

Chatham County Appearance Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 25, 2024

Attendees:

Dan Sundberg (DS), Angela Plummer (AP), Jack Ritchie (JR), Davis Andrews (DA), Chuck Walker (CW), Rachel Nelms (RN)

Guests: Approximately 10-15 members of the public, see public comment section notes for detail.

Start: 6:00 PM EST

Meeting Opening

DS- Prefaced the public(seated in the room) as to the purpose and duties of the Appearance Commission

New Business, Item 1 – Review a site plan for a proposed Dollar General on NC 87 N, Parcel 68537 by Gardner Engineering, PLLC.

Applicant in attendance: James Peden III of Vanguard Property Group, partnered with Forest Equity LLC (developer) of Raleigh, NC

Applicant explained proposed Dollar General Mini Mart and its difference between a standard Dollar General. The Mini Mart will include produce section, coolers, freezers, etc. The building footprint will be approximately 10,640 SF. This Dollar General Mini Mart's location will be approximately 7.8 miles south of the existing Dollar General in Eli Whitney and 8.4 miles north of the one in Pittsboro.

Preliminary Landscape Plan

CW + DS – questioned why the tree save area is so narrow along the road frontage? Suggested moving 20' planted buffer further into site to take advantage of existing vegetation (mostly pines). Commented that the site layout appears to have the depth for everything to move back towards the east. Applicant agreed and commented that it would be worth looking into.

JR – asked if the 20' planted buffer have to begin at the right-of-way (ROW)?

AP- Yes

See Figure 1.0 for tree save area discussed above.

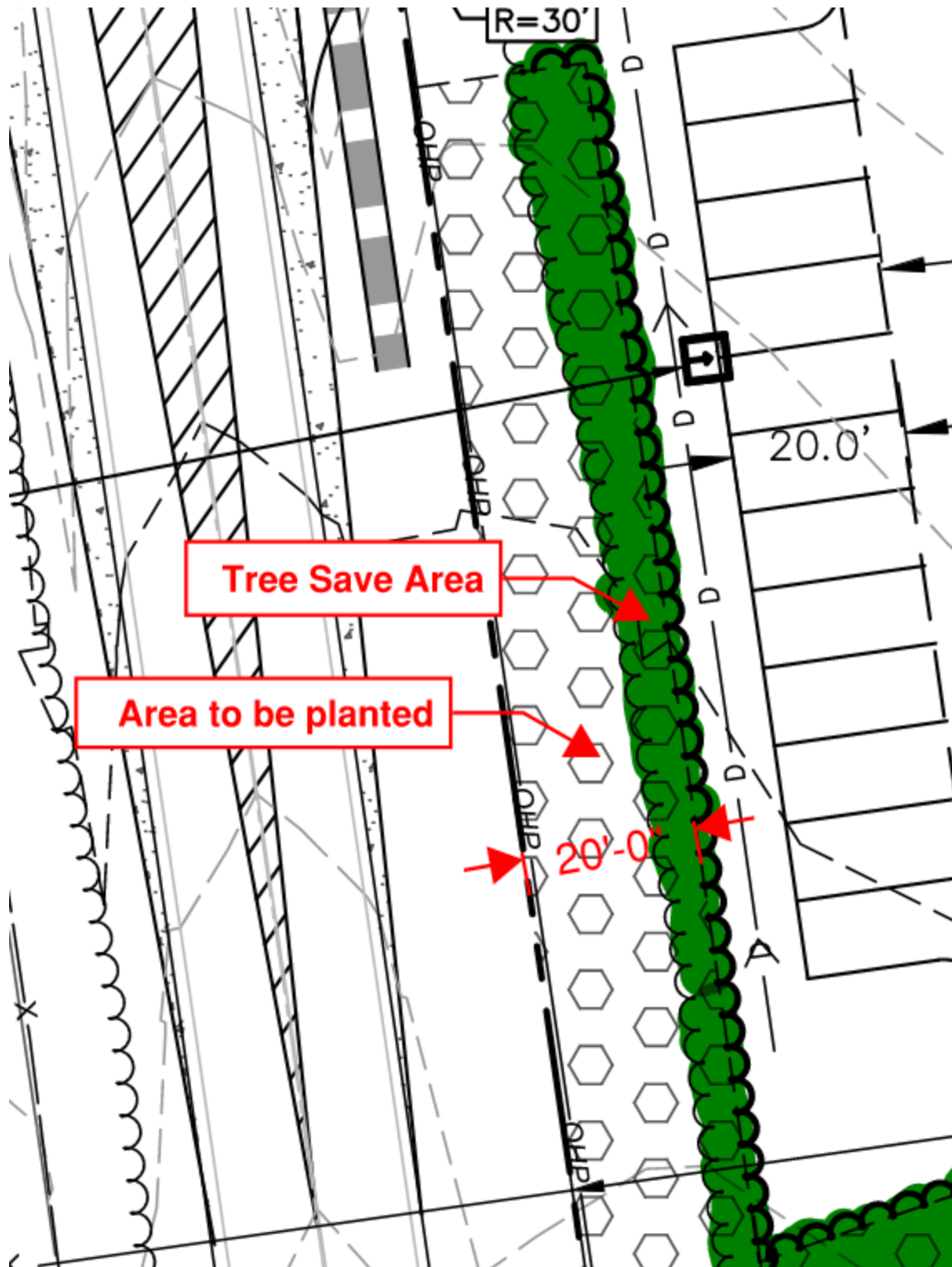


Figure 1.0 Excerpt from submitted Preliminary Landscape Plan

Green shading added to highlight tree save area for visual purposes of these notes. Appearance Commission recommends offsetting the 20' planted buffer to claim more existing vegetation so tree save is not so narrow. This would require moving layout further into the site to accommodate.

