



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:

Jessie Hillman

Staff Recomm. (Abbr.):

Approve the H (Historic Overlay) zoning district because the significance of the site is consistent with the intent of the district. The DK-B (Downtown Knoxville Boulevards Subdistrict) zone would be retained.

Staff Recomm. (Full):

Comments:

PURSUANT TO THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 16.1.E, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MUST BE MET FOR ALL REZONINGS:

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL BE NECESSARY BECAUSE OF SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED OR CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE AREA AND DISTRICTS AFFECTED, OR IN THE CITY/COUNTY GENERALLY:

1. The Sunsphere was constructed in 1982 for the World's Fair, where 11 million people were welcomed to Knoxville to celebrate the theme, "Energy Turns the World." The golden glass orb was designed to represent the energy of the sun, and it served as a key symbol of the Fair.
2. This request for the H (Historic Overlay) zoning district for the Sunsphere building complements recent renovations and ongoing improvements to maintain the status of this iconic Knoxville structure. In 2007, the Sunsphere observation deck was refurbished with new lights, HVAC and fire safety improvements to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the World's Fair. In 2023, the Sunsphere was painted back to its original PANTONE® color Classic Blue 19-4052 TCX by CertaPro Painters in partnership with the City. In March of this year, construction began on the third floor of the Sunsphere to develop a Welcome Center, which will provide walk-up ticketing as well as expanded retail, brochures and information in an enclosed space with windows overlooking World's Fair Park.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE APPLICABLE ZONING ORDINANCE:

1. The purpose of the H overlay zoning district is to preserve and protect historic structures and areas which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the City of Knoxville, the state of Tennessee and the United States.
2. At their April 16, 2024 meeting, the Historic Zoning Commission (HZA) voted to recommend Planning Commission approval of the H overlay district, per staff recommendation (see Exhibit B). The basis for approval stemmed from the Sunsphere's landmark status as a marker of local history and its high artistic values. The building was determined to be consistent with historic integrity criteria by the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) due to its established location in the center of World's Fair Park among other structures retained since the event, and its intact design with original materials.
3. The only condition for HZA approval was that a more thorough statement of significance for the Sunsphere be prepared by the applicant, property owner and/or Planning staff and submitted for review by the HZA. This could assist in the preparation of a future nomination to the NRHP.
4. This request is to apply the H overlay zoning district, and it does not propose to rezone the base zone.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT ANY OTHER PART OF THE CITY, NOR SHALL ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT ADVERSE EFFECTS RESULT FROM SUCH AMENDMENT.

1. The zoning overlay should not have any adverse impact on the City, as its function is to preserve and protect this regionally significant structure for future generations.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL BE CONSISTENT WITH AND NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE GENERAL PLAN OF KNOXVILLE AND KNOX COUNTY, INCLUDING ANY OF ITS ELEMENTS, MAJOR ROAD PLAN, LAND USE PLAN, COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN, AND OTHERS:

1. The proposed H overlay zoning district is consistent with the General Plan's development policy 6.5 to protect and enhance monumental buildings, public open spaces, bridges and similar physical features that contribute to Knoxville's identity.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, SCHOOLS, PARKS, POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION, ROADS, SANITARY SEWERS, AND WATER LINES, OR ARE REASONABLY CAPABLE OF BEING PROVIDED PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IF THE AMENDMENT WERE ADOPTED:

1. The H overlay zoning district does not point to an increase in demand for public facilities, but the Sunsphere is located in City's downtown district where there is ample infrastructure capacity.

**Action:** Approved **Meeting Date:** 5/9/2024

**Details of Action:**

**Summary of Action:** Approve the H (Historic Overlay) zoning district because the significance of the site is consistent with the intent of the district. The DK-B (Downtown Knoxville Boulevards Subdistrict) zone would be retained.

**Date of Approval:** 5/9/2024 **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:** 6/11/2024

**Date of Legislative Action, Second Reading:** 6/25/2024

**Ordinance Number:**

**Other Ordinance Number References:**

**Disposition of Case:**

**Disposition of Case, Second Reading:**

**If "Other":**

**If "Other":**

**Amendments:**

**Amendments:**

**Date of Legislative Appeal:**

**Effective Date of Ordinance:**