

**CITY OF CONWAY  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2023  
Planning & Building Dept. Conference Room – 196 Laurel Street**

Present: Kendall Brown, Brian O’Neil, David Sligh, Ellen Watkins, Samantha Miller, Virginia Norris  
Absent: Jessica Wise, Danny Hardee  
Staff: Jessica Hucks, Planning Director; Marquiez Carter, Planning Intern; Katie Dennis, Planning Concierge; Charlie Crosby IT; Anne Bessant, Planning Assistant  
Others: Suzanne Roman

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman O’Neil called to order at approximately 5:30 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Hardwick made a motion, seconded by Sligh to approve the April 6, 2023 minutes as written. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

**III. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. TEXT AMENDMENTS**

1. *Previously Deferred – Amendment to Article 2 – Definitions, Article 4 – Use Tables, and Article 5 – Specific Use Regulations, of the City of Conway Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), regarding shooting ranges and armories.*

Hucks stated that currently there is no provision for the lawful permitting of shooting ranges within any zoning district in the City of Conway.

A 2017 report from the Pew Research Center found that; Nationwide, 30% of Americans own guns and 11% don’t personally own a gun but live with someone who does. However, 52% of those who do not own guns could see themselves owning one at a point in the future. The demographics in this region may differ as; 46% of those who live in rural areas are gun owners while 28% of those in suburbs and 19% of those in urban areas own guns. The City of Conway contains all three of these characteristics.

With 41% of Americans currently having access to a firearm and potentially an additional 35% acquiring guns in the near future, The City of Conway recognizes the benefit of and potential demand for specialized facilities designed to both instruct and develop proficiency in the safe handling of firearms.

Property located at 3794 HWY 701 South is currently going through the annexation process (PIN 381-01-04-0022). This 2.45-acre parcel contains “The Gun Store”, a firearms retail sales business with an indoor shooting range facility. The property is currently zoned Horry County “Indoor Amusement Commercial” (AM1), which permits indoor shooting ranges. Upon annexing, the use on the subject parcel will become a “legal nonconforming” use. In addition to the UDO not defining or addressing shooting ranges, the property owner

has expressed concerns that annexing will prohibit future expansion of his business, if he chooses. The site is large enough to consider expansion or addition of buildings to the property. Planning Commission recommended approval of annexation of this property (as HC) at their April 6th meeting. City Council deferred 1st reading of the annexation / rezoning request to give the applicant an opportunity to explore other options besides annexation into the City, due to their concerns with annexing. As a result of this property, staff began researching other cities and towns and how they defined and permitted such facilities, so that in the event this came about with other properties – either already containing such use, or vacant properties seeking to develop a shooting range, the City would have standards to address the use and that would include provisions to offer protections for adjacent properties.

While indoor shooting facilities may be appropriate within industrial areas, except for those facilities solely for the training of law enforcement, the incorporated area does not seem to be a suitable setting for outdoor shooting ranges. This amendment proposes to allow indoor shooting ranges, with conditions in three (3) districts: Highway Commercial (HC), Light Industrial (LI), and Heavy Industrial (HI). In addition to providing provisions for the use of indoor shooting ranges, staff also proposes to define uses associated with shooting ranges and armories in *Article 2 – Definitions*, of the UDO.

This amendment was deferred at the May 4th Planning Commission meeting due to questions from Planning Commission regarding design standards for indoor shooting ranges, and whether there were any that could be included in the amendment. Staff has revised the amendment slightly, to include a general statement regarding design standards, that is also provided in the NRA standards as well as the US Dept. of Energy standards.

Staff recommends that Planning Commission give a thorough review of the request and make an informed recommendation to City Council after said review.

The board and staff discussed at length.

Sligh made a motion to recommend approval to Council conditional upon deletion of sub paragraph 9.C. “Facilities shall be designed, constructed, and operated in strict compliance with the National Rifle Association (N.R.A.) Standards”. O’Neil seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**2. *Previously Deferred – Amendment to Articles 4 – Use Tables and Article 5 – Specific Use Regulations, of the City of Conway Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), regarding the keeping of chickens in residential zoning districts.***

Hucks stated, *Section 5.2.5* of the UDO sets forth the regulations governing the non-commercial keeping of livestock or fowl. This section makes keeping chickens illegal throughout most of the City, allowing it only in RA, FA, and IN zoning districts.

The keeping of chickens was added as an allowed use in IN in 2017. At this time, Conway High School had asked that chickens be allowed for the furtherance of their agricultural programming. The original 2017 amendment also proposed allowing chickens in low-density residential zoning districts in addition to IN, but at that time, Council chose to move forward with the IN amendment only.

Since then, there has been a movement in the area to allow the keeping of urban chickens, and Conway is no different. Through the years, the Planning Department has required families to get rid of their chickens, and each time it was a difficult thing for families who treated them like pets. Additionally, with the recent rising cost of eggs, more citizens are considering raising chickens.

The proposed amendment to the UDO would allow chickens to be kept in R and R-1 neighborhoods, without allowing the other types of fowl and livestock. This would accommodate most of the areas that are known to

keep chickens and hopefully address community concerns. No more than 10 chickens could be kept on R or R-1 property, and all chickens must be cooped and penned to keep them from freely roaming. No roosters are permitted and all areas must be kept in a clean and healthy condition.

At the May 4th Planning Commission meeting, members discussed several options with staff regarding the number of chickens that were proposed to be allowed with this amendment, and there was public input in favor of allowing city residents to have chickens with little to no restriction. PC asked staff to provide information from surrounding areas and how they regulated urban chickens. The proposed amendment was deferred to the June Planning Commission meeting.

Staff recommended that Planning Commission give a thorough review of the request and make an informed recommendation to City Council after said review.

The board and staff discussed at length.

Norris made a motion to recommend approval to Council with the staff's recommended conditions, also adding the R2 district (only having a single family detached dwelling with no lot size changes), Rural Residential and making a 6-chicken allowance. O'Neil seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Sligh noted that the motion he understood that was made included a lot size requirement and would have not voted in favor or would have suggested that the minimum lot size requirement be added in the motion.

**IV. PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**V. BOARD INPUT**

None

**VI. STAFF INPUT**

None

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:15 pm.

Approved and signed this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023.



Brian O'Neil, Chairman