Preliminary Landscape Plan (continued)

DS- Brings up plant matrix shown on preliminary landscape plan, suggests RN make some additional plant suggestions

RN- 228 yaupon hollies(Not dwarf yaupon) could use a mixture or variety of shrubs. Suggests having a male and female cultivar of yaupon hollies for cross pollination. Also suggests incorporating inkberry. Mentions sweetbay magnolia as an understory tree to supplement the tree save area. Also eastern red cedars can be used.

DS- In the upcoming new code, if you have more than 70 shrubs, a minimum of 3 different species required. If you have more than 10-20 trees, you would need at least 3 species, of which no single species exceeds 40%.

DS- north property line appears to be void of existing trees shown on survey. This area is included in the buffer requirements.

Applicant- explains clearing limits not shown for grading, etc

CW- Asks for grading plan, applicant could receive credit for existing vegetation

DS- Limits of disturbance must be shown.

CW- We need clarity on the detention area.

DS- Parking lot trees are required in the islands. Parking lot trees shall be within 60' of every parking space.

RN- Recommended redbuds and ironwood trees.

JR- Recommends white oaks, tulip poplars, and maples.

Lighting Plan

Applicant- presents lighting plan and details. Explains that wall packs will cut off after 10pm.

AP- foot candles cannot exceed 0.5 at property line. Security light required to stay on all night.

Signage

JR- asks for clarification on sign location. Notices possible conflict with tree save and site distance.

Applicant- shares sign elevation and details. Sign proposed is a pedestal mounted sign approximately 20' tall.

DS- asks applicant to consider a monument style sign rather than a pedestal sign, although pedestal sign is allowed in the proposed zoning. Applicant acknowledges that may be an option worth exploring. Dan states that this is the only development like this between Pittsboro and Eli Whitney and that this is going to set a precedent for this corridor. It is very important for the project to set a good example on this very rural road, NC87.

Public Comment

DS- reiterates what was shared at beginning of meeting and asks the public in attendance if they have any comments specifically relating to the landscaping, lighting, or signage.

Elderly man (name not stated) – is there any way for the applicant to propose a 4' berm to help with additional plant material and screening?

Billy Cummings- East Perry Road, has lived in Chatham County for 52 years. Not sure about rural character of this proposed Dollar General Mini Mart. Remised that applicant did not know more about the Chatham County UDO requirements.

Lady (unidentified) – asked about the loblolly pines across the northern property line and not just the ones being preserved across the road frontage. Said as a neighbor, she would like to see additional plant material proposed underneath the tree save area due to the pines' canopies being so high off the ground.

DS/JR – agreed and stated that a continuous evergreen shrub to be planted under the loblolly pines in the tree save area.

RN- Leucothoe may be an additional plant suggestion for evergreen shrub/understory screening

General comment from public- not happy with blockiness of Dollar General building appearance. Commented that Appearance Commission should have some say over the appearance of buildings/architecture and not just landscaping.

JR- Suggested applicant consider alternative architectural design such as the Dollar General in Bishop, GA. See Figure 2.0.

Applicant- acknowledged that Dollar General has built stores in other locations with non-traditional building types.

AP- Stated that this proposed Dollar General is in an area identified by the Board of Commissioners for neighborhood commercial business. Would be more fitting if it looked like a country store to retain the local character.

JR- agreed and stated example of other stores built to blend in with local architecture.

DS- asked if there was a motion to approve.

CW- Motion to approve

DA- Second

DS- Approved unanimously with conditions/notes 6:55 pm



Figure 2.0 – Dollar General in Bishop, GA (for example)



Commission Updates

DS- Erin McDade (not in attendance) has decided to step down as vice chair. Asks commission for nominations for a new vice chair.

JR- States interest in position

DS- Nominates Jack Ritchie to be the vice chair. Asks for a second/vote.

CCAC- approves Jack Ritchie to be the new vice chair unanimously

AP- provides update on new UDO and redactions made by planning board over CCAC's comments/revisions. States time is of the essence and CCAC needs to revisit new UDO with any comments by October 7, 2024. Possible vote for adoption set to happen on October 21, 2024. Would not be implemented until early spring 2025. CCAC should visit Recode Chatham and log in Konveio to review.

DS- Motion to adjourn, motion passed. Meeting ended at 7:06 pm EST.