



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: JANUARY 14, 2020
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance

Re: Amend Sec. 7.15 Conservation Overlay District

File No. 19-006959-ZA

Petitioner: Bridget Lidy for the City of Savannah

Leah G. Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the zoning text amendment to Article 7, Section 7.15 Conservation Overlay District to add the Historic Carver Village – Flatman Village District as requested.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the zoning text amendment to Article 7, Section 7.15 Conservation Overlay District to add the Historic Carver Village – Flatman Village District as requested.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10 + Chairman

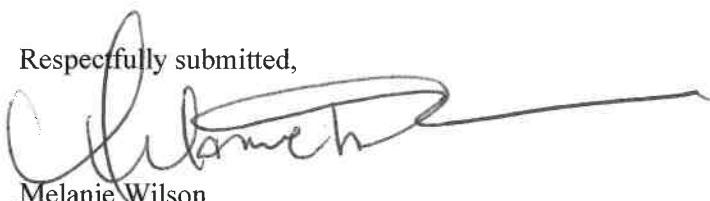
Joseph Ervin, Chairman
Thomas Branch
Travis Coles
Ellis Cook
Karen Jarrett
Lacy Manigault
Tanya Milton
Wayne Noha
Eula Parker

Linder Suthers
Joseph Welch

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (11-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 11	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Ervin Branch Cook Coles Jarrett Manigault Milton Noha Parker Suthers Welch		Smith Monohan Woiwode

Respectfully submitted,



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

/jh

Enclosure

cc Mark Massey, Clerk of Council
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Beth Barnes, Department of Inspections





C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah

FROM: Metropolitan Planning Commission

DATE: January 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
Re: Amend Sec. 7.15 Conservation Overlay District
File No. 19-006959-ZA
Petitioner: Bridget Lidy for the City of Savannah
Leah G. Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation

Issue:

The City of Savannah, on behalf of the Carver Village Neighborhood Association, has filed a petition to amend the zoning ordinance to create an overlay district for the area known as Historic Carver Village – Flatman Village. The Conservation Overlay District, Article 7, Section 7.15 (formerly Article Q) was created in January 2019 at the request of the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent Neighborhood Association in order to require that proposed demolitions of historic buildings within designated areas be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (formerly reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission) prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Background:

The proposed overlay district includes two areas: Historic Carver Village and Flatman Village; both are residential subdivisions with mostly mid-20th century single family dwellings.

Carver Village is an established, historic neighborhood with a distinctive social and architectural history. Following the listing of Carver Village on the National Register of Historic Places in January 2019, the City of Savannah and the Carver Village Neighborhood Association now seek to protect the area from unnecessary demolition of historic buildings as well as prohibit lot recombination by establishing the Conservation District. This would require that all demolitions of historic buildings be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission at a public hearing and public notice would be provided; it would also prohibit all lot recombinations.

Established in 1948, Carver Village is a socially and architecturally significant neighborhood. The neighborhood was conceived and planned in 1947 as a “low cost negro housing development.” The Carver Village Exclusive Colored Housing Development was the first of its kind, providing low cost loans to African American home buyers and providing City-funded roads, drainage, and water and sewer services.

The American Small House design for the buildings in Carver Village was determined by a design competition; Cletus W. Bergen, a prominent Savannah architect, was chosen to design the model house for the development.

Facts and Findings:

1. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places provides no protection of historic resources, provided that federal funds and/or permits are not involved. Property owners are able to demolish historic buildings without restriction.
2. The Conservation Overlay District is intended to protect older and established neighborhoods from unnecessary demolitions of historic resources without the creation of a full local historic district, similar to the Savannah Historic District, Victorian District, etc. The Conservation Overlay District is limited to the evaluation of demolitions and, in the case of this proposed district, restricts lot recombinations only.
3. Article 7, Section 7.15 was written in such a way that other neighborhoods could apply for Conservation Overlay protection in the future.
4. Boundaries: The Historic Carver Village – Flatman Village Overlay Conservation District (CD-4) boundaries are from the centerline of West Gwinnett Street to the centerline of Allen Avenue to the centerline of Blun Avenue to the centerline of Endly Street. These boundaries include the Carver Village National Register Historic District as well as the neighborhood to the west known as Flatman Village; Flatman Village was requested to be included by the petitioner.
5. Public Notice: Mailed notice was sent to all property owners within the proposed district boundaries.
6. Review Process: All demolitions would be reviewed by the City Historic Preservation Officer prior to the issuance of a building permit. Any demolition of a contributing building, or a building eligible for contributing status, would be referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for review.
7. Contributing vs. Non-Contributing: A building must meet one or more of the following criteria to be considered a contributing building:
 - a. The building is identified as contributing on the National Register Historic District or Property map;
 - b. The building is at least 50 years old; possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and:
 - i. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
 - ii. Is associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or

- iii. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - iv. Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory;
 - c. The building has achieved significance within the past 50 years if it is of ‘exceptional importance’ as defined by the National Park Service.
8. The Historic Preservation Commission can only approve the demolition of a contributing building in two situations:
- a. The demolition is required to alleviate a threat to public health or public safety; or
 - b. The demolition is required to avoid exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon any owner of any specific property. If the difficulty or hardship claimed is economic, the applicant shall be required to submit sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the application of the standards and regulations of this section deprives the applicant of a positive economic use or return on the subject property.
- However, the Historic Preservation Commission may also determine that a building is non-contributing.
9. Public Notice: The proposed ordinance requires that the building proposed to be demolished is posted 15 days in advance of the public hearing.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1. Approve the petitioner’s request as presented.
- 2. Approve an alternative amendment.
- 3. Deny the petitioner’s request.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Adding the Conservation Overlay District to Historic Carver Village – Flatman Village will protect the historic neighborhood against unnecessary demolitions and lot recombinations, and provide for public notice and a public hearing in such situations.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the zoning text amendment to Article 7, Section 7.15 Conservation Overlay District to add the Historic Carver Village – Flatman Village District as requested.