



**CITY OF MARIANNA**  
**MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
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# Memo

**To:** Planning & Zoning Board  
**From:** Kay Dennis, Director  
**Date:** 06/27/2022  
**Re** Variance Request for Thomas Pines Apartment Complex

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**Summary:** The applicant is requesting a variance from *Marianna City Code, Land Development Code, Sections 4-1.7(3)(d)(ix)* and *4-6.8 (2)*, which addresses parking spaces for a 35-unit apartment complex and accessory structures.

**Nature of Variance Requests:** *Marianna City Code, Land Development Code, Sections 4-1.7(3)(d)(ix)* requires “two spaces per dwelling unit for the first 30 units and 1 ½ spaces for each dwelling unit exceeding 30 units.” *Marianna City Code, Land Development Code, Sections 4-6.8 (2)* requires two spaces per unit plus one per ten units. This does not include office, visitor or community-room parking.

**History:** The applicant is requesting a variance from half the parking requirements for one-bedroom apartment units and all the club house parking for a total of 67 parking spaces.

The City of Marianna Land Development Code provides minimum parking requirements for the City. The most lenient determination would require 74 parking spaces (67 for residential units, 4 for the club house (1050 square feet) and 3 for the office area excluding the laundry room (843 square feet). This is only an additional seven spaces.

The proposed apartment complex is located on SR73 South, which is an Urban Collector with high traffic volumes, higher speed limits, and no on-street parking or sidewalks. The annual average daily traffic (AADT) two-way volume is 6,200 vehicles with 3100 vehicles traveling in each direction in the area where the apartment complex is proposed (<https://tdaappsprod.dot.state.fl.us/fto/>). AADT is the total volume on a road for a year divided by 365 days. Public transportation in Marianna is less common, and less available than in larger cities. The majority of residential households in this rural community have at least one car. Even one bedroom apartments can have a couple, who share a bed and own two cars. Many have several cars. This is not accounting for visitors to residential units or the office. In addition, staff will need parking. The developers previously mentioned that training classes will be held on-site. The people conducting the training will also need parking.

Consultant Engineer, Doug Crook, PE with Panhandle Engineering also noted potential issues with the requested variance (see attached document). Mr. Crook in response to the applicant's engineer points out that parking enforcement could be a problem. In fact, City staff has not received a plan to enforce prevention of single-units from having "one or no vehicles for transportation." Additionally, the City of Marianna does not enforce how many vehicles a resident can maintain at their home. Mr. Crook recommends 77 spaces be provided to allow for office and visitor parking

**Determination:**

*Marianna City Code, Land Development Code, Sec. 2-6.6* states "[t]he planning board shall first determine whether the need for the proposed variance arises out of the physical surroundings, shape, topographical condition, or other physical or environmental conditions that are unique to the specific properties involved. If so, the planning board shall make the following required findings based on the granting of the variance for that site alone. If, however, the condition is common to numerous sites so that requests for similar variances are likely to be received, the planning board shall make the required findings based on the cumulative effect of granting the variance to all who may apply. The Planning Board shall not vary the requirements of any provision of this code unless it makes a positive finding, based on substantial competent evidence, on each of the following:

- a. [t]here are extreme practical or economic difficulties in carrying out the strict letter of this code;

- b. [c]onditions for which the variance is being applied are unique or unusual to the site or structure in questions;
- c. [t]he variance request is not based exclusively upon a desire to reduce the cost of developing the site;
- d. [t]he proposed variance will not substantially increase congestion on surrounding public streets, the danger of fire, or other hazard to the public;
- e. [t]he proposed variance will not substantially diminish property values in, nor alter the essential character of, the area surrounding the site;
- f. [t]he proposed variance will not decrease the level of service standards as established in the comprehensive plan; and
- g. [t]he effect of the proposed variance is in harmony with the general intent of the code and the specific intent of the relevant subject area(s) therein.”

Planning staff has reviewed the request and determined the request does not arise out of unique conditions related to the physical surroundings and practical difficulties in placement of the parking. In fact, the City’s consultant engineer noted ample area for 77 parking spaces, which is more than staff is requesting. In addition, other apartment complexes have met the minimum parking standards. Granting the variance will lead to additional variance requests from this requirement.

The request appears to be based exclusively on the desire to reduce costs since the site is large enough to accommodate the parking. Yet, the additional parking area will only amount to 1,400 square feet.

Without adequate parking, the variance request is likely to cause traffic congestion from visitors and residents parking along the SR73 South right-of-way. It is also likely to increase pedestrian traffic in an area that FDOT has not provided sidewalks after numerous requests. The proposed request could result in public safety concerns.

While the proposed request is unlikely to diminish property values, it will very likely reduce the level of service requirements on SR73 South, which are approved by the State of Florida for the City of Marianna Comprehensive Plan.

Finally, staff does not agree that the variance is in harmony with the general intent of the City’s Code of Ordinance and

Comprehensive Plan. While only 74 parking spaces are required, planning staff notes issues with visitors for the office and residences having a place to park.

**Proposed Recommendation:**

Recommend denial of the variance request due to potential diminished levels of service on SR73 South, congestion, lack of visitor parking, lack of parking enforcement, and public safety concerns.