



## MINUTES

### PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

**MAY 1, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT FOR MEETING:** Board Members: Barbara Payne, James Addison, Mark Wilkinson, and Peter Traudt; Planning Director Phyllis Ayers; Planning Secretary Beth Rider;

Mark Wilkinson called the regular meeting to order and welcomed those present.

#### **I. ROLL CALL AND PLANNING CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENT AND PROCEDURES**

A copy of the announcements and procedures for the hearing were made available for those present. Beth Rider called roll with the following present: Barbara Payne, James Addison, Peter Traudt, and Mark Wilkinson

#### **II. APPROVE AGENDA**

A motion was made by Peter Traudt, seconded by James Addison to approve agenda as presented.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **III. APPROVE MINUTES**

##### **1. APRIL 3, 2018 – MEETING**

A motion was made by Peter Traudt, seconded by James Addison to approve minutes as presented.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **IV. HEARING ON TEXT AMENDMENTS, REZONING, MAP AMENDMENTS, CONDITIONAL USES AND VARIANCES**

1. REZONING REQUEST FROM PARADISE MOUNTAIN MINISTRIES, CAROLYN ECKMAN, 1054 FALLS ROAD, TOCCOA, GA. PARCEL T08 017. SUBJECT PROPERTY IS CURRENTLY ZONED AS COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY. THE PROPOSED ACTION TO BE TAKEN IS TO REZONE PROPERTY TO COMMERCIAL GENERAL TO CONSTRUCT A HOME SIMILAR TO OTHER HOUSES ON ADJOINING PROPERTY TO HOUSE APPROXIMATELY 12 COLLEGE AGE STUDENTS

Ms. Ayers stated the property is 19.62 acres and is currently undeveloped with at request to build a home similar to the other two houses already on the adjoining property to house approximately 12 college age young people. The property is in a mixed use area of residential, commercial and City of Toccoa. Property is in close proximity to the Toccoa Falls College Campus. This type of

development is a permitted use under Commercial General Section 1101. #4 Lodging facilities, hotels, motels and inns. The land use is in conformity with the policy and intent of other adopted plans and the recommendation is to approve. Ms. Ayers opened the floor for anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request.

John Gailer stated Paradise Mountain Ministries began in 1990 as a home away from home for missionary kids whose parents were overseas. These kids' growing up overseas is what we call third culture kids. They have a mix of United States culture when their parents go overseas and they grow up in another country. When they get of age and graduate they have to come back here to the United States and many times they don't have a home base or a place they belong. They struggle to find their way and many end up in different circumstances and Paradise Mountain Ministries provides a home away from home for those young people. Mr. Gailer stated they have had over 350 young people that have come through the homes, they are scattered through the United States and many have made their home in Toccoa. They are also working in over 30 countries across the world. Mr. Gailer stated Paradise Mountain Ministries was started and the need for it continues to grow. Paradise Mountain Ministries is a non-profit 501C3 organization. People think we are part of Toccoa Falls College but we are not, we work closely with them because a number of our residents will attend school there; some do not, we have many working in town just trying to figure out where they belong and they have a safe place to do that rather than fall into the wrong crowd. They find support; love and they find adults that can give them direction. Some of them attend North Georgia Technical College, Athens Tech and Piedmont; there are ten universities and colleges within one hour drive. We have had students at most of those colleges. We provide room and board, lodging and family atmosphere. It does not cost them anything to stay with us; we are supported by gifts all over the world, most are small donations. Sometimes they wonder where we were when they were growing up, other are interested in just the care for missionaries they pray for. Mr. Gailer stated the property we are asking to rezone is contiguous to the current property we are in that was zoned after we started operating. We are trying to bring property purchased to where we can continue our mission. The third house, our board began to pray feeling strongly this is the direction the Lord wanted us to go. We are turning away enough young people to fill the house. We have begun raising funds, we are halfway there; we have an architect from Atlanta that is designing the house and doing his work as in-kind service. We appreciate your consideration because we believe in our mission.

