

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS CITY OF PALATKA

Minutes for the February 14, 2013 Meeting

The Zoning Board of Appeals meeting was called to order by Chair Ellsworth Taylor III at 4:00 pm. Other members present included Betty Willis, Eddie Collins, Marcia Lane and Cleveland Hobbs. The following members were absent: Blanch Rogers and Rufus Borom.

Staff present: Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Deena McCamey.

Motion made by Mr. Collins to approve the September 13, 2011 minutes. Ms. Willis seconded the motion. All those present voted affirmative, motion passed.

Appeals Procedure- Recording Secretary Ms. McCamey read the appeals.

OLD BUSINESS- None

Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson as per Sec. 94-61(c)

Motion- made by Mr. Collins to retain the current officers, -seconded by Ms. Lane. All those present voted affirmative, motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS-

Case:	13-08
Address:	3205 and 3209 Crill Avenue
Parcel:	11-10-26-0000-1160-0000 and 11-10-26-0000-1110-0000
Agent:	Brenden Sloan
Owner:	Donald E. Holmes and Dale J. Hewett Life Estate and Richard S. Richter.
Request:	Variance requests: 1) Zoning Code Sec. 94-261 (f), reduce minimum parking space width from ten feet to nine feet; and (2) Zoning Code Sec. 94-261 (s) (4), increase driveway width at the juncture of the street from 40 feet to 80 feet and increase driveway width at the property line from 24 feet to 46 feet.

Mr. Crowe said there was a specific criterion that pertains to the variances. The first special condition and circumstances regarded the high number of mature trees that are being retained. By reducing parking width from 10 feet to 9 feet there will be more room for these retained trees and their survival will be enhanced.

The second special circumstance would be the limitation by FDOT on just one driveway, which resulted in the need to have a wide entrance to allow for turning trucks. Mr. Crowe showed the board a picture of the roadway and parking, demonstrating the need for the wider entrance to accommodate turning trucks. With a 24 foot-wide driveway trucks could not enter the site without driving over the curbing, landscaping and presenting any traffic hazard by blocking at least three lanes of Crill Ave. Normally the property line is much further than the street and drivers have the ability to transition from the travel lanes to the site much easier. The unusual circumstances pertained to older parts of the city where the property lines were closer to the street. The second criterion recognized that the applicant acted in good faith in designing the site, in particular how they retained the trees, as this was not required by County regulations.

The third variance criterion requires that the applicant not receive grant of a special privilege. Mr. Crowe used Masters Funeral home as an example of one of numerous business that had a short tapered driveway with a wider width to accommodate turning vehicles. He also mentioned other driveways that were permitted under County regulations on State Rd 19 where over 90 feet of pavement width was allowed, showing that this request would not result in a special privilege.

The fourth criterion identified the hardships as wider parking places that would potentially damage the trees that the applicant is trying to protect, and inability of the narrower driveway to accommodate trucks to service the site.

Mr. Crowe summarized that in Staff's opinion the variance criteria were met and the variance should be granted.

Applicant Brenden Sloan, CHW Engineering, Gainesville, FL, said a normal delivery truck is 76 feet long, and the wider driveway would allow for trucks to make the turn into the site without damaging curbing and landscape. He said the store itself will be 9,100 sq. feet and is properly zoned for the proposed use. He noted that standard parking space width in other municipalities is nine feet.

Mr. Hobbs asked if the nine foot width feet is standard or is a design made up for this request Mr. Sloan reiterated that this was a standard driveway width; typically Family Dollar's right in, left out and right out driveway has a 36 foot width feet. With Crill Ave. being an FDOT right of way, this agency's regulation limit the driveway location to the current median opening that serves the shopping center across the street, so shifting the driveway to other locations would not be an option.

Mr. Hobbs also asked if there will be access feet to the lot behind the property that that fronts S. Palm Avenue or will it be used as buffer. Mr. Sloan said he will be speaking with staff about combining the two lots after the meeting but right now there is driveway access to this lot.

Ms. Lane said they normally do not approve the parking space decrease, in fact, she said they have turned down Wal-Mart®, Town and Country shopping plaza® and the Hodge brothers. This is due to the high percentage of trucks in Palatka. Mr. Collins remarked there is a tree preservation situation here that was unusual. Mr. Lowery asked if the parking stayed at 10 feet how many trees will be lost. Mr. Sloan replied around five to seven trees. Ms. Lane asked how many would need to be replanted if they were removed. Mr. Sloan replied he was not sure what the mitigation would be concerning the trees.

Mr. Crowe said the mitigation would be to put in 1/3 of the caliper that was lost and with talking about mature trees he estimated an average of 12-15 small trees, but keep in mind it will take 10-15 years for those trees to reach maturity, so the canopy will be lost. Ms. Lane asked what kind of trees are on the lot now.

Mr. Crowe said there are some water oaks, live oaks, evergreens, long leaf pines, laurel oaks, magnolia, cabbage palm trees and red cedar. Ms. Willis said when you park and by the time you have your shopping cart, open the trunk you need the 10 fee. She said her vehicle has many scars from parking lot dents.

Mr. Crowe said he understood Ms. Willis's remark, but believed that one foot would not make that much of a difference regarding parking, but would make a difference with paving and heat index and with the city trying to be greener with development and tree preservation. He commented that outside of the city most jurisdictions had the standard nine-foot.

Mr. Hobbs asked with the size of the parking lot and the building and if the nine foot parking space width was not allowed, would there be enough parking spaces. Mr. Sloan replied the minimum number of parking spaces required by Code has been provided.

Mr. Hobbs asked if the 10 foot –wide parking places would negatively affect site development. Mr. Sloan replied if the feet wider spaces would result in additional pervious area; but, the spaces could be feet wider, but this would result in a loss of trees and adding additional impervious area. Ms. Lane said by increasing driveway width from 40 feet to 80 feet that would be a fairly large amount of pervious space that would be put in. Mr. Sloan replied that is true. Mr. Collins asked staff what the county's standards were he thought it was nine feet but was not sure. Mr. Crowe replied throughout the state the standard is nine feet Ms. Lane said here we find we need to 10 feet and it works well. Mr. Sloan replied with making the parking spaces 10 feet that would mean loss of trees. Ms. Lane said that was true but they would be required to put in new trees. Mr. Sloan replied right now they will be replanting around 200 inches of new trees on this property. Ms. Lane said then you would have to put in some more. Mr. Sloan said it would difficult to do that, making it a design issue putting in the additional trees and still having view of the store from the street and other issues like that. He showed the board a copy of the landscape plan. Mr. Hobbs asked what the number of parking spaces was involved. Mr. Sloan said per code they are required one space for every 200 feet of sales area which total 39 spaces but typically Family Dollar® only requires about 31 spaces.

Mr. Collins said with Washington requiring the industry to develop smaller vehicles there wouldn't be a problem allowing the reduction of one foot. Mr. Hobbs asked what if the board met in the middle with parking spaces in the front allowed a 10 foot width and the parking on the side allowing a nine foot width Mr. Sloan replied there was room to expand the parking spaces to 10 feet.

Motion made by Ms. Lane: 1) approving staff recommendations with the provision that 50% of the parking spaces stay at the required 10 foot width and the other 50% at the nine-foot width, with the 10-foot parking spaces closer to the building and the nine-foot parking spaces further away And 2) approve the increase in driveway width at the Crill Ave. edge of pavement from 40 feet to 80 feet and the driveway width at the property line from 24 feet to 46 feet. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hobbs. All those present voted affirmative. Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn- made by Mr. Collins and seconded by Ms. Willis.

Meeting adjourned- at 4:28pm