Hollie Berry

Mayor

Martin Granum

City Manager

# MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES
February 17, 2022
6:00 p.m.
Red Bank Courtroom

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Browder called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

## II. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Skonberg called the roll. Commissioners Browder, Luther, Skonberg, Millard, and Smith were in attendance. The Commission's two planning advisors from the Southeast Tennessee Development District (Ashley Gates and Annya Shalun) and the Mayor were also present. Additional attendees are listed on the sign-in sheet.

## III. INVOCATION

Commissioner Miller gave the invocation.

## IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Luther lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

## V. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

### A. December 16th, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Browder asked for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections. Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Millard seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Request to rezone 2101 Dayton Blvd from C-1 to C-3

Staff gave an overview on the staff review and recommendation of the rezoning request. See staff review below:

"The applicant is requesting C-3 zoning for a portion of the property known as 2101 Dayton Boulevard. The portion that they are requesting rezoning for includes the smaller commercial strip at the rear of the property and the majority of the parking lot. The proposal maintains C-1 zoning for the former grocery store building and the auto parts store.
The conceptual site plan shows 38 townhomes within the C-3 zoned area, and redevelopment of the former Sav-A-Lot store, which is 26,343 square feet for office and retail uses. I did some

checking, and this building is the largest commercial building south of Red Bank's business district. The site plan is not up for a vote this evening, only the zoning is to be voted on tonight. I have provided a review of the proposal in the agenda packet, where I looked at several alternate scenarios. If you have questions about any of those, I'd be happy to answer them, but I will first get into my recommendation.

I recommend rezoning the property to C-3 Neighborhood Commercial with conditions:

1. Single-family detached residential structures shall be prohibited.
2. Developer shall fund a traffic study, conducted by an engineering firm approved by the City, to consider the need for traffic light or flashing crosswalk. Developer will fund recommended improvements along Dayton Boulevard as determined by the City.
3. Development will meet standards of Red Bank Design Review Standards for multi-family residential. I have provided a checklist of these requirements.
4. The originally proposed condition 4 of the property being subdivided as shown on the submitted site plan is no longer needed, as it has already been satisfied, and the O'Reilly's and former Save-a-Log has already been subdivided into separate lots.
5. Structures on lots with frontage along Dayton Boulevard shall be positioned on the lot so that the front façade and front door face towards Dayton Boulevard.

There is an additional condition that was the subject of discussion at the work session. The condition reads: "Only non-residential uses shall be permitted on the first floor of all structures within 150 feet of Dayton Boulevard."

The intent with this condition is to preserve commercial uses along Dayton Boulevard.

The pros of including this condition are that it ensures more commercial space on Dayton Boulevard, should buildings be built on this portion of the site. Some of the SETD planning staff agreed that this should be enforced.

The main downside to this condition is that it limits the property owner's flexibility. If the additional commercial space is not financially feasible, requiring it could result in vacant commercial spaces, vacant land, maintaining the existing surface parking, or possibly less desirable commercial tenants.

This particular site has some challenges for a commercial developer. It sits away from Red Bank's busiest intersections – about 2.3 miles from Morrison Springs, and two thirds of a mile from Signal Mountain Road. It sits above the grade of the road, so visibility is not especially good. The site has also just lost the main anchor store. For those that don't know, an anchor store is the store that attracts most customers to the site, often a grocery store for commercial centers like this one. Not only does this closure remove the main driver of customers to the site, but it also creates 26,000 square feet of commercial space that will need to be filled. Providing medium to high density housing, such as townhomes, in close proximity to a commercial development can be an alternative to attracting another anchor store and is a common practice for the adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial centers.

In my opinion, these challenges should be considered when deciding how much flexibility to offer the property owner. The Planning Commission must determine if this rezoning, and in particular Condition 6, will meet the F-Goal of the Red Bank 2035 Plan, which is to protect Dayton Boulevard from less desirable commercial uses."

Geoff Smith, the developer from Rise Partners, introduced his team and explained his experience with development, residential and commercial. He explained that he has had conversations about adding another grocery store with other community grocery owners and was told that it would not be a good spot to replace the Savalot grocery store. His inspiration for the parcel is the development where Il Primo is located now in Chattanooga. He would like to have a premiere restaurant/boutique store development where the store is currently. He expanded that the store has been for sale for many years and was not able to be sold. The parking lot with the run-down and vacant stores will be converted into townhomes and residential space. He proposed that the development of commercial space next to residential townhomes counts as mixed-used development. He clarifies that he is not asking for site plan approval; he is only asking for a rezoning recommendation to town council.

