

## Oyster Research Facility – Site Plan

Staff Report: Andy Bauer  
Application #:ZA21-000030

Planning Commission Meeting Date: June 22, 2021  
Applicant: Ward Properties, Inc.

Property Location: Lot 11A Business &  
Aviation Park

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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### Summary of Request

The applicant requests Site Plan Approval to construct a 10,741sf Oyster Research Facility on Lot 11A in the Business & Aviation Park.

### Existing Conditions

The property is located at the southeast curve of Commerce Drive in the Business and Aviation Park. The property is a vacant wooded lot that is zoned IND-Industrial and is within the Business and Aviation Park Overlay District.

### Surrounding Context

The following are the surrounding zoning and land uses:

- **North** – IND: Industrial / Vacant Wooded Land
- **South** –IND: Industrial / Vacant Wooded Land
- **East** –IND: Industrial/ Storm water Pond for the Business and Aviation Park
- **West** – IND: Industrial/ Vacant Wooded Land & Offices

### Proposed Site Plan

The applicant proposes to construct a 10,741sf Oyster Research Facility, including 4 ponds on Lot 11A in the Business & Aviation Park.

Specifics of the plan are as follows:

- Building height – 1 story (21')
- Setbacks:
  - Front = 100'
  - Rear = +30'
  - Sides = +15'
- Lot Area – 217,800sf
- Building Coverage – 10,741 (5%)
- Impervious Coverage – 19,314sf (8%)
- Landscape Area – 198,486 (92%)
- Parking Spaces – 13 spaces

### ANALYSIS

#### Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan designates this area as “Commercial/Mixed Use”. The Land Use Plan states businesses compatible with Gulf Shores’ tourist driven economy such as light manufacturing, research, technology, aviation, and wholesale businesses which are clean, quiet, free of hazardous and objectionable emissions, and have low impacts on the environment shall be located in and adjacent to the city’s Business & Aviation Park. The proposed use complies with the Future Land Use Plan and executes a specific implementation opportunity of recruiting businesses that are compatible with Gulf Shores’ tourist driven economy.

## **Zoning**

### IND Industrial District

This district is intended to provide a suitable protected environment for manufacturing, research and wholesale establishments which are clean, quiet and free of hazardous or objectionable emissions, and generate little industrial traffic. The proposed Oyster Research Facility use is allowed in the IND zoning district.

### Business and Aviation Park Overlay Zone

The Overlay Zone controls the use of the lots within the Business and Aviation Park and provides specific development standards for building architecture, parking, lighting, landscaping, fences and signs. The Oyster Research Facility complies with the Business and Aviation Park Overlay zoning regulations.

## **Plan Review**

The purpose of the Oyster Research Facility is to work with government and non-government entities to expedite oyster restoration efforts, perform oyster research, and supply oyster seed to the farmed oyster industry along the Gulf Coast. The Oyster Research Facility has the capability to produce up to 1 billion diploid oysters annually. The diploid oysters will be sold to customers and be deployed to a natural water environment to continue their growth. The site plan has a building with 4 ponds located on the property. The ponds control water temperature and salinity to provide the best growing environment for the oysters.

The Oyster Research Facility is located at what will become a gateway to the City's airport in the near future. The site plan is designed to minimize the development's visual impact on surrounding properties and roadways.

### Access

**Vehicle.** There is one access driveway provided to the site from Commerce Drive. The drive complies with the Zoning Ordinance regulations.

**Pedestrian.** In accordance with Article 16 of the Zoning Ordinance and the Master Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, the applicant has submitted a cost estimate for the construction of a 6ft wide sidewalk within the Commerce Drive public right-of-way. The cost estimate, in an amount of \$25,215, has been reviewed and approved by the City Engineering Department. The applicant has provided a 5ft sidewalk from the building's entrance to the right-of-way of Commerce Drive. This sidewalk can be connected to a future sidewalk along Commerce Drive.

### Parking

The site plan has a total of 13 parking spaces, and 13 parking spaces are required. As required by the Business and Aviation Park Overlay Regulations the parking is located forward of the building. The design of the parking spaces and drive aisle complies with provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

### Off-street Loading

No loading area is provided, because the applicant indicates the development will not be serviced by trucks.

### Trash Service

Roll-out trash containers are provided for garbage needs. The roll-out containers are located to the rear of the building and will be screened from public view as required by the Zoning Ordinance.

