

**GAINESVILLE PLANNING AND APPEALS BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 11, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Doug Carter at 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Doug Carter and Board Members Jane Fleming, Kelvin Simmons, Rick Young and Ellen DeFoor

Members Absent: Vice-Chair Ryan Thompson and Board Member Eddie Martin

Staff Present: Community & Economic Director Rusty Ligon, Community & Economic Planning Manager Heather Deweese and Recording Secretary Gwen Fleming

Others Present: None

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2025

There was a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion made by Board Member Fleming
Motion seconded by Board Member Young
Vote – 5 favor, 2 absent (Thompson, Martin)

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Variance Request

- 1) Request from **Aneesh Patel** to vary the minimum lot size requirement, buffer width and minimum number of parking spaces required on a 1.92± acres tract located northwest of the intersection of Dawsonville Highway and Beechwood Boulevard, at the terminus of a private cul-de-sac (a/k/a **1181 Dawsonville Highway, NW**), having a zoning of General Business (G-B).

Ward Number: One
Tax Parcel Number(s): 00-115-002-085
Request: Extended stay hotel

Staff Presentation: Director Rusty Ligon gave the following staff presentation:

The applicant is requesting special use for a 1.92± acres property zoned General Business (G-B) for an 80-room, Home2 Suites by Hilton extended stay hotel. In addition, the applicant is asking to vary three development standards that are specific to extended-stay hotels which include varying:

- Minimum lot size requirements from 2.0 acres to 1.92 acres.
- Minimum buffer width from 100 feet to a minimum of 35 feet in width.
- Minimum number of parking spaces from 120 spaces to 87 spaces.

The applicant is basing their physical hardship on the size of the property and the steep topography which limits the developable area.

The subject property is the remaining undeveloped lot within the commercial subdivision created in 2010 that includes Cheddar's restaurant, Olive Garden restaurant, Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant and the Holiday Inn & Suites hotel. The subject property is currently padded out with mounded fill dirt and contains a storm water pond. Over half of the property steeply slopes down toward the southerly and westerly property lines. Other adjacent uses include the Beechwood estates subdivision and the Lake Forest Apartments.

The proposed extended stay hotel is 62,310± square feet in size and is 4-stories in height over a parking garage that is below street grade. A total of 87 parking spaces are proposed (41 garage spaces and 46 surface level spaces), and access is proposed from the existing private cul-de-sac. Amenities include an outdoor pool, outdoor grills, fitness center restaurant open for breakfast, coffee bar and beer and wine with small bites during evening social hours.

The subject property is located within the Commercial Future Land Use category and within the Suburban Commercial Character Area which includes areas focused on retail, office, or other commercial service areas such as grocery stores, banks, restaurants, theaters, hotels and automotive-related businesses which may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center.

Staff is recommending **approval** of the proposed special use request within **General Business (G-B) zoning**, based on the Comprehensive Plan and the adjacent nonresidential land uses, with **9 conditions**.

In addition, staff is recommending **approval** of the variance request based on the size of the subject property and sloping topography with the same **9 conditions**.

Applicant Presentation: Aneesh Patel, 809 Jesse Jewell Parkway, stated the reason for purchasing the property was it was zoned for a hotel but was unaware at that time changes to the code created obstacles regarding parking and site requirement. Mr. Patel stated the hotel won the JD Associates number one mid segment to upper scale segment award two years ago and will compete with higher end rates starting at \$150 and above. Most guests stay three to six days at a time but enjoy the flex space which is a healthier option being able to cook rather than eating out. His opinion was the project will benefit the city and county by helping facilitate the growth. The room images and details were explained by Mr. Patel stating only twenty percent will have a range/oven / dishwasher and no paper products being used only china-ware will be used in order to help with conservation and recycling.

