



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES–Zoning Public Hearing VIRTUAL MEETING
Wednesday, October 20, 2021 @ 3:00 PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Zoning Public Hearing Virtual Meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm by Mayor Pro Tempore Vanneriah Wynn. A roll call was taken, and the following City Council Members were present: Diane Howard, Darold Honore, and Ric Dodd. Amelia Inman was absent. Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds joined the call during council member questions following the applicant presentation.

II. This application concerns a conditional use that would allow a secondhand store at 2618 Max Cleland Boulevard, Suite C in the “Downtown” District, in a multi-tenant building located within Lithonia Plaza. Secondhand stores are subject to Mayor and Council approval of a conditional use following a public hearing.

a. Report from Bill Johnston, Zoning Administrator

Mr. Bill Johnston provided findings as certain used merchandise stores contribute to character by offering unique items not found in traditional retail shops, they do have some appeal. While some jurisdictions frown on such stores as “junk” stores, approval of the proposed secondhand store is dependent on the vision of the City. As the shop would be located in the “intown Mixed Use Character Area of the 2020 City of Lithonia Comprehensive Plan Update, guidance may be available in the Plan. While few plans identify specific uses, the proposal does comply with a Plan Implementation Strategy “Continue redevelopment of, and reduce vacancies within, Lithonia Plaza.”

b. Presentation by Applicant (10-minutes allotted, including rebuttal)

Mr. Fabian Nelson stated that Coin Purse by classification would buy, sell, and trade used merchandise as a free flow business to include jewelry, electronics, gently used modern technology such as phones and computers at competitive pricing.

Councilmember Questions:

Councilwoman Howard asked for an explanation of the merchandise going in and out, feels that this proposal in distinction is similar to the pawn shop aspect. Fabian Nelson replied that merchandise purchased from consumers would be assigned a price, and held for 30-days before reselling, and the pawn shop element would be eliminated from the business.

Councilwoman Wynn expressed concern of similarity to the pawn shop previously proposed. Fabian Nelson replied that at the conclusion of the pawn shop presentation the business model was re-evaluated, and the difference is that this will be more similar to a Plato’s Closet.

Councilman Honore stated that with the element of lending gone, does Fabian consider his business as one to buy and sell electronics such as phones and computers. Fabian Nelson replied, in partiality, yes.

Bill Johnston questioned the 30-day record keeping period and asked if there would be any reporting requirements to DeKalb County. Fabian Nelson replied the reporting to DeKalb would not be a requirement, however for good record and bookkeeping purposes to stay compliant either way.

c. Presentation by Persons Opposed to the Application (10 minutes allotted)

No one was present to oppose the application.

d. Presentation by Persons In-Favor of the Application (10 minutes allotted)

Ms. Alexis residing at 5158 East Ponce De Leon Avenue, Stone Mountain 30083, former employee for Fabian Nelson stated that he will help the community based on her familiarity of how he does business.

e. Closing of Public Hearing

Councilwoman Howard motioned to close the public hearing, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved by a vote of 3-0.

f. Deliberation by Council on Zoning Administrator's Recommendations and Presentations

Councilwoman Howard feels this proposal is so similar to a pawnshop, and the process seems similar as well just without the aspect of lending. Not in favor. Fabian stated the items would be sourced from auction sites.

Councilman Honore asked about plans to engage with the community. Fabian stated that he looked at a lot of things to include donations to the community on auction site items that are unusable, participation in community events, partnering with schools to donate items ranging from instruments to computers and that his wife would spearhead this.

Councilwoman Wynn stated the second-hand store seems so identical to the previous pawn shop presentation, which is discouraging. Fabian state that he eliminated the pawn shop aspects for the secondhand store proposal and would only sell, buy, and trade.

g. Decision

Councilman Honore motioned to deny the applicant, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn; the motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

III. Adjournment of Zoning Hearing

The adjournment of the Zoning Hearing was made by Mayor Shameka Reynolds at 3:50 pm.