Mr. James Addison asked if they have a dining hall. Mr. Gailer stated each house has their own kitchen. Mr. Addison asked if males were in one home and females in another. Mr. Gailer stated we operate as a family; he stated he and his wife are in one home and another couple in the other house. The guys live downstairs and the girls live upstairs; if they start taking an interest in each other we shuffle them around because we do not allow them to live in the same house. We have sit down meals Monday thru Thursday evenings and on Sunday after church, we have a lot of fun and have about ten cultures at any time represented sitting around our table. Mr. Addison asked if they helped cook. Mr. Gailer stated they do not pay to stay so they work one hour a day that helps go toward mowing the grass, prepping meals, dishes, keeping the property looking good. Some have grown up in a culture where they have had someone do that for them and come to us they expect someone to make up their bed and do their laundry; it is a good learning curve. We invite you to come and sit on our porch it is one of the most beautiful views. Come and join us for a meal sometime. Mr. Peter Traudt asked about the driveway. Mr. Gailer stated they had purchased a small piece of property that has a driveway that leads up to where the house will be. Mr. Mark Wilkinson asked is all that one property. Mr. Gailer stated it was all purchased at the same time except for the small piece. Mr. Wilkinson stated that was part of his family's property. No one else spoke in favor of the request. Ms. Ayers opened the floor for anyone wishing to speak in opposition of the request. Ms. Ayers stated Mr. Robert Myers President of Toccoa Falls College wanted to be here to protest, we received a letter from him and Ms. Ayers forwarded it to the Planning Board. Ms. Ayers stated however, as a Planning Director it did not change her

recommendation we should be using the criteria in section 1606. Ms. Ayers stated after she received the letter she spoke with the applicant, if pushed come to shove and there are no Toccoa Falls students there are other options. Mr. Gailer stated he had not seen the letter or heard the contents that he would only allow a certain number of Toccoa Falls students. He is the President of Toccoa Falls and has every right to say that and put any limitation he wants; all our residents are not student at Toccoa Falls they are students somewhere regardless of whether he caps that we still have applications of students wanting to come and still pursue the building of the house and not sure that has a bearing on the zoning of the property. Ms. Ayers stated she did learn that when she spoke with Mr. Gailer she wasn't sure if it was tied enough that you would want to pull the application till you sat down and had a discussion with Mr. Myers and have learned it is not that strong of a tie. Mr. Gailer stated it does mean we will have a conversation with him because he told us when we got ready to do the third house he had a contractor he wanted us to use and we are a little surprised. Mr. Gailer stated he was sorry it came to the county and not to them. Even if he puts a cap this is something we would pursue. Mr. Wilkinson stated Mr. Myers said the building was new to him. Ms. Payne stated that should not interfere and if you are not affiliated with Toccoa Falls College it wouldn't have anything to do with what you are want to do. Mr. Wilkinson stated he didn't see a difference if they lived in Toccoa and Stephens County and went to the Falls. Ms. Payne stated she was glad they had other students. Ms. Ayers closed the public hearing.

**V. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. REZONING REQUEST FROM PARADISE MOUNTAIN MINISTRIES, CAROLYN ECKMAN, 1054 FALLS ROAD, TOCCOA, GA. PARCEL T08 017. SUBJECT PROPERTY IS CURRENTLY ZONED AS COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY. THE PROPOSED ACTION TO BE TAKEN IS TO REZONE PROPERTY TO COMMERCIAL GENERAL TO CONSTRUCT A HOME SIMILAR TO OTHER HOUSES ON ADJOINING PROPERTY TO HOUSE APPROXIMATELY 12 COLLEGE AGE STUDENTS

A motion was made by Barbara Payne, seconded by Peter Traudt to approve the rezoning request. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Peter Traudt, seconded by Barbara Payne to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Rider, Planning Clerk