



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2021 – 6:34 PM
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: David S. Eady, Mayor; George Holt, Avis Williams, Laura McCanless, Lynn Bohanan, James Windham. **COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT –** Jeff Wearing.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: City Manager Matt Pepper, City Clerk/Treasurer Marcia Brooks, Utilities and Maintenance Supervisor Jody Reid.

OTHERS PRESENT: Art Vinson, Laura Gafnea (Oxford College), Cheryl Ready, Michael Ready, Susan Roan, Steve Roan, Jackie Ellis.

The public hearing was called to order at 6:34 PM by the Hon. David S. Eady, Mayor.

Matt Pepper stated that the purpose of the public hearing is to provide an opportunity for members of the community to comment and/or ask questions regarding the proposed recommended changes to the City of Oxford official zoning map. The specific recommendations are as follows:

1. Amend the official zoning map to change the zoning district of six parcels from Town Center District to the Single-Family Residential District R-20.
2. Amend the official zoning map to change the zoning district of eighteen parcels from Single Family Residential District R-7.5 to the Single-Family Residential District R-20.

Mr. Pepper provided some background related to the purpose of the public hearing. In September of 2020, the Planning Commission began discussions regarding rezoning of six parcels on the East side of Emory Street that are currently zoned as Town Center. In the following Planning Commission meetings, the Commission invited the property owners to get their input and discussed their reasoning for recommending that the parcels be rezoned to Single-Family Residential R-20. The land on the West side of Emory Street is suitable for commercial development. These six parcels are used for residential purposes, and some of the homeowners expressed opposition to have property adjacent to commercial development.

In November of 2020, the Commission made the recommendation to change the zoning designation for the six properties as stated in #1. Shortly thereafter, they revisited their recommendation and expanded it to include eighteen additional properties on East Clark Street and East Emory Street which are currently zoned Single-Family Residential District R-7.5 as stated in #2. Homeowners in the expanded area were invited to the February, March, and April Planning Commission meetings. During the April meeting, the Commission reviewed the Criteria for Amendments to Official Zoning Map as set

forth in Sec. 40-638(b) of the City of Oxford zoning ordinances and has provided these criteria to the City Council with their recommendation.

Mayor Eady stated that in 2006 the Planning Commission engaged with the University of Georgia to look at a master plan for the City of Oxford. This engagement included the use of Smart Coding to rezone the City's layout, which operates on the principle that commercial development should be in the center of a town, and residential areas should be on the perimeters. At the time, the City Council's philosophy was to adopt an approach to rezoning using the Smart Code planning tools. The new zoning map was adopted in 2011.

The R-7.5 designation represents a 75-foot by 100-foot lot, the smallest allowed in Oxford. A Town Center District was also defined as a concept to enable multiple uses. For example, a building could be commercial on the first floor and residential on other floors. The decision was made to include the properties on the East side of Emory Street in the Town Center District, and to draw the R-7.5 district quite broadly from East Clark Street to the Wentworth subdivision.

Since the zoning ordinances were adopted in 2011, much has changed in Oxford, and it is time for the City to reconsider its philosophy and return to the zoning in residential areas as it was prior to the changes in 2011. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was also created since that time to guide the development of the Town Center, and the properties on the East side of Emory Street do not fit in with their current plans.

Art Vinson asked if his understanding that the recommendation is essentially to revert to the zoning designations for the stated properties that were in place prior to the amendments to the zoning ordinance in 2011. Mayor confirmed this understanding is correct. Mr. Vinson stated he thought that was fine.

Mayor Eady stated he received an email from the Thomas family who owns the green Victorian home on Emory Street (912 Emory Street). They have requested that their property be excluded from the changes because they are negotiating the sale of their home to a potential buyer who is interested in turning the property into a bed and breakfast. They would like for their property to remain under the Town Center District.

James Windham asked why this issue was brought up to begin with. He expressed concerns about changing the zoning designations of certain properties after so much money and time was spent developing the zoning map. Mayor Eady stated that this issue is on the agenda for the Work Session and can be discussed by the City Council Members at that time.

There being no further questions from the community, Mayor Eady adjourned the Public Hearing at 6:51 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer