CASE SUMMARY

APPLICATION TYPE: SPECIAL USE

Planning
KNOXVILLE | KNOX COUNTY

File Number: 7-I-26-SU **Related File Number:**

Application Filed: 5/28/2026 **Date of Revision:**

Applicant: JONATHAN'S GRILLE

PROPERTY INFORMATION

General Location: Southwest side of Willow Ave, east of Hall of Fame Dr

Other Parcel Info.:

Tax ID Number: 95 H B 00801 **Jurisdiction:** City

Size of Tract: 0.55 acres

Accessibility: Access is via Willow Ave, a local street with a pavement width of 30 ft within a 50-ft right-of-way.

GENERAL LAND USE INFORMATION

Existing Land Use: Agriculture/Forestry/Vacant Land

Surrounding Land Use:

Proposed Use: Major modification to a final plan to reduce the approved building's height **Density:**

Planning Sector: Central City **Plan Designation:** MU-SD / MU-CC3 (Mixed Use-Special District, SOMAG), HP

Growth Policy Plan: N/A (Within City Limits)

Neighborhood Context: This area is adjacent to the Old City Neighborhood in downtown Knoxville, which consists of event spaces, commercial storefronts, personal service establishments, restaurants, and residential buildings. The subject site is on the east side of the James White Parkway overpass and across Willow Avenue from the new Covenant Health Park multi-use stadium. The area to the southeast is characterized by multifamily apartment complexes, commercial offices, and Green Magnet Academy.

ADDRESS/RIGHT-OF-WAY INFORMATION (where applicable)

Street: 406 WILLOW AVE

Location:

Proposed Street Name:

Department-Utility Report:

Reason:

ZONING INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Zoning: I-MU (Industrial Mixed-Use), HP (Hillside Protection Overlay), PD (Planned Development)

Former Zoning:

Requested Zoning:

Previous Requests:

Extension of Zone:

History of Zoning: A rezoning request from I-2 (Restricted Manufacturing and Warehousing) to I-3 (General Industrial) was denied in 1980 (10-N-80-RZ) but passed in 1984 (3-G-84-RZ). The property was designated I-MU with the adoption of the current zoning ordinance, then approved for a PD (planned development) as

part of the Covenant Health Park application.

PLAN INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Plan Category: MU-SD / MU-CC3 (Mixed Use-Special District, SOMAG), HP (Hillside Ridgetop Protection)

Requested Plan Category:

SUBDIVISION INFORMATION (where applicable)

Subdivision Name:

No. of Lots Proposed: **No. of Lots Approved:** 0

Variances Requested:

S/D Name Change:

OTHER INFORMATION (where applicable)

Other Bus./Ord. Amend.:

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Planner In Charge: Mike Reynolds

Staff Recomm. (Abbr.): Approve the major modification to the final plan to reduce the building's height from 60'-6" to 33'-9", as it is in substantial compliance with the approved final plan (12-A-25-PD), subject to 6 conditions.

Staff Recomm. (Full):

1. Modifications to the final plan must be approved in accordance with Article 16.7.F (Modifications to Approved Final Plans).
2. The development shall be compliant with the City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance unless an exception has been approved through the planned development process outlined in Article 16.7.
3. Meeting all applicable requirements of the City of Knoxville Engineering Department.
4. Installation of all sidewalks and walkways as identified on the site plan.
5. The landscaping, lighting, and signage must comply with the City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance.
6. To the extent there is a conflict or ambiguity between the terms of any of the Project Documents, and notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the foregoing documents, the order of priority listed below will be used for purposes of resolving the conflict or ambiguity:
(1) The Approved Final Plan;
(2) The Approved Preliminary Plan, Planning File No. 9-A-21-PD (see Exhibit B for a summary); and
(3) The City of Knoxville Zoning Code.

Comments:

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT
A 2-story restaurant with approximately 11,200 sq ft of floor area and additional outdoor patio and balcony seating area.

BACKGROUND
Jonathan's restaurant received final plan approval for a 20,000 sq ft, 3-story (60'-6") structure located on the southwest side of Willow Avenue, across from the Covenant Health Stadium (12-A-25-PD). This property is within the boundary of the approved preliminary plan for the mixed-use stadium planned development (9-A-21-PD), and the project utilized three of the zoning exceptions to the I-MU (Industrial Mixed Use) zoning standards: 1) increased building height, 2) reduced rear setback, and 3) reduced parking requirement.

