

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on 2.52 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Multi Family Residential (R-M). The subject properties are located at 802 Harmon Drive, 1501 Hickory Road and 1509 Hickory Road. These are along the south side of the road, between 500 and 1,200 feet east of North St Augustine Road. The applicant is the owner of these properties as well as the property in between (1.79 acres, 1505 & 1507 Hickory Rd) which is already zoned R-M. These properties currently contain several single-family residences as rental property. The applicant is proposing to demolish all of these residences, combine all of these properties together into one tract of land (4.31 acres total), and redevelop the entire property as one apartment complex with 75+ dwelling units.

The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-M zoning. It should be noted that the existing R-10 zoning on the property is “non-compliant” with the CAC Character Area (not intensive enough).

The subject properties are part of a residential neighborhood that was one of the unincorporated “islands” that were annexed by the City in 2006. These properties had R-10 zoning in the County and were given R-10 zoning in the City upon annexation. In the years leading up to its annexation, this area was once dominated by “owner occupied” single-family housing and it was considered a very stable neighborhood. However, this characteristic has since changed to one that is now dominated by rental houses and a large apartment complex in the rear area along Harmon Drive (owned by the applicant). While the neighborhood was still in the county, even some non-residential uses crept in through special approvals in R-10 zoning and there was even a failed neighborhood buyout attempt for a proposed shopping center. Over the past 10 years, the Candlewood Suites hotel has been constructed on property that was rezoned to C-C, and the neighborhood’s “Character Area” has been changed from Transitional Neighborhood (TN) to Community Activity Center (CAC) for the specific purpose of furthering the transition of this neighborhood to an area of higher intensity development. Resulting from this was a 2018 rezoning of the 1.79 acres in between the subject properties, from R-10 to R-M (by an out-of-town developer) for the purposes of developing a separate apartment complex. The plans for that complex were fully reviewed and approved by the City, but the actual construction of the project never commenced. The current applicant later acquired the property, along with the current subject properties, and is simply proposing to combine them all together to develop a larger complex, which will be managed in conjunction with the applicant’s existing complex to the NE.

As an overall future land use pattern for the area, staff continues to believe the majority of properties toward the rear of the neighborhood are very well-suited for multi-family or professional office development. Light commercial development should occur on assembled properties fronting North St Augustine Road. The applicant’s proposal is in keeping with this overall land use projection. The applicant has also informally expressed a desire to continue his redevelopment efforts in the area with future phases of multi-family development that are adjacent to these subject properties and that are based on an overall master plan. Staff finds this encouraging and therefore supports this request.