

CITY OF BARNESVILLE
PUBLIC HEARING
January 3, 2022

Council met at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 3, 2022, in the Courtroom at 100 Mill Street in Barnesville, Georgia.

Mayor Peter L. Banks called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Councilmember Sammie D. Shropshire, Jr. opened the meeting with prayer.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Peter L. Banks
Mayor Pro Tem Christopher Hightower
Councilmember Bill Claxton
Councilmember Sammie D. Shropshire, Jr.
Councilmember Joseph Sims
Councilmember Cecil D. McDaniel, Sr.

STAFF PRESENT

Acting City Manager Tim Turner
City Clerk Tammy T. Folson
City Accountant Tammy York
Fire Chief Kelvin Chute
Chief of Police Craig Cooper

ACTION TAKEN BY COUNCIL

Mayor Banks stated the first order of business was to present Application #21-11-001 to rezone properties owned by Trice Funeral Home Inc. The properties are located at 147 Mill Street and 149 Mill Street. The properties are in Ward 3 and are currently zoned R-1B, Single-Family Residential, Low Density District to be rezoned C-4, Highway Commercial District.

Acting City Manager Turner explained Trice Funeral Home at 147 Mill Street wants all three of its parcels zoned the same to expand the business. He gave the first reading of Ordinance No. 586.

Mayor Banks asked if there were any questions about the rezoning. There were no public comments.

Mayor Banks stated the second order of business was to present Application #21-11-002 for a variance request by Zach Westerfield with Southern Venture Partners to reduce the minimum floor area per dwelling unit and to increase the non-commercial use of the first floor at 215 Main Street. The property is in Ward 1.

Acting City Manager Turner read Resolution No. R2022-0001.

Mayor Banks introduced Mr. Westerfield and he presented his variance request to the Council. He stated he purchased the property last month, but it's been in the planning phase for five months and he plans on holding and owning it long term. Mr. Westerfield further stated it is listed as a historic building on the registry and he would like to bring the storefront back to or close to the original. He discussed his company and the floor plan and stated two commercial areas and three apartments units would be maintained downstairs and four apartments upstairs. Mr. Westerfield asked for the square foot minimum to be reduced from 650 to 370. He said he's proposing high end downtown apartments that cater to young professionals and not college students. Mr. Westerfield stated he's asking for two variances to make the project financially viable.

Mrs. Kay Pedrotti inquired about the rental price and Mr. Westerfield responded the rent will be based on the current rate of a one bedroom in the area.

Chief of Police Craig Cooper asked about parking. Mr. Westerfield reported he was working to lease the parking lot across the street from United Bank.

Ms. Dorothy Carter told Mr. Westerfield she appreciated his vision and asked about the size of the apartments. He reported they range in size from 450 to 500 with 357 being the smallest. Mr. Westerfield clarified only downstairs would be in ADA compliance. He noted trash pickup would be in the alley.

Councilmember Sims reported every commercial business downtown is opposed to the variance except one and he is opposed to it too because of the parking and fire hazards. Mr. Westerfield said he is working with Fire Chief Chute to make sure he is compliant with the code in addressing any fire hazards.

Councilmember Claxton stated he owns seven storefronts downtown and he doesn't see too many people wanting to spend money downtown. He said parking is an issue and it may be time to address the rules and regulations about parking. Councilmember Claxton noted in Forsyth, residents live downtown and it adds a different dimension. He said in the evenings here, it's dead downtown and there's not a lot going on.

Councilmember Shropshire commented he didn't know any where that allows apartments downstairs on the lower street level in its downtown.

Councilmember McDaniel asked Acting City Manager Turner what the variance is for and if a zoning change is going to be made on a resolution. Mr. Turner clarified the City already has a loft apartment ordinance and Mr. Westerfield is asking for less than 50% of the building floor plan be for commercial use. He also noted there is no zoning change because multifamily is already allowed in the commercial district.

Mayor Pro Tem Hightower thanked Mr. Westerfield for his presentation and his vision for the City of Barnesville. Mr. Hightower asked if he's put similar projects in commercial areas. Mr. Westerfield said this is his first in a commercial area, but he has in residential areas.

Mayor Banks also thanked Mr. Westerfield for his presentation and stated he was personally in favor of the project.

Acting City Manager Turner read Resolution No. R2022-0001 again.

On motion by Councilmember Claxton and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hightower, Council granted the variance for 215 Main Street with a vote of 4 to 1. Councilmembers Claxton, Hightower, Shropshire, and McDaniel voted in favor of the variance and Councilmember Sims voted against it.

Mayor Pro Tem Hightower noted Mr. Irvin Trice wasn't present when his rezoning request was heard earlier and he asked he be allowed to speak at this time if he desired. Mayor Banks asked Mr. Trice if he had any comments. He said he had no comments.

After no further business and on motion from Councilmember Shropshire and seconded by Councilmember Claxton, Council adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Peter L. Banks, Mayor

Tammy T. Folsom, City Clerk