EFFECT OF APPROVAL (Article 16.7.E.4.c)
After final plan approval, the final plan constitutes the development regulations applicable to the subject property and must be developed in accordance with the final plan, rather than the zoning district regulations otherwise applicable to the property.

MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED FINAL PLANS (ARTICLE 16.7.F)
The planned development process allows the Planning Commission to approve a limited number of "minor modifications". All other modifications are considered "major modifications" and must be approved by the City Council.

REQUEST
This request concerns a change in building height from 60'-6" to 33'-9". A minor modification is considered an increase or decrease in building height of up to 10 percent. This request reduces the building height by 44.2 percent, which is considered a major modification.

APPROVAL CRITERIA (ARTICLE 16.7.F.2.b)

The City Council may only approve changes to the final plan if they find such changes are in general conformance with the approved final plan, necessary for the continued successful functioning of the planned development, respond to changes in conditions that have occurred since the final plan was approved, and/or respond to changes in adopted City land use policies.

STAFF ANALYSIS: With the exception of the building's height, development remains relatively unchanged and in substantial compliance with the approved final plan. The project retains its pedestrian-oriented design by orienting the building towards the street, with patios and balconies wrapping around it, following the street's curve, and providing multiple pedestrian connections to the public sidewalk. This proposal will activate this corner of the mixed-use stadium development, especially during the warmer months, when the outdoor spaces are more heavily used.

STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING A SPECIAL USE (ARTICLE 16.2.F.2.)
1) THE USE IS CONSISTENT WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES, INCLUDING THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE ONE-YEAR PLAN.
A. The One Year Plan and Sector Plan designations for this site are MU-SD (Mixed Use Special District), MU-CC3 (SOMAG Mixed Use District), which recommends including office, wholesale and retail commercial, warehousing, and light manufacturing, and residential development. The concept is to allow mixed-use building forms that are more urban-oriented (for example, multiple stories with small or no front yard setbacks) and designed to enhance the pedestrian experience.
B. The proposed 2-story restaurant is consistent with the MU-SD, MU-CC3 land use designation.

2) THE USE IS IN HARMONY WITH THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS ZONING CODE.
A. The proposed development is consistent with the I-MU zoning standards and zoning exceptions approved with the mixed-use stadium development preliminary plan.

3) THE USE IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE IT IS PROPOSED, AND WITH THE SIZE AND LOCATION OF BUILDINGS IN THE VICINITY.
A. The 2-story restaurant is compatible with the multi-story, mixed-use building and stadium on the opposite side of Willow Avenue.

4) THE USE WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INJURE THE VALUE OF ADJACENT PROPERTY OR BY NOISE, LIGHTS, FUMES, ODORS, VIBRATION, TRAFFIC, CONGESTION, OR OTHER IMPACTS DETRACT FROM THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT.
A. The proposed restaurant is similar in nature to the surrounding uses and will not significantly injure the value of the adjacent property or detract from the immediate environment.

5) THE USE IS NOT OF A NATURE OR SO LOCATED AS TO DRAW SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC THROUGH RESIDENTIAL STREETS.
A. The site is located in a commercial and mixed-use area, and will not draw additional traffic through residential streets.

6) THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SURROUNDING AREA IS NOT SUCH AS TO POSE A POTENTIAL HAZARD TO THE PROPOSED USE OR TO CREATE AN UNDESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROPOSED USE.
A. There are no known uses immediately surrounding the subject site that pose a potential hazard or undesirable environment for the proposed use.

Action: Approved with Conditions **Meeting Date:** 7/9/2026

Details of Action:

Summary of Action: Approve the major modification to the final plan to reduce the building's height from 60'-6" to 33'-9", as it is in substantial compliance with the approved final plan (12-A-25-PD), subject to 6 conditions.

Date of Approval: 7/9/2026 **Date of Denial:** **Postponements:**

Date of Withdrawal: **Withdrawn prior to publication?:** ☐ **Action Appealed?:**

LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Legislative Body: Knoxville City Council

Date of Legislative Action: 8/18/2026 **Date of Legislative Action, Second Reading:**

Ordinance Number: **Other Ordinance Number References:**

Disposition of Case: Approved (One Reading Only) **Disposition of Case, Second Reading:**

If "Other": **If "Other":**

Amendments:

Date of Legislative Appeal:

Amendments:

Effective Date of Ordinance: