

St. Charles Parish Department of Planning & Zoning

LAND USE REPORT

CASE NUMBER: PZR-2015-07

GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

- ◆ **Name/Address of Applicant:** River Road Historical Society
PO Box 5
Destrehan LA 70047
 - ◆ **Location of Site:** 15.15 acres comprised of Tract 4-II-A-1 of Plantation Business Park and an additional $\frac{3}{4}$ acres near 13034 River Road, Destrehan.
 - ◆ **Requested Action:** Rezoning from M-1 to C-2.
- Application Date:** 7/2/13

SITE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- ◆ **Size of Parcel:** Approximately 15.15 acres
 - ◆ **Current Zoning and Land Use:** M-1. Much of the site is currently in use as the Destrehan Plantation historic site.
 - ◆ **Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning:** Immediately adjacent to site on the north and east, land is zoned M-1, but largely vacant. To the west, the St. Charles Parish Library and fire station abut and the St. Charles Parish urgent care center is under development (recently rezoned to MS/PZR 2013-14). Plantation Business Campus is zoned M-1 and is developed with several office buildings and distribution centers further east.
 - ◆ **Utilities:** Standard utilities are available to the site from River Road. The site is vast. Sewer and water lines as well as drainage facilities will be installed at the developer's expense.
 - ◆ **Traffic Access:** River Road Historical Society owns approximately 530' on River Road. The additional lease area provides an additional 500' of frontage.
- Plan 2030 Recommendations:**
Civic/Town Center

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Appendix A., Zoning Ordinance, Section VI.9:

Rezoning Guidelines and Criteria: Before the Planning & Zoning Commission recommends or the Parish Council rezones property, there should be reasonable factual proof by the proponent of a change that one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. Land-use pattern or character has changed to the extent that the existing zoning no longer allows reasonable use of the proponent's property and adjacent property. Reasonableness is defined as:
 - a. Land use the same as, or similar to that existing on properties next to, or across the street from the site under consideration.
 - b. Consideration of unique or unusual physical or environmental limitations due to size, shape, topography or related hazards or deficiencies.
 - c. Consideration of changes in land value, physical environment or economic aspects, which tend to limit the usefulness of vacant land or buildings.
2. The proposed zoning change, and the potential of a resulting land use change, will comply with the general public interest and welfare and will not create:
 - a. Undue congestion of streets and traffic access.
 - b. Overcrowding of land or overburden on public facilities such as transportation, sewerage, drainage, schools, parks and other public facilities.
 - c. Land or building usage which, is, or may become incompatible with existing character or usage of the neighborhood.
 - d. An oversupply of types of land use or zoning in proportion to population, land use and public facilities in the neighborhood.

3. The proposed zoning change is in keeping with zoning law and precedent, in that:
 - a. It is not capricious or arbitrary in nature or intent.
 - b. It does not create a monopoly, or limit the value or usefulness of neighboring properties.
 - c. It does not adversely affect the reliance that neighboring property owners or occupants have placed upon existing zoning patterns.
 - d. It does not create a spot zone, that is, an incompatible or unrelated classification which would prevent the normal maintenance and enjoyment of adjacent properties.

ANALYSIS

The applicants request rezoning from M-1, light industrial to C-2, general commercial/retail sales in order to permit the location of historic structures from other sites to be used as historic home site bed and breakfast cottages to support Destrehan Plantation. The area requested for rezoning is 15.15 acres comprised of Tract 4-II-A-1 and an additional $\frac{3}{4}$ acre piece owned by BP Products North America. The rezoning site surrounds the site of Destrehan Manor House, which is approximately 3.8 acres zoned H-Historic Preservation District.

The 15.15 acres is in the Pan American Southern Refinery site. The refinery operated from the early 1900s until it was dismantled in 1958. Approximately 258 acres of the refinery site have been reviewed by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)—Remediation Services Division (RSD) and determined to be “Ready for Reuse” (LDEQ Agency Interest 4356). On the site layout map on page 30 of this agenda, the 15.15 acres falls within the areas labelled “LICENSE AREA” and “UNDEVELOPED AREA.” These areas were developed with “offices, open areas, and sports fields” (ready for reuse letter, enclosure 1) and have been deemed “non-impacted by site activities” of the refinery which makes them suitable for the proposed use and any C2 use.

Since 2011, BP Products North America has been proactive encouraging redevelopment of the site with particular focus on a civic or town center. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan indicates the area as “Plantation Civic/Town Center,” anticipating a future concentration of civic facilities and other community-serving activities and functions due to a central location and proximately to I310. River Road Historical Society is implementing a master plan for their site that is consistent with the town center land use description. The plan includes overnight accommodations to support specific functions at Destrehan Plantation and tourism in the Parish. Developing this historic site with overnight accommodations is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan designation and will likely add to the character of the area.

Historic home site bed and breakfast cottages are permitted in the H land use zone; however, the plantation’s master plan recommends the accommodations outside of the existing H zone. Rezoning the 15.15 acres to H would impact neighboring properties limiting use within a 1,000’ of any H zoning to C-2 or less intense. As the surrounding property is M-1, the applicants opted to request C-2 zoning which also permits the accommodations but does not extend the 1,000’ zone of protection. Approving this request for C-2 would essentially create the ‘zone of protection’ for the manor house on property managed by River Road Historical Society without impacting adjacent land owners.

In order to receive a recommendation for approval, a rezoning request must meet all of the criteria of at least one of three tests. **This request meets all the criteria of the second test.**

The proposed zoning change and the anticipated land use change will comply with the general public interest and welfare by allowing development of an historic attraction without limiting development on the surrounding property. The proposed zone change will not create undue impacts to public facilities or creating traffic congestion. The site of Destrehan Plantation is over 21 acres and has adequate space for on-site parking for normal daily operations and most regular events. Special events at the site are permitted by the St. Charles Parish Sheriff and follow strict guidelines. Development of the proposed historic home site bed and breakfast cottages and indeed any C-2 use will not overburden schools or parks or other public facilities. All standard utilities (water, sewer, drainage, electricity, telecommunications) are available from River Road and can provide what’s needed for development of the plantation site according to it’s master development plan. River Road Historical Society will be required to install water, sewer, and drainage infrastructure on the site as elements of the master plan are permitted, and Parish Departments are assisting as necessary with plan reviews and recommendations.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

Approval.