### Landscaping & Buffering

Approximately ½ of the property will be left in its current vegetated state. The developed area of the project is located on the southern portion of the property, and landscaping is provided around the perimeters in accordance with the Landscape Regulations. The Tree Protection Plan indicates six protected pine trees will be preserved, and three protected pine trees will be removed. The credits

allocated for trees being preserved is greater than the number of caliper inches of trees being removed, therefore no tree remediation is required. The landscaping complies with the Zoning Ordinance regulations in terms of location, quantities and sizes of plant materials.

Waiver Request. A minimum 3ft wide landscape area is required along the foundation of buildings for the purpose of separating parking lots from buildings. The applicant seeks a waiver from the foundation landscape requirement for landscaping to be planted between the building and parking lot. Staff does not support the waiver, because there is a minimal amount of area to be landscaped between the building and the parking lot, and there are no unique site conditions that would warrant a waiver to the foundation planting requirement.

The pond area is classified as a storage facility. Article 12-2, *Screening*, of the Zoning Ordinance requires storage facilities to be located outside of the front setback and screened from public view. The ponds are not located within the front 35ft setback and are screened from view by a 2-3ft berm and row of sweet viburnum shrubs. The location of the ponds and screening materials comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

#### Architecture & Building Floor Plan

All four sides of the one-story building will consist of smooth CMU blocks. Windows are provided on the front (east) and south elevations, and vertical split faced CMU blocks provide character to the building. The north and west elevations have several garage doors for service equipment. The architecture complies with the Zoning Regulations. The building has a small office, storage areas, and oyster hatchery tanks, a spawning area and nursery.

#### Lighting

One 18ft tall pole-mounted light fixture is located in the parking lot, and wall-mounted lighting is provided on the walls of the building. The Lighting Plan complies with the Zoning Ordinance regulations and has been reviewed and approved by the manager of Jack Edwards National Airport, Scott Fuller.

#### Signage

As required by the Business and Aviation Park Overlay District regulations, a Master Signage Plan is included as part of the Site Plan submittal. A freestanding monument sign is proposed near the vehicular driveway to the site. The monument sign is 6ft tall with a sign area of 23sf. The Master Sign Plan complies with the sign standards within the Business and Aviation Park.

#### Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal has reviewed and approved the site plan.

#### Engineering Department

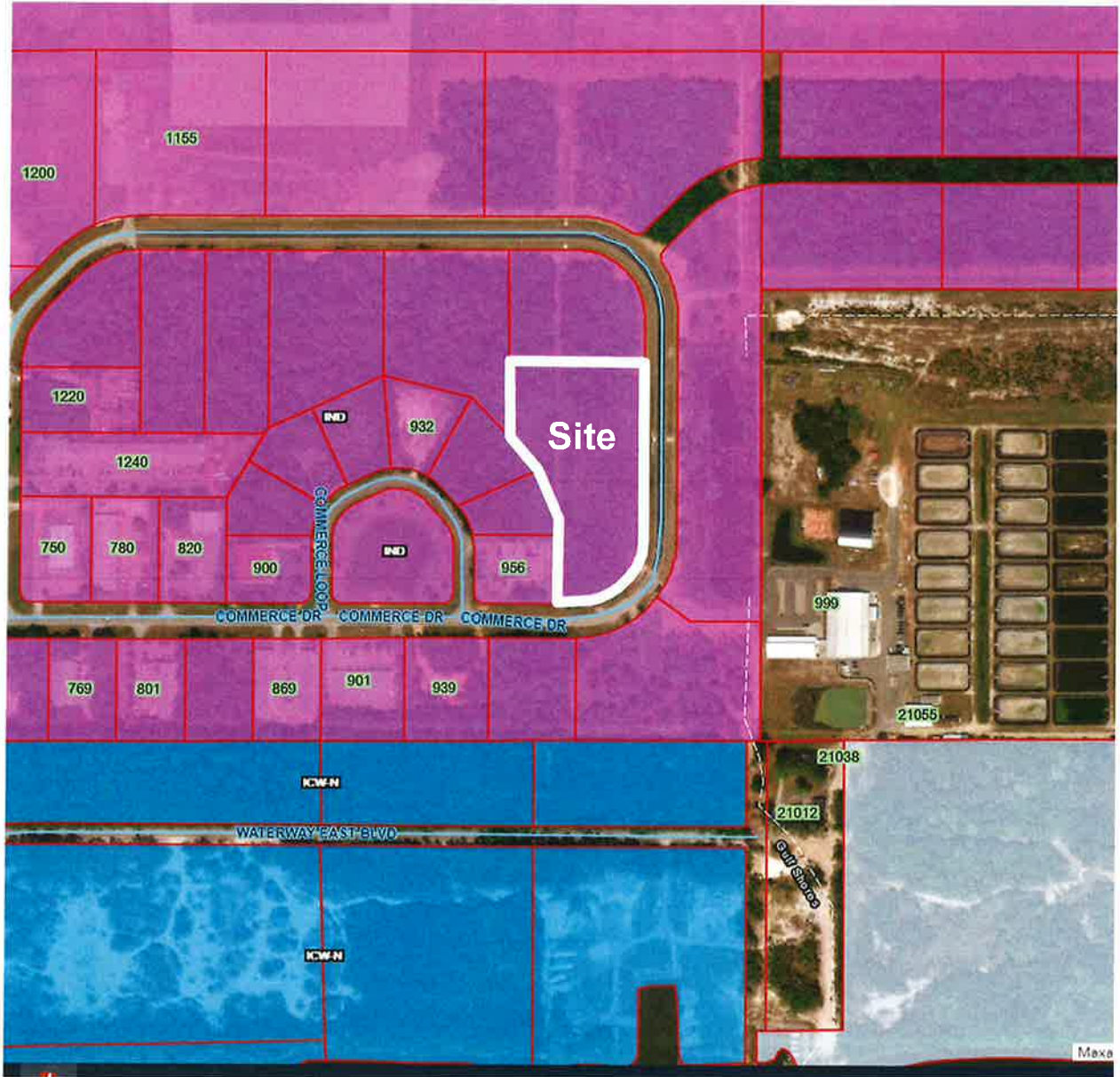
The City Engineering Department has reviewed and approved the site plan.

#### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the site plan with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall pay a \$25,215 fee in lieu of constructing a sidewalk. The fee shall be paid prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
2. The applicant shall submit a revised Site Plan demonstrating compliance with the Foundation Landscaping requirement prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

## Oyster Research Facility – Location Map





**RESOLUTION ZA21-000030**  
**Oyster Research Facility**  
**Site Plan**

Be it resolved by the Gulf Shores Planning Commission while in regular session on June 22, 2021, and by a vote of 7-2, hereby approves subject to the special conditions set out below and based on the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions related to the proposed plan for Oyster Research Facility to be located on Commerce Drive in the Business an Aviation Park:

1. The Plan is consistent in all respects with the Comprehensive Plan and the purpose and intent of the applicable district.
2. The Plan is in conformance with all applicable regulations of the applicable district.
3. The Plan is in conformance in all respects with the City's Subdivision Regulations and all other applicable City requirements including design, adequacy and construction of streets, drainage, utilities and other Essential Services or facilities.
4. The Plan is consistent with good design standards in respect to all internal and external relationships, including but not limited to
  - a. Relationship to Adjacent properties;
  - b. Internal circulation, both vehicular and pedestrian;
  - c. Design of access and egress and impact on Adjacent Thoroughfares;
  - d. Disposition and use of Open Space, provision of Screening and/or Buffering, and preservation of existing natural features including trees, Wetlands, and Dunes;
  - e. Size and apparent Bulk of Structures;
  - f. Building arrangements both between Buildings in the proposed development and those on abutting sites.
5. The Plan is in conformance in all respects with City policy in respect to sufficiency of ownership, guarantees for completion of all required improvements, and, if private, the guarantee for continued maintenance.

**Approval is subject to the following Special Conditions:**

1. The applicant shall pay a \$25,215 fee in lieu of constructing a sidewalk. The fee shall be paid prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
2. The applicant shall submit a revised Site Plan demonstrating compliance with the Foundation Landscaping requirement prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

Be advised that before any construction activities can commence on the property, City permits must be issued prior to any construction or demolition commencing on the site. A building permit must be obtained within one year of the date of this Resolution or the site plan will become null and void.

This resolution shall become effective upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June 2021.

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Robert Steiskal, Jr.  
Chairman, Planning Commission

Attest:

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Mell Davis  
Secretary, Planning Commission