the option to have that inside. That is not an option we see with every unit in Waycross, but it does seem to be a growing need. Um, and all of them have their own energy efficient appliances and they will all be serviced by our company. Um, and we aim to keep all of our properties affordable. We have many that are as low as 50% Ami all the way up to 100% Ami. But for my boss, for our company owner, Jeremiah Horne, this is a personal mission. Um, he actually owns we we're from

Cairo now. Um, are you all familiar with Maryland's chicken? Yes. So, he actually owns a Maryland's chicken over in Cairo. And he was like, man, I'm paying my employees well, but they can't really find any housing. This is a problem. I'm having trouble keeping people employed. And I'm paying, you know, 17, \$19 an hour to some of my top employees. Um, what's going on with this? And they were like, there's no housing to be had. And so, The way he puts it is the chicken restaurant man got into the real estate business. And so, he went, and he built apartments that were affordable for his workforce. And he knows that every city in southeast Georgia needs that as well. Um, and so that's what we're trying to bring here to y'all's area, to Waycross and really help, help with the housing shortage that y'all are facing here. So, do y'all have questions for me? I can answer about the design or the impact of the property. Okay.

**MAYOR:** I will start with the panel just for a moment. District one no. Issue two. No. District three.

**\*\*\*DISCUSSION NOTES\*\*\***

**12/17/2024**

**PH-BRUNEL STREET**

**FELDER:** I have a question. District three. Thank you for your presentation. You mentioned that there would be 10 to 12 units per building.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** Yes, ma'am.

**FELDER:** Um, how many buildings do you anticipate developing on this property?

**AURORA TAYLOR:** We anticipate developing six. And how many bedrooms? Uh, they're all one-bedroom units. These are for your single-family earners who are just getting out on their own, or for those who prefer a solo lifestyle.

**FELDER:** Thank you, Mayor.

**MAYOR:** And district four.

**HOPKINS:** Um, yes. And so, um, what is the is there a minimum salary?

**AURORA TAYLOR:** No, ma'am.

**HOPKINS:** No, nothing like that.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** These are not income restricted. We build energy efficient, which is how we can keep our unit prices low without needing subsidization, which makes it open to your entire workforce to support the economic development of the area.

**HOPKINS:** So I guess what I'm asking is each condo I call them or call them condos or apartments or whatever. Um, we have 12 units per, and y'all can build how many?

**AURORA TAYLOR:** Well, we're going to build six of them.

**HOPKINS:** Six? Yes. And you'll have we have a parking space for them on site or in the street.

**HOPKINS:** Yes, ma'am. We're doing onsite parking. We're going to do a semi-permeable. Permeable, semi permeable pavers to reduce that erosion and runoff that's happening there because it is a little bit of a low-lying area with the overpass and the railroad track, but they are going to have parking on site. They are not going to be in the street, and we will have delivery spots as well to keep those delivery trucks out of the fire trucks way. Okay.

**HOPKINS:** That was the thing that needed to know about the parking area, because if you put that many in a unit, yes, that many units there, you're going to have to have some off-street parking.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** We will all of the units will have we do a one and a half approximately units per hour spaces per unit. And then additionally, we're going to be installing bike racks because there is a very large biking community here in Waycross and it's right there by downtown. So really helping drive some of that traffic down there is our goal with it. So have that access.

**HOPKINS:** Now may I ask you how much they'll rent for per unit.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** But right now they will rent for about 969 per unit is our target price. And, um, we may go up in price a little bit, but that would be if we include our utilities in it. Most of our other properties are all utilities included, and I live in one of our properties. They are built very nice.

**\*\*\*DISCUSSION NOTES\*\*\***

**12/17/2024**

**PH-BRUNEL STREET**

**HOPKINS:** So now you're going to Waycross? I might move right back. Welcome. Okay.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** Thank you. I mean, I'm here every week. I might as well save myself the drive.

**HOPKINS:** Okay. That's all I have, Mr. Mayor.

**MAYOR:** Commissioner Nelson.

**NELSON:** Uh, when are you getting started?

**AURORA TAYLOR:** Um, if we can get the permit and get our rezoning request, we would go through the building process immediately. Okay. So we would like to add this as quickly as possible because we have quite a large amount of interest in the property. Okay.

**MAYOR:** If there are no further questions, then we'll take a motion. But Commissioner Felder has a question.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** Yes, ma'am.

**FELDER:** Where have you developed other properties such as this and other cities.

**AURORA TAYLOR:** So as far as this Victorian style building, we'll be putting this in Adel and Thomaston as well. Um, but our portfolio spans through a lot of southeast Georgia. I live in platform Cairo. Um, where we have a couple of different properties. We've also developed in Bainbridge. We have, um, a very large complex going up in Douglas and Bainbridge, Americus, Flint River, Dothan. Um, a few places in Florida as well. But our primary goal is to start targeting southeast Georgia, which is actually why I started working for them, was to start bringing this over them over this way and bringing affordable housing here. Okay.

**CITY MANAGER:** Mr. Mayor, we'll take a vote if I know we got a few minutes left. Can she you share with the board the data that made you change your view? Can you just share how you came to the decision to go the direction versus other apartments, please?

**AURORA TAYLOR:** Yeah. So, with this. So, I actually conduct housing needs assessments for local municipalities. Um, so alma has one from me. I helped them get their rural workforce housing grant last year. Um, and so whenever I came on board, Jason and I actually talked last year while I was with a different company about doing a housing needs assessment for the city of Waycross and Ware County. Um, and when I came on board at Ethan Jackson, they were like, hey, we have this really great project over in Waycross. Do you mind taking a look at the data, seeing what does the data say about their housing market? Um, so I actually just got done with completing that assessment, and it's one of the reasons that we moved from the two- and one-bedroom mixed unit style to all one-bedroom unit style. So that way we could get a larger number of units. Right now, y'all have in the city of Waycross alone, about 2100 of your prime workforces. That's 18- to 34-year-olds who still live with Mom and dad. Um, they. And the biggest hurdle that they're facing is there's nowhere for them to move to. Um, and so when we were looking at this project, we could have done a mixed unit style. But the greatest need for y'all is just getting units in, period. Because there are not enough in the city. And we see it right now. We see people from Russia. I've seen people from Russia, from other countries coming in and buying up property, turning around, and our rental prices in this area. Last year, I could have gotten a home for rent, a whole home \$8,900 this year. The only one left on the market right now is 1800. Um, and so for us, like I said, we're very mission driven. We're driven by

**\*\*\*DISCUSSION NOTES\*\*\***

**12/17/2024**

**PH-BRUNEL STREET**

making sure people stay housed, that they can stay working. Um, and that is why we went with the one-bedroom units, because we could almost double the number of units, um, and make sure that we're housing as many people as possible. There's a very large difference between the 48 units that would have been possible and the 66 to 72 that we will be doing. And that's how we sort of informed that decision.

**MAYOR:** Thank you. Well, there's a motion to approve.

Second.

**MAYOR:** We have a motion from our Commissioner Wilson and a second from our commissioner, district three. Any further questions or comments? Hearing none. We'll move into voting. All in favor, say aye. Aye. All opposed? No. Motion carries. Folks. Thank you. Congratulations.

**MAYOR:** At this time, I'll entertain a motion to come out of the public hearing. So, moved. Is there a second? Second. We have a motion from Commissioner Nelson. Second from Commissioner Hopkins. All in favor? Aye. All opposed? Motion carries.