FAVOR: None

OPPOSE: Christine Osasu, 1738 Lanier Springs Drive, stated she lives in the Beechwood Estates and appreciates all work by the staff and understands it would be a nice hotel. The main concern was the existing traffic issue, only one exit for the neighborhood and seems no concern regarding traffic issues for the people in the neighborhood. She then spoke about extended stays having a bad reputation in Gainesville and concerned with it being a high end extended stay in years to come. Ms. Osasu would prefer for the extended stay not be near her home and it affecting the property value of the homeowners.

Chairman Carter advised the property was zoned in 2010 for a hotel and the only reason for the public hearing was for an extended stay hotel but with no changes a hotel could be built. Ms. Osasu again expressed an extended stay has a different spirit and concerned about living next to an extended stay.

Rebuttal: Mr. Patel stated the customer base would be around eighty at maximum and not every parking space will be occupied. He mentioned traffic from the hotel would not be much of a concern with the restaurants having around 300 vehicles per day. He commented since it is Hilton property, a leader in the market along with Marriott, trending in the \$200's and always positive reviews. Mr. Patel advised there seems to be a misconception in Gainesville regarding extended stay hotels due to some hotels deciding to become an extended stay but with the rates being in the range of \$150 to \$200 and the type of property would not be an issue for the future and remaining a high-end hotel. Also mentioned, people traveling in town for ballgames and events usually stay at Holiday Inn Express, Hampton Inn or Super 8, not at an extended stay hotel.

Chairman Carter asked Mr. Ligon to remind everyone how long ago the standards were raised for an extended stay hotel and was advised approximately 4 years ago. Chairman Carter replied it was addressed due to some problems with some existing extended stay hotels in the community.

Board Member Young asked if it were older hotels which were single occupancy being turned into extended which was confirmed. There was discussion of the proposed project being different and designed for an extended stay.

There was a motion to conditionally approve the request to vary the minimum lot size requirement, buffer width and minimum number of parking spaces for an extended stay hotel with the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The special use approval shall be limited to the operation of a Home2 Suites by Hilton extended stay hotel or any other hotel brand that is considered upper midscale or upper scale extended stay hotel.
2. The proposed development shall be generally consistent with the concept plan and architectural renderings provided with this application per the approval of the Community & Economic Development.
3. Prohibited uses for the subject property shall include adult novelty stores, group homes, crisis centers, adult entertainment centers, pawn shops, dollar-type stores, massage parlors, hookah lounge, tobacco or vaping stores, gas station/convenience stores, tire stores, auto parts stores, auto body shops, automobile sales establishments, marine sales or repair stores, automated or non-automated car washes, truck stops, coin-laundry facilities, tattoo parlors, psychics, fortune tellers, clairvoyants and the like.
4. The existing trees located within the proposed 35 foot wide buffer shall remain except for those areas that may interfere with stormwater facilities. In addition, a mixture of evergreen trees shall be planted at the top of the retaining wall, as well as, between the 35 foot wide buffer area and the proposed building. The minimum install height of the trees shall be 10 feet. The location, spacing, size and type of

trees planted shall be subject to the approval of the Community and Economic Development Department Director.

5. All service areas, dumpster enclosures, loading areas, ground or roof top HVAC equipment shall be screened from view from all adjacent properties and roads.
6. Outdoor lighting used in this development shall be of non-spill design and placed in a manner so as to minimize direct visibility by the adjacent properties.
7. The subject property shall be limited to one monument sign not to exceed 10-feet in height and 100 square feet of total sign structure area with internal or external lighting. Building signage shall be permitted as regulated within the Gainesville Unified Land Development Code and shall be limited to the north and east sides of the building. Electronic message board signs or electronic changeable copy signs are not permitted.
8. All access point design for the subject property shall be submitted for review by the Gainesville Public Works Director. The approval of said design shall be required prior to issuance of a building permit. All required access / traffic / sidewalk improvements associated with the proposed development shall be at the full expense of the owner/developer.
9. The proposed variance request shall be contingent upon City Council approving the special use for the proposed Home2 Suites by Hilton extended stay hotel.

