



CITY OF ST. MARYS

418 OSBORNE STREET
ST. MARYS, GEORGIA 31558

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PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT: 912-510-4032

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The Application Process

The P & Z Department processes all applications for rezoning, annexation/de-annexation of property, special permit uses, variances, temporary permits, subdivision plats, soil erosion & sedimentation control permits, and sign permits. Applications are reviewed by the Planning and Zoning staff, and checked for completeness. Legal notices are prepared and transmitted to the Tribune & Georgian newspaper for publication as required by Georgia Law. Public Notice letters are also sent by first class US mail to adjacent property owners that share a common border with the applicant. The application is then scheduled for review and action by the St. Marys Planning Commission. Certain applications must also be reviewed and approved by City Council.

There are fees associated with each type of application. These fees are updated yearly, and the Applicant is encouraged to consult with the Planning and Zoning staff as to the current cost of any procedure.

Types of Applications

Rezoning

The applicant must complete the application, which includes the following information:

- Name of property owner
- Location of the property
- Size of property (footage/acreage)
- Current zoning classifications and/or use and the requested zoning classification and/or use
- Tax Map and Parcel Number of property
- Brief explanation of why request is necessary
- Other requirements are necessary and more information can be obtained from the Planning and Zoning Department
- If the applicant is not the owner of the property, certification authorizing the applicant to apply for the rezoning or special permit use must be signed by the property owner or letter signed and notarized by the owner shall be attached

Fees for rezoning are based on the number of acres and/or land use.

Special Permit Use Requests

All Special Use Permits will be issued only to the applicant/entity requesting the special permit use and only for the specific use presented. No special permit use shall be transferable or assignable, even if the use is unchanged. This translates to, if the owner changes, the special use

permit is voided and must be applied for again. If the use of the property changes, the special use permit is voided and must be applied for again.

An application similar to the Rezoning Application must be submitted and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. An initial fee and an annual fee thereafter will be assessed for this type of request.

Temporary Permits

Temporary permits can be obtained from the Planning Director for the following uses:

- Carnival or circus
- Meetings
- Open lot sale of Christmas trees
- Contractor's office and equipment sheds.
- Other temporary activities as identified by ordinance or approved by Council

Temporary permit are time linked and vary based on the activity.

Variances

A variance may be granted by the Planning Commission for specific instances of hardship as determined by the Planning Commission. Applicant created hardship will not be considered for a variance. The applicant must submit complete application to the Planning and Zoning Department for review by the Planning Commission. There are variance fees based on whether the variance requested for residential use or for all others.

Subdivision Plats

Prior to development of subdivisions, applications shall be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department at the Preliminary and final plats stages. There are other requirements necessary for approval, and the applicant is encouraged to meet with the Planning and Zoning Staff in an informal setting to discuss the project and requirements for approval of same. Preliminary plat applications are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission only. Final plat applications are reviewed by the Planning Commission **and** City Council.

Plat fees are based on acres and/or zoning use. Fee schedule may be obtained from the Planning and Zoning Department.

Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Permits

Before any excavation or land clearing takes place an Erosion & Sedimentation Control Permit shall be obtained through the Planning and Zoning Department for all property. Property less than one acre shall have an application filled out, but there will be no fee for this. For property one acre or larger, a land disturbance permit (with engineering drawings) must be obtained from Satilla River Soil Conservation services as well as the City of St. Marys. There are fees for both of these permits.

However, all property - regardless of size or the presence of a permit - shall adhere to the "Best Management Practices" (BMP) requirements, prior to commencing of any work.

For certain types of land disturbance, a "Letter of Credit" or "Property Bond" may also be required.

Water & Sewer Extensions

All water & sewer extensions shall be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department and the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) for approval. Applications can be obtained from the Planning and Zoning Department.

Annexation Requests

Applications to annex property into the incorporated limits of the City require the same information as a rezoning or special permit use. A partial listing of required items for review would be:

- Census demographic information is required.
- A “meets and bounds” legal description and certified survey.
- All property annexed into the City shall include a designated land use.
- Procedures for rezoning shall be followed, as with any other rezoning request.

There are several methods of annexation. The methods are 1) 60 % Method, 2) 100% method and, 3) Annexation of Unincorporated Islands. All annexations are covered by applicable Georgia Law. Please consult with the Planning Department as to these requirements.

