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MPC votes in favor of Glyndale rezoning, allowing wood pellet storage

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The Glynn County Mainland Planning Commission voted to recommend a rezoning to allow for wood chip storage and some residential development at a property at the corner of Glyndale Drive and Picric Street.

If approved by the county commission, the owner would have 18 months to remove the wood chips, after which he could use the property for single-family or multi-family residential and commercial development.

Property owner Josh Kirkland piled up the tons of wood pellets — which were salvaged from a fire that destroyed a Logistec warehouse at the East River Terminal in Brunswick's south end in May 2021 — to process them into sawdust to sell.



Some nearby residents complained to code enforcement about it, as the property was zoned for commercial and not industrial use, which led to an application late last year to rezone the property.

“It did come to us as a code enforcement action,” said county Planning Manager Stefanie Leif. “We received complaints about a sudden arrival of wood chips stored on this property and that it was a residential property.”

She and a code enforcement officer informed Kirkland that he had a limited period in which he could remove the wood chips without any punitive action, or he could seek a rezoning during that same time period to make the wood chip storage legal.

His initial application was missing some information and was withdrawn. The application considered Tuesday was the second application.

Jake Hightower, with Roberts Civil Engineering, represented Kirkland at the meeting. He said the reason for the second application was that Kirkland wanted to regroup and come up with an action plan to remove the pellets and then to develop the land once the pellets are gone.

The application originally called for a two-year grace period, which Hightower said would allow Kirkland to find somewhere to move the substantial amount of wood pellets.

“Once that two years is gone, we’ll by that time have a plan of what we’re going to do moving forward to turn this into residential, reverting it to what it can be,” Hightower said.

Some members of the public opposed the rezoning.

Rachael Thompson with the Glynn Environmental Coalition said Kirkland cleared the land of trees — to make room for the wood pellets — without seeking approval from the local government.

“Despite this, the property owners have continued to operate a light industrial operation since mid-May,” Thompson said.

Citizens brought several concerns, mostly about the clear-cutting and a potential drop in air quality due to the sawdust operation, she said.

Ultimately, commissioners approved the rezoning on the condition that the potential commercial uses be removed from the property, the grace period for the wood chips be reduced from two years to 18 months, that Kirkland put up a six-foot privacy fence on Glyndale Drive and that he brings in no more wood pellets to the property.

The motion passed 7-0.



In other business, the MPC voted to support a request to rezone five lots on Oscar Lane in the Country Club Heights area to allow for more residential development, potentially including mobile homes.

The five lots amount to 0.88 acres in size and are currently part of the same planned development as the adjacent Palm Club Apartments, the planned development text for which caps the development at 136 units.

“The Palm Club Apartments and three other duplex lots are in the same PD and they’ve used up all of the 136 dwelling units already and due to this the five lots in the zoning application have never been developed,” said county planner Maurice Postal. “Unless these lots are rezoned they have absolutely no economically viable use. The applicant is requesting to take these five lots out of that PD and create a new residential PD.”

The new planned development as proposed is similar to the medium residential zoning, in that 15 residential units is the maximum for all five lots combined, but it would allow mobile homes as well, which the MR zone does not.

Bob Blackwell, the property owner, said there are already some mobile homes in the area.

“It’s an interesting mix ... It’s not a high-priced neighborhood, and so you want to build something so that, if you sell it to homeowners, that would be affordable and mix price-wise with the neighborhood potentially,” Blackwell said.

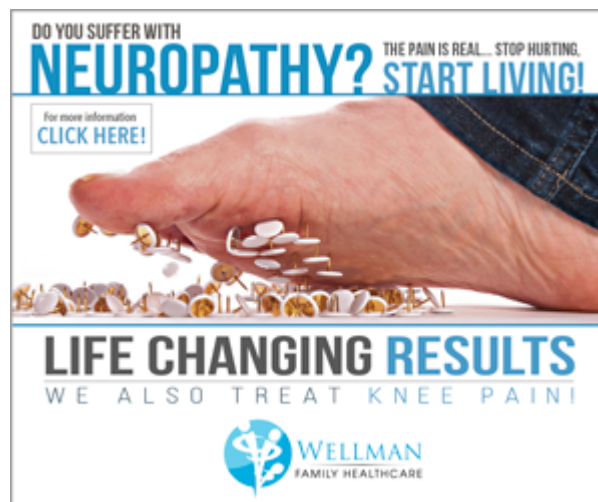
No members of the public spoke in favor of or against the rezoning.

MPC members voted 6-1 to recommend approval. Neal Boatright, Bo Clark, Darrell Dawson, Bill Edgy, Sherrye Gibbs and Richard Strickland voted in favor. Missy Neu was the sole opposing vote.

The planning commission also voted to:

- Approve a site plan for four residential duplexes at the corner of Nix Lane and Granville.
- Approve a site plan for a 90-foot by 75-foot expansion of the J&J Tire Pros facility on Candler Road to add 10 more service bays.
- Recommend the Glynn County Commission approve a conditional use permit for a 23,868-square-foot mini-warehouse and climate-controlled storage facility at 100 and 200 Daniel Lane. If commissioners approve the permit, the owner must then get a site plan approved.
- Recommend the county commission approve a reduction in the development setbacks from beach dunes. The Islands Planning Commission also voted to recommend the ordinance amendment in February.
- Recommend the county commission approve an ordinance amendment exempting heating and air conditioning units elevated above grade from yard setback requirements.

The MPC's next meeting is scheduled for April 5.



Taylor Cooper