

CITY OF HOSCHTON
CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025 AT 6:00PM
HOSCHTON COMMUNITY CENTER
65 CITY SQUARE, HOSCHTON



PUBLIC HEARING
DRAFT MINUTES

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER at 6:00pm by Mayor Martin

INVOCATION/ MOMENT OF SILENCE led by Councilmember Sterling

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Mayor Martin

AGENDA APPROVAL A motion was made by Lawson to approve the agenda with no changes, seconded by Jackson, and all voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **CU-24-01** Conditional Use: Frank Pittman, applicant, Christian Stewart and Ashishumar Patel, property owners, seek a conditional use permit for a day care center in an MU, Mixed-Use Zoning District for 2.0 acres (part of Map/Parcel 119/004N1) fronting on the south side of Eagles Bluff Way and the west side of SR 53. [*Consulting City Planner Recommendation: Approval, Conditional; Planning & Zoning Commission Recommendation: Approval, with Revised Conditions*]

Dr. Jerry Weitz presented his report on the application and also outlined the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation, which included changes to the conditions of zoning approval.

Frank Pittman, Pittman & Greer, 1050 Barber Creek Dr, Watkinsville, spoke in favor of the application on behalf of the property purchaser. He explained that the purchaser is an owner of multiple daycares and has more in the works. Mr. Pittman acknowledged that concerns for traffic were raised at the P&Z Commission meeting. He pointed out that the property is currently zoned Commercial, so there are numerous business types already allowed under that zoning classification. His client is focused on building the daycare facility and is less concerned with the other commercial building shown on the plans.

Kenny Whitworth, property owner, 150 Fortress Way, Jefferson, spoke in favor of the application. He commented that he has been in communication with GDOT engineer Jonathan Peevy regarding the requested traffic study. Mr. Whitworth stated that the traffic study would be performed by a third party at considerable expense and is unnecessary as any recommendation resulting from the traffic study would still have to be approved by GDOT, and the only improvement could be a traffic light. He said that GDOT would not approve a traffic signal at this intersection because there are already intersections with a greater need along

highway 53. Mr. Whitworth further stated that the intersection of Eagles Bluff Way and Highway 53 was initially developed taking into consideration the Creekside neighborhood AND this commercial property. The proposed development plan included a Right Out driveway (condition removed by P&Z) that he believes would help with the traffic flow. He also added that he has spoken with JCSS Superintendent Dr. Phillip Brown who agreed that the community urgently needs a daycare center, especially teachers at West Jackson Elementary.

Raphael Mayberry, 344 Eagles Bluff Way, spoke in opposition. Mr. Mayberry is a current Creekside HOA board member and noted that he is speaking on behalf of some of his community members, but not all. Mr. Mayberry emphasized that traffic study should be completed so that the Council can see the potential impact on the community. He stated that the application uses old traffic data. The peak hours of traffic related to the daycare drop-off and pick-up are also the peak hours of existing congestion along highway 53. Mr. Mayberry also said that it seems strange for a daycare facility to be located beside townhomes and a future car wash, with its playground next to a state highway. He concluded by asking the Council to deny or table the application, pending a traffic study.

Mayor Martin asked Mr. Whitworth if he meant that GDOT would not approve a traffic signal because of the other two already planned down highway 53. Councilmember C. Brown asked if GDOT would not pay to put in a signal, but would approve it. Mr. Whitworth responded that no other improvements would be warranted at the Eagles Bluff intersection because there is not enough traffic through the day and there will not be enough traffic. The right turn and deceleration lanes are sufficient as designed for the neighborhood and the commercial property.

Mayor Martin commented that a traffic study would only reflect current traffic, not the daycare center and future charter school. Councilmember C. Brown wondered how the city could plan to mitigate what is coming. Martin mentioned a potential exit onto Main Street. Dr. Weitz responded that it would be accomplished by the proposed Right Out driveway.

Councilmember Jackson asked for the total number of cars in and out at peak times. Mr. Pittman responded that there would be 638 total trips in and out per day, which equates to about 150 cars at the peak times. Jackson asked if the proposed retail space plan has been squashed. Pittman replied that the property purchaser is not against it, but is the Conditional Use application is focused on the daycare. Whitworth added that the owners of the property intend to construct the road behind the car wash at the same time the daycare is developed. Jackson asked if there would be any benefit to Creekside residents. Could a number of spots be open to those residents first?

Jared Little, 1523 Willow Creek Drive, Watkinsville, property purchaser, responded that it could be possible. They often offer discount to counties, etc. He currently has 3 operating daycares and 7 more under construction.

Councilmember Lawson asked who removed the Right Out condition from the recommended conditions of zoning approval. Dr. Weitz replied that it was the P&Z Commission, but the Council could add the condition back in.

Councilmember C. Brown asked about the specifications of the retaining wall between the daycare facility and highway 53...height, appearance, etc. She expressed her concern for children being able to dart into traffic and for vehicles running off the road without a sufficient barrier. Mr. Pittman responded that there are no specs yet, but there will be an 8 foot fence around the playground. It could be on top of the retaining wall or behind it.

ADJOURN *The public hearing was closed by Attorney Hayes.*

Members Present

Debbie Martin, Mayor
David Brown, Mayor Pro-Tem
Christina Brown, Councilmember
James Lawson, Councilmember
Jonathan Jackson, Councilmember
Fredria Sterling, Councilmember

Also Present

Jennifer Kidd-Harrison, City Manager
Dr. Jerry Weitz, Consulting City Planner
Hu Blackstock, Planning
Abbott S. Hayes, Jr., City Attorney
Jen Williams, Assistant City Clerk
Media

Members Absent

Scott Courter, Councilmember