Commissioner Browder asked if how did the Greenlife building compare to the size of his proposed developed. Mr. Smith said that Greenlife is about half the size of the Savalot building. Commissioner Luther asked for clarification of what percentage of the Savalot building will be used as office space. Mr. Smith responded that he wasn't absolutely sure, but he hoped that 8,000 – 10,0000 square feet would be converted into office. All space that has frontage to Dayton will be other commercial space. Commissioner Luther asked Mr. Smith if why he was adamant about having 38 townhomes developed. Mr. Smith responded that the goal is to have higher residential density in the area and that 38 is not a hard number.

Commissioner Luther reminded the public that public comment should be limited to speaking about the rezoning. He also added that half a mile North of the property is all commercial and a mile South of the property is all commercial, and that 70% of the commercial property in Red Bank is in a flood plain, but 2102 Dayton Blvd is not in a flood plain.

**<u>Public Comment:</u>**

Drake Pertuit (120 Sweetland Drive): Speaker lived in the top right corner of the proposed development. He was under the impression that the rezoning could determine how many houses could be placed in the area. He was against the high-density residential development because he wanted people under 30 to be able to buy homes in the area. He explained that he thinks the right type of development matters and he doesn't think that townhomes are the right development for Red Bank. He said the current property may be considered an eyesore to some, but it is also a gathering space being used by him and his neighbors. He did not want Red Bank to jump on the first opportunity to redevelop the area.

Andrea Abercromie (1941 Dayton Blvd): Ms. Abercromie is a property owner of the River City Physical Therapy clinic, not far from the proposed development. She has been a business owner in Red Bank for over 7 years. She explained she had a hard time finding commercial space in the Chattanooga area. There is a limited amount of space for commercial, and her business needs visibility and frontage on Dayton Blvd. She proposed that mixed-used development could be very successful.

Joy Krause (547 Bruning Lane): Ms. Krause lives close to the property and is pleased with the proposed development because she believes that the developer will build high-quality townhomes that will increase property values of the surrounding homes. She said that she thinks that Red Bank will have an overall facelift with the new development.

Lawrence Miller (130 Pence Street): Mr. Miller commented that he supported bringing higher density to the area. He mentioned that the rest of Chattanooga development started only after population increased first. The area is difficult for commercial development as it is built at a higher elevation than street level. He proposed that the area could be considered part of White Oak Corridor. He reminded the Commissioners and audience that this is not the first time the area has been developed unsuccessfully, as the plasma center was not approved for development a few years prior. He urged the Commissioners to take a look at simplifying the zoning map and ordinances and make a more clear distinction between residential and commercial areas.

Davis Guedron (4810 Stagg Road): Speaker hoped that Commissioners would put all recommended conditions on the rezoning request. Red Bank does not have a current transportation plan so he was for the traffic study condition. He also requested that stormwater be looked at since the development is at the base of a steep slope and has a lot of impervious surface.

Satish Patel (2105 Dayton Blvd): Mr. Patel is the liquor store owner in the current property, and has been there since 2003. He has had conversations with Mr. Smith about future accommodations in the proposed commercial development. He said that previous property owners did not treat him well. He explained that it is hard to find commercial space in Red Bank and he asked commissioners to consider the current tenants in their recommendation to the town council. He explained that the new development will impact his family's livelihood and well-being. Commissioner Browder asked how many square feet was his current store. He responded that it was 1,800 sq ft. Commissioner Luther asked if he was able to find another comparable site for his business. Mr. Patel responded he had not been able to. Commissioner Millard asked how much was his current rent. Mr. Patel responded that the rent was currently $1,500 a month.

Allie Staford (Ashmore Avenue): Ms. Staford said that she did not agree with the Commissioner's request to limit repetitive comments. She said that she will miss the Savalot grocery store. She would like to see the space along Dayton Blvd to remain commercial, as it will create more jobs in the area. She said that this was a pivotal moment in Red Bank's future and the city needs to thoughtfully use the limited commercial space in Red Bank. She wants to at least see a portion of the parcel that has frontage on Dayton Blvd. to be saved as commercial.

