

MINUTES
GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
LOWNDES COUNTY SOUTH HEALTH DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
April 25, 2016
5:30 P.M.

Members Present:

Johnny Ball, III
Brad Folsom
Gerald McClendon
Jody Hall
Franklin Bailey, Chairman
Celine Gladwin
Ted Raker
W. Keith Sandlin

Members Absent:

Chip Wildes
Tommy Willis
~Dasher representative~

Staff:

Jason Davenport, County Planner
Matt Martin, City's Planning & Zoning
Carmella Braswell, Recording Secre.

VISITORS PRESENT:

(See Attached Sign-In Sheet)

AGENDA ITEM #1:

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Bailey called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Chairman Bailey welcomed everyone to the GLPC meeting, and thanked staff for their efforts for arranging the special called meeting. Chairman Bailey explained that the Planning Commission serves as an advisory body to the local member governments regarding land use requests. Chairman Bailey explained that the Planning Commission is a recommending body only, and the final determination of the requests presented will be made by the applicable local governments. Chairman Bailey explained the meeting procedures and stated that handouts were available for review by the public for the conducting of the public hearing, to include the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Powers that will be used as part of their determination for the cases on the agenda. Chairman Bailey announced the date of the public hearing for the member governments as listed on the agenda.

Chairman Bailey asked Commissioner McClendon to lead the Pledge of Allegiance followed by an Invocation.

AGENDA ITEM #2:

Approval of the Meeting Minutes: March 28, 2016

Chairman Bailey called for questions, corrections, and approval of the March 28, 2016, GLPC meeting minutes.

There being none, Commissioner Hall made a motion that the minutes be approved. Commissioner Folsom seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried unanimously. (Vote 7-0)

LOWNDES COUNTY CASES:

Agenda Item #3

REZ-2016-10, Freedom Heights, Bemiss/Ashurst/Dinky Run/Studstill Roads

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated the subject property is located off Bemiss Road, Ashurst Road, Dinky Run Road, and Studstill Road. The rezoning request is a change from C-H (Highway Commercial) to P-D (Planned Development) zoning for a multi-family development consisting of 96 units. The Technical Review Committee (TRC) recommended approval and there has been an update to the site plan that depicts a change in the layout, and addresses the concerns that were brought forward at the last work session.

Chairman Bailey asked if there were any questions to staff from the Planning Commission.

Chairman Bailey asked if there had been any thoughts and concerns from staff concerning the potential of traffic congestion given the proposed apartment complex further down the road and commercial center located across the street.

Mr. Davenport stated at this point, the County Engineer did not identify any improvements or had any concerns; GDOT will certify any proposed ingress/egress points. The County Engineer may request a deceleration lane. Because of the flow of traffic to and from Bemiss Road, GDOT will review any improvements to the right-of-way prior to the county's approval. There is an existing curb cut off of Dinky Run Road for cross access, and along Ashurst Road as well. There has been no indication of any new curb cuts.

There being no further questions to staff, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone was present wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Steve Brooks, 6048 Johnson Road SW, Hahira, Georgia, stated he works with Integrity Development Partners and is the representative of the multi-family development. The development will be a mixed income community. He is present to answer any questions. While there is no true multi-family development along Bemiss Road that is in close proximity to the Moody AFB, housing of this type is desperately needed.

Commissioner Hall asked if the development was planning to leave the existing tree buffer intact; he had appreciated the revised site plan for protecting the neighborhood.

Mr. Brooks stated there are some nice specimen trees that will be preserved. The revised site depicts space away from Bemiss Road as much as possible in order to reduce the noise. Development is a process. Some of the existing trees are as tall as the proposed 3-story buildings. Regarding the exterior façade, 40% or more will consist of brick and stone with cement siding – similar in style to the multi-family development behind the Five Points shopping center. They are proposing a “green building program” development which will involve the community.

There being no further questions for the speaker, Chairman Bailey asked staff if he had received any phone calls concerning the rezoning request.

Mr. Davenport stated he had received 2 internal comments, but no phone calls from the neighborhood.

Commissioner Gladwin stated she also appreciated the applicant's responsiveness to their concerns.

There being no further questions, Chairman Bailey made one last call for those in favor of the request. There being none, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone was present wishing to speak in opposition to the request.

There being none, the public participation was closed and Chairman Bailey entertained discussion among the Planning Commission.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Folsom made a motion to follow staff's recommendation as presented. Commissioner Ball seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called for questions and discussion concerning the motion. There being none, the motion was called. (Vote 7-0)

Agenda Item #4

REZ-2016-11, Creekside West, Georgia Highway 122 East

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated this case is a partnership with the county to update the Creekside West master plan Planned Development that was proposed in 2006. Staff has received 2-3 phone calls from public concerning this request. Essentially, the masterplan will be updated for the subdivision to reduce the overall number of dwelling units from 300 to 242. The development will continually consist of all single-family units. The master plan update will reduce the recreation and green space area from its original depiction and remove the seven (7) conditions that were tied to the original rezoning request. Staff had received concerns from 2 adjoining property owners concerning drainage issues and buffering.

Chairman Bailey asked if there were any questions to staff from the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hall stated some of the lots along the wetlands area appear to be landlocked. The potential property owners will not have access to their own property that they will be taxed. There appears to be only an easement to the pond.

Mr. Davenport stated the developer plans to provide an easement to the rear of Mallard Lake located on the western side of the development. Their plans are to provide an easement between lots 314 and 315, although not shown on the original site plan.

Commissioner Gladwin asked for clarification regarding the access route to the required green space area and asked if the preservation area a private area.

Mr. Davenport stated yes.

