



**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF HARTSVILLE**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 - 5:30PM**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 100 EAST CAROLINA AVENUE**

PURSUANT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT SC CODE 30-4-80: WRITTEN NOTICE WAS DELIVERED TO THE PRESS BY EMAIL ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023, AND DULY POSTED AT CITY HALL LOCATED AT 100 EAST CAROLINA AVENUE AND ON HARTSVILLESC.GOV. CITY HALL IS AN ACCESSIBLE FACILITY, FOR ASSISTANCE, CALL 843-383-3018.

**Members present:** Chairman Mallory Hankins, Vice-Chairman Warren Felkel, Curtis Lee, and Trevor McDonald. **Absent:** Dan Askins, Jennifer Dunleavy, and Scottie Hill. **Staff:** Michelle Byers-Brown, Brenda Kelley, and Matt Winburn. **Press:** Absent. **Guests:** Kinzey DeLaine, Chris Frazier, and Erik Jorgensen.

**Call to Order/Welcome**

Chairman Hankins called the meeting to order at 5:36p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Felkel wanted the minutes to reflect that in addition to his comment that the short-term rental ordinance would put a burden on City employees, he also discussed that it would put a burden on city resources, would expose the city to a new liability, and it would be cumbersome for property owners to comply, as well as voicing support for staff concern for safety. Mallory also wanted the minutes to reflect that Mrs. Dunleavy commented that the board did not have any type of cost-benefit analysis or any type of financial analysis to look through or evaluate. Lee made a motion to approve the August 28, 2023, minutes with the amendments; Second: McDonald. Carried: All in favor.

**New Business**

**Join Parachute**

Erik Jorgensen, architect for the project, was present to participate in the discussion regarding an application for a site plan, landscape plan, lighting and elevation drawings for a new business called Join Parachute. Mr. Jorgensen provided some background information about Join Parachute. He described the nature of the blood plasma business. The proposal was for a 6,400 square foot, single-story building. Staff Kelley reiterated the items on the site plan that meet the ordinance requirements as outlined in the staff report. She also noted that staff provides the site plan to the public works and fire department for comments. Public works was concerned with access points and the potential for a grinder pump. Mr. Jorgensen had spoken with public works prior to the meeting to explain that the need for the additional access point off Driver Avenue was to accommodate delivery trucks. Public works was concerned with the truck traffic coming into the adjacent Walmart property. Mr. Jorgensen stated that the delivery for Join Parachute occurred less than twice a week. Mr. Jorgensen and public works looked at the plan together and came to the realization that there probably is not a better place for a truck to access the site. The grinder pump may be needed because of the distance it may take to get to the water on the side of Hartsville Crossing furthest away from the property.

Staff mentioned that there was some interest in sidewalks when the project was presented prior. No sidewalks were shown in the site plan other than the existing sidewalk on Driver Avenue. The landscape plan does not show a required irrigation system. Staff requested that a few of the trees proposed be

removed a replaced with trees more indigenous to our area. Otherwise, the landscaping meets all the City of Hartsville requirements by ordinance. The fire department commented that there appears to be a fire hydrant close enough to the business, but the engineer will need to confirm.

Chairman Hankins mentioned that she recalls that Join Parachute would have to get permission to build on the property. Staff Kelley commented that at the time staff neither Join Parachute was aware that Walmart had purchased the rights to make the determination about the future of the property. An approval from Walmart was included in the packet. The color scheme meets the requirements of the Planned Development Standards. Chairman Hankins also wanted to confirm that the use was permitted. Staff Kelley confirmed that the medical office was determined to be a commercial use which is a permitted use in the Planned Development district. Staff Kelley confirmed that a medical office business is in the shopping center which is also in the planned development district.

Felkel mentioned that at the prior meeting the commission suggested that the developer look at existing buildings in the area to locate the Join Parachute business. Mr. Jorgensen stated that the developer uses various types of software to determine how people get to the site whether by foot, transit, bus, etc. They choose the location based on the location that is determined to yield the highest production. Felkel recommended a sidewalk on the north end of the property that would connect with the Walmart sidewalk for safety of pedestrians walking from that direction.