There is no fee for annexation.

De-annexation Request

No property can be de-annexed from the incorporated limits of the City into the unincorporated limits of the county until a Resolution of De-annexation has been approved by the City and County and accepted by the U.S. Justice Department.

Appeal Requests

Appeals of Planning Commission decisions shall be made to the City Council. Written notice of appeal shall be filed with the Planning and Zoning Department within 15 days of the decision of the Planning Commission. The City Council decision is final.

Review of Applications

Applications for preliminary plats, final plats, rezoning, variances and special permit, uses are reviewed by the Planning Commission. Rezoning, special permit uses and final plats are forwarded to the City Council for final action. Variances are reviewed and action taken by the Planning Commission only. Applications for all requests to appear before the Planning Commission are due 32 days in advance of the meeting, as per applicable Georgia Law.

Meetings

Unless Special Called Meetings are held, the meeting dates and time of all appropriate Commissions/Council are as follows:

St. Marys Planning Commission

4th Tuesday of each month

5:30 P.M.

St. Marys City Hall Council Chambers, 418 Osborne Street

St. Marys Mayor & City Council

2nd & 4th Monday of each month

6:00 P.M.

St. Marys City Hall Council Chambers, 418 Osborne Street

In conjunction with the Building Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department, Finance Department and Police Department, the Planning and Zoning Director reviews all plans submitted to the

Building Department for new construction and/or renovations. Plans are reviewed for zoning compliance, parking requirements, setback requirements, fire code requirements, building code requirements, public safety requirements, etc. These departments meet at 8:30 AM Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. To be placed on the agenda for these staff meetings, please contact the Planning and Building Assistant prior to Noon of the day before the meeting.

Historic Preservation

Any changes to the exterior of a structure and /or property must be approved by the St. Marys Historic Preservation Commission, if said property/structure is located within the Historic District. This includes new construction, existing structures, fences, awning, awnings, demolition, relocation, parking area, parks & monuments and signs, as well as other items noted in the ordinance.

Certificate of Appropriateness Applications must be submitted to the Planning Department 15 days prior to the 3rd Tuesday of each month, for review by the SMHPC.

The SMHPC meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 5:30 P.M., in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Occupation Tax Certificate

An application to conduct business within the City of St. Marys shall be approved and certificate issued, prior to any business operation. Fees are as per a schedule that is updated yearly and are based on a base administration fee plus the number of employees:

For retail and commercial uses, the tax is based on full-time employees working a minimum of 40 hours per week. Part-time employees who work less than 40 hours per week are to have the total number of hours worked each week added together and divided by 40 to establish the equivalent number of full-time employees.

Practitioners of professions and occupations as defined in O.C.G.A. § 48-13-9©(1)-(18) shall pay the occupation tax set above or shall pay an occupation tax of per practitioner. Practitioners are defined as follows:

- Lawyers
- Physicians licensed under O.C.G.A. §43-34-1 et seq.;
- Osteopaths licensed under O.C.G.A. §43-34-1 et seq.;
- Chiropractors;
- Podiatrists;
- Dentists;
- Optometrists;
- Psychologists;
- Veterinarians;
- Landscape architects
- Land surveyors;
- Practitioners of physiotherapy;
- Public accountants;
- Embalmers;
- Funeral directors;
- Civil, mechanical, hydraulic, or electrical engineers;
- Architect;
- Marriage and family therapists, social workers, and professional counselors;
- Dealers of motor vehicles, as defined in O.C.G.A. § 10-1-622(1);

Any other business, profession, or occupation for which state licensure or registration is required by State law, unless the State law regulating such business, profession or occupation specifically allows for regulation by local governments.

In conjunction with the Building Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department, Finance Department and Police Department, the Planning and Zoning Director reviews all applications for Occupation Tax Certificates. Applications are reviewed for zoning compliance, building code compliance, fire code compliance, etc. These departments meet at 8:30 AM Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. To be placed on the agenda for these staff meetings, please contact the Planning and Building Assistant prior to Noon of the day before the meeting.

Summary - Planning Department Functions

On a daily basis, assistance is given to developers, realtors, and private citizens who require help with requests for zoning district information, historic district information, occupation tax information, standards for new development, location of property, street/road locations, addresses, requests for copies of ordinances, etc. For further information you may contact the Planning & Zoning Department at 912-510-4039.

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