Motion made by Board Member Fleming
Motion seconded by Board Member Simmons
Vote – 5 favor, 2 absent (Thompson, Martin)

B. Special Use Request

- 1) Request from **Aneesh Patel** for a special use on a 1.92± acres tract located northwest of the intersection of Dawsonville Highway and Beechwood Boulevard, at the terminus of a private cul-de-sac (a/k/a **1181 Dawsonville Highway, NW**), having a zoning of General Business (G-B).
Ward Number: One
Tax Parcel Number(s): 00-115-002-085
Request: Extended stay hotel

There was a motion to recommend conditional approval of the special use request for an extended stay hotel having a zoning of General Business (G-B) with the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The special use approval shall be limited to the operation of a Home2 Suites by Hilton extended stay hotel or any other hotel brand that is considered upper midscale or upper scale extended stay hotel.
2. The proposed development shall be generally consistent with the concept plan and architectural renderings provided with this application per the approval of the Community & Economic Development Director.
3. Prohibited uses for the subject property shall include adult novelty stores, group homes, crisis centers, adult entertainment centers, pawn shops, dollar-type stores, massage parlors, hookah lounge, tobacco or vaping stores, gas station/convenience

stores, tire stores, auto parts stores, auto body shops, automobile sales establishments, marine sales or repair stores, automated or non-automated car washes, truck stops, coin-laundry facilities, tattoo parlors, psychics, fortune tellers, clairvoyants and the like.

4. The existing trees located within the proposed 35 foot wide buffer shall remain except for those areas that may interfere with stormwater facilities. In addition, a mixture of evergreen trees shall be planted at the top of the retaining wall, as well as, between the 35 foot wide buffer area and the proposed building. The minimum install height of the trees shall be 10 feet. The location, spacing, size and type of trees planted shall be subject to the approval of the Community and Economic Development Department Director.
5. All service areas, dumpster enclosures, loading areas, ground or roof top HVAC equipment shall be screened from view from all adjacent properties and roads.
6. Outdoor lighting used in this development shall be of non-spill design and placed in a manner so as to minimize direct visibility by the adjacent properties.
7. The subject property shall be limited to one monument sign not to exceed 10-feet in height and 100 square feet of total sign structure area with internal or external lighting. Building signage shall be permitted as regulated within the Gainesville Unified Land Development Code and shall be limited to the north and east sides of the building. Electronic message board signs or electronic changeable copy signs are not permitted.
8. All access point design for the subject property shall be submitted for review by the Gainesville Public Works Director. The approval of said design shall be required prior to issuance of a building permit. All required access / traffic / sidewalk improvements associated with the proposed development shall be at the full expense of the owner/developer.
9. The proposed variance request shall be contingent upon City Council approving the special use for the proposed Home2 Suites by Hilton extended stay hotel.

Motion made by Board Member Simmons
Motion seconded by Board Member Young
Vote – 5 favor, 2 absent (Thompson, Martin)

C. Rezoning Request

- 1) Request from **Gainesville Housing Authority** to rezone a 2.6± acres tract located on the southwest side of the intersection of Jesse Jewell Parkway and Downey Boulevard and the southeast side of the intersection of Jesse Jewell Parkway and Summit Street (a/k/a **1120 Jesse Jewell Parkway, SE**) from Residential-II (R-II) to Planned Unit Development (P-U-D).

Ward Number: Three
Tax Parcel Number(s): 01-035-002-004
Request: Multi-family housing

Chairman Carter stated Director Ligon received notification the applicant would like to table their request to the April 8, 2025, Planning and Appeals Board meeting.

There was a motion to table the rezoning request to the April 8, 2025, Planning and Appeals Board meeting.

Motion made by Board Member DeFoor

Motion seconded by Board Member Simmons
Vote – 5 favor, 2 absent (Thompson, Martin)

ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

Motion made by Board Member Simmons
Motion seconded by Board Member Young
Vote – 5 favor, 2 absent (Thompson, Martin)

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Carter, Chairman

Gwen Fleming, Recording Secretary