Sam Young (2103 Dayton Blvd): Mr. Young is the owner of the Green's Design and Build store on the site currently. He said that he thinks the rezoning and the site plan are very related. He said he really loved his current spot. He thinks the site is beautiful, and that many people who pass by the area are concerned about the current tenants leaving the area. The space provides a quality of life to the neighborhood. He requested that better communication tools be used by the City to inform the public of the rezoning of the site. He wanted the community to have a better understanding of what is going on in that space. He can't tell if C-3 zoning would add benefits to the community. He also asked how the sewer moratorium and stormwater issues will affect the proposed development. Ashley Gates responded that WWTA has the capacity to include the new development and that specific area is not under moratorium. She added that Hamilton County Stormwater Program oversees that area and the development will have to get the proper permits. Stormwater issues are not under the Planning Commission's jurisdiction.

Don (Unknown address): He agreed that the current shopping center was an eyesore but he has an uneasiness about the proposed development. He understood that there was a housing issue in the area, but his main concern was that the City was being rushed into making a decision about the biggest commercial space in the Red Bank area. He requested that the Red Bank Strategic Plan be updated and he wanted more citizen engagement and public input with its development. He urged Commissioners to slow down the process.

Commissioner Browder asked Mr. Smith for his time frame for the project. Mr. Smith responded that he would like to get started as soon as the site plan gets approved. He reminded the audience that the Savalot building frontage on Dayton Blvd will be all commercial space, which is around 200 feet of frontage. He said he was currently in conversations with design professional about the best design and best use of the site. He also reminded the Commissioner that C-1 does allow for single family units, but he is requesting C-3 so he can include a higher density residential use on the site. He also commented that he wanted to go through the design review requirement process so that his design will require future development in the area to be high quality. Commissioner Millard asked about the time frame on the back street mall and when current tenants would have to leave. Mr. Smith said that he would give tenants four months to leave from the time of close-out. He also added that he would like Mr. Patel to bring back a business plan to see if he could accommodate Mr. Patel's future business in the proposed commercial development.

Commissioner Skonberg said that she full listened to every comment and read every email. She hoped to find a compromise between all the stakeholders. She reminded the board that the development could still move forward in C-1 zoning with single family units without the added design review standards.

Commissioner Luther said he heard and considered how many people stated how difficult it is to find commercial property in Red Bank. He urged the board to consider the proposed development 10 years down the road. He said that Red Bank saw commercial growth even through the pandemic and there is a need for a commercial corridor in Red Bank. He asked why there should be residential pockets in the middle with no opportunity for mixed-use commercial development. He requests that they find a medium. He believed that building residential structures would be a mistake.

Commissioner Browder said that C-3 would still allow commercial businesses, and in the time that it will take to redevelop the Savalot building, there will be time to change the site plan to include a commercial component. She said that the sixth condition was optional and not recommended. Commissioner Luther corrected Commissioner Browder to say that the condition is recommended, but it is optional. Ashley Gates explains that, in her personal planning experience and professional opinion, typical commercial corridors have pockets of residential scattered throughout and that it is more important for Red Bank to increase its residential density and population.

**Commissioner Browder motioned to recommend approval of rezoning a portion of Parcel No. 126C G 001, as shown in the submitted site plan, from C-1 to C-3, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Single-family detached residential structures shall be prohibited.**
2. **Developer shall fund a traffic study, conducted by an engineering firm approved by the City, to consider the need for traffic light or flashing crosswalk. Developer will fund recommended improvements along Dayton Boulevard as determined by the City.**
3. **Development will meet standards of Red Bank Design Review Standards for multi-family residential.**

4. **Structures on lots with frontage along Dayton Boulevard shall be positioned on the lot so that the front façade and front door face towards Dayton Boulevard."**

**Commissioner Skonberg motioned to amend the motion to include condition #6, with no distance limits of first floor residential uses on Dayton Blvd. Commissioner Luther seconded the motion.**

**Ayes – Commissioners Luther and Skonberg**
**Nos – Commissioners Smith, Browder, and Millard**

**The motion failed. The original motion is now voted on.**

**Ayes – Commissioners Smith, Browder, and Millard**
**Nos – Commissioners Luther and Skonberg**

**The motion passes.**

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**1. City-owned property discussion**

i. The 2022 Hamilton County back-tax/surplus sale has been indefinitely postponed. Staff planners will give updates once new information is available.

## VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

**Commissioner Luther motions to postpose the election of new officers to next month's Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Skonberg seconds the motion. Motion passes.**

Commissioner Skonberg mentioned that she would like to discuss why C-1 and C-3 zoning allows for residential uses. She would also like to discuss if the South end could be considered a Gateway / South End Business District, alongside the Central Business District.

Commissioner Luther thanked all attendees for their engagement and participation.

No other business was presented. Commissioner Skonberg motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Luther seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.

The next meeting will be held on March 17th, 2022.

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Chairman