Commissioner Gladwin asked how much green space area is required for a planned development.

Mr. Davenport stated there were no green space area requirements prior to the ULDC adoption. This development was proposed under the previous ordinance. Under the ULDC current standards, a minimum of 10% is required for open space and an addition minimum of 5% requirement for recreation, civic or public use. At this time, staff cannot require the current standards due to the development's previous existence. Staff have been working with the developer to negotiate the current green space requirements. The developer is proposing 25% of open space.

There being no further questions to staff, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone was present wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Young Tillman, 7326 Windchase Drive, Hahira, Georgia, stated his name and thanked the GLPC for their public service. Mr. Tillman stated when they started the project, the site plan for phase 1 was actually an engineering plan to include a soil plan and not a conceptual plan – there is a difference and this was a mistake and assumption on their part. However, staff has been helpful and gracious with updating the masterplan and they would like some type of solidification of the masterplan. One of the biggest change from the original plan was the requirement, construction, and feasibility of a personal wastewater system with a large drainfield/spray field with a drip irrigation system; however, Mike Allen, the County's previous Utility Director mentioned an alternative option – the construction of an E1 system. An E1 system is a simple system that was designed by Westinghouse in the 70s. The system is a small pump system located outside of everyone's house. It is very effective and ecological. Neither storm water nor groundwater flows into the sewage system. To accommodate an E1 system, they, along with some other developers, built a force main along Union Road from Creekside West through Franks Creek Landing under I-75 to Union Road to a drop basin near Valwood School. The construction made the project financially viable. Regarding the master plan, they relocated the playground area where it could be visible and accessible – this change was supported by the County staff. The maintenance of the lake is addressed through the Declaration of Covenants and charges this responsibility to the individual property owners. The lake is purposed for detention and privacy. Other changes from the original master plan is the reduction of lots from 300 to 232 platted lots. Currently, there are 109 developed lots which equates to 47% buildout.

Chairman Bailey asked if there were any questions to the presenter.

Commissioner Gladwin stated the plan of 2006 and the latest master plan are very similar.

Mr. Davenport stated staff did not see the latest engineering plan that was submitted to the County Engineer for approval. Staff saw some minor revisions with the developer's first and second changes; however, when the 3rd future tract plan was brought to staff's attention, we worked with the developer to get the final revised plan updated without any uninterrupted development. Essentially, there was an officially approved and enforceable rezoning master plan – the governing master plan - that staff was operating from, and a different engineering approved plan that the developer was operating from.

Commissioner Folsom stated in his legal experience and his experience at Stone Creek, he is concerned about the proposed pond areas being owned by the entire homeowner's association in lieu of the west side and east side pond areas being owned by 8-10 property owner home association. Collectively and practically, it seems better that the entire homeowner's association address the potential problems.

Mr. Tillman stated the property owners are given a copy of the supplemental covenants.

There being no further questions to the speaker, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone was present wishing to speak in opposition to the request.

Mr. Larry Webb, 8733 Old Valdosta Road, Hahira, Georgia, stated there has been more water runoff and flooding of Old Valdosta Road in 2 places as a result of the development, which has made his property less desirable. The more the property is developed, the worse the water runoff becomes. Will there be a security fence would be constructed to separate the development from his property, or could there be a berm constructed on the back side similar to the berm on the front to at least slow the water down somewhat. They have had problems with homeowners trespassing onto his property.

Chairman Bailey stated it would be the responsibility of the homeowner to construct a fence.

Commissioner asked if the County had any buffering requirements for E-A zoned properties that abut to P-D zoned properties.

Mr. Davenport stated unlike the requirement for a multi-family development, since this is a single-family project, there is no buffering or fencing requirement.

There being no further questions to the speaker, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone else was present wishing to speak in opposition to the request.

Mr. John Chitwood, 7546 Old Valdosta Road, Hahira, Georgia, stated since the original plans, there were a number of things the developer said he would do but has not, specifically, the sewer system. They also said they wanted to make this area like Stonecreek and make it secure – with one entrance. They said they were going to build a fence around the area with an 8' berm and hedge. Additionally, there is a problem with water runoff and flooding since this development. The holding pond stays full all the time. Old Valdosta Road runs off of Georgia Highway 122 and often floods. On the Morven Road side, it also floods.

Mr. Davenport stated the minutes of the meeting from the Board of Commissioners did not require a fence or berm – only a 25' vegetative buffer on that edge.

Chairman Bailey stated staff will certainly take the water issues that were brought forth to the County Engineer.

Chairman Bailey closed the public participation portion of the request and entertained further discussion from the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Raker stated he would like to see the engineer report available for citizens to see prior to the Board of Commissioner's meeting.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff with 2 conditions 1) west boundaries of lots numbered #307, #309, #310, #311, #312 and #313 be revised to read "to have an easement along the western boundary or to the edge of the lake as shown"; 2) the easement on east boundaries of the lake for lots #412 through #420 be revised to read "the boundaries of the preservation areas as shown to have an easement" – that is the green line. Commissioner Hall added a 3rd condition to

require a 25' easement on the eastern boundary that are adjacent to Franks Creek. Commissioner Folsom seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called for questions and discussion concerning the motion.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried. (Vote 5-2)

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Davenport stated that he will be sending a follow-up email concerning the timeline for the Coventry Subdivision rezoning case that was tabled from the Planning Commission's last meeting.

Mr. Martin reminded the Planning Commission of their next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 31st due to the holiday, and a brief update of 5 expected cases.

There being no further business, Chairman Bailey adjourned the meeting. (6:34 p.m.)

Franklin S. Bailey, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date