Staff Kelley asked what the bioretention would drain into. Mr. Jorgensen said it would drain into the "ditch" on the rear of the building. The site also has an underground storm water retention. McDonald made a motion to approve the site plan with the revisions to the landscape plan and the addition of the sidewalk to connect with the Walmart sidewalk Second: Felkel; Carried: All in favor. Chairman Hankins wanted the minutes to reflect that she voted in favor if the use is permitted in the district.

### **LED Signs**

The current ordinance allows LED signs, also called Electronic Message Board signs for government agencies, public schools, and campuses with over ten acres in size. Pastor Frazier was present. He and a business owner asked the Planning Commission to consider allowing the expansion of LED Signs to include the church and the business. Staff Kelley stated that the planning commission could not include the church or business only. They would have to determine if they wanted to include churches. If yes, could churches be treated differently than other commercial businesses. The commission would also have to determine if they wanted to include specific zoning districts. The current ordinance is not based on any zoning district. Staff presented a PowerPoint presentation that showed three option that Pastor Frazier submitted for LED signs he would choose for his church. The presentation also included photos of the Sonic sign in Darlington. Sonic was the other business that made the request. Staff Kelley provided the required dimensions of an allowed sign and the percentage of the sign that could house the LED portion of the sign. There has been a lot of conversation about this type of sign. Some have been totally in favor; others in opposition. In review of other ordinances, some include churches, others do not, others do not allow LED signs at all. Lee commented on controlling the amount of light emitted using lumens. Staff provided the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) regulations for outdoor advertising. SCDOT does not use lumens or foot candles for determining light emissions. Staff Kelley researched ordinances that used lumens or foot candles. The differences in the allowable lumen or foot candles were too varied to decide what was adequate. A lot of cities use neither. Staff did not make a recommendation. Lee asked for clarity on what is allowed currently for Pastor Frazier's church. Kelley stated that the church is in a B-2 zoning district. Signs are limited to 12 square feet and can have no internal illumination. Lee also asked what was the thought process in the difference between signage

in the B-2 versus the B-3 zoning district. Kelley stated that the main reason was the B-2 zoning district is a mixture of residential and commercial. Originally, it was mainly residential. The B-3 zoning district is mainly commercial. Lee commented that there were three options: rezoning B-2 to B-3, having the same sign regulations for the B-2 and B-3 zoning district and allow LED signs in both since B-3 allows LED signs, or creating a new standard for signs. Kelley made one correction to Mr. Lee's statement. The B-3 zoning district does not allow LED signs unless it is a school, church, or campus type environment with over ten acres. Kelley said if we want to make a change to the ordinance to allow LED signs other than for the existing allowable uses, how do we want to allow it, where do we want to allow it, or we going to allow it based on use or zoning district. Chairman Hankins wanted to know how signs are grandfathered. Kelley stated that the current ordinance states that the sign loses its grandfathering after a business has closed for six (6) months. Chairman Hankins asked if a work session is needed. Kelley thought a work session would be a great idea. There are so many details to work through. Lee suggested a work session with Council. Councilman Delaine was present. He mentioned that he rode the entire city a couple of times at night to look at the various types of signs. He stated that prior to this evening's meeting he was against LED signs. He is now open to a discussion about LED signs. Felkel expressed a concern that Pastor Frazier has been to several meetings how much longer will he have to wait to get an ordinance change to allow the type of sign he has requested. The ordinance that allows LED signs was written in 2012. It is time to update the ordinance. Lee asked Pastor Frazier what the impact would be if he was unable to move forward with his request. Pastor Frazier was amenable to waiting. Lee made a motion to table the item until the next meeting; Second: McDonald; Carried: All in favor.

#### **Discussion Regarding Backlit Signs**

The Planning commission would include the backlit signs in the discussion with LED signs in a joint session with City Council. No action was taken.

#### **Density Requirements**

No action was taken.

#### **Rental Ordinance**

Staff updated the Planning Commission on the short-term rental ordinance. The items was pulled from Council's agenda.

#### **Adjournment**

Lee made a motion to adjourn at 7:48p.m. McDonald seconded. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 30, 2023, at 5:30p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall.

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Chairman Mallory Hankins

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Date