

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

Members Present:

Franklin Bailey, Chairman
Brad Folsom
Gerald McClendon
Jody Hall
Ted Raker
Tommy Willis
Celine Gladwin
Chip Wildes

Members Absent:

Johnny Ball, III
W. Keith Sandlin
~Dasher representative~

Staff

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

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 5:30 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 Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM #2:

Approval of the Meeting Minutes: June 27, 2016

Chairman Bailey called for questions, corrections, and approval of the June 27, 2016, GLPC meeting minutes.

Commissioner Gladwin stated clarification is needed on page 5 under the title "Other Business" – the first sentence beginning with "Mr. Martin stated" - there appears to be an uncomplete sentence.

Mrs. Braswell stated she will correct the mis-clarification as she believes this sentence is referring to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

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

Commissioner Folsom made a motion that the minutes be approved with the necessary corrections. Commissioner Willis seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried unanimously. (Vote 7-0)

LOWNDES COUNTY CASES:

AGENDA ITEM #3:

REZ-2016-13

Evelyn Lund – 4701 Knights Ferry Road, Valdosta, Georgia

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated this request was a bit unique and will be considered by the Board of Commissioners tomorrow night. Staff has received an updated site plan for Knights Ferry Road's request for an event facility. The event center will host meetings and gatherings. The approved 2014 approved master site plan has exceeded its square foot boundaries. The updated masterplan meets the standards and makes accommodations for future developments. There were 2 changes on the site plan – the eastern side of the subject property's development plan depicts a future 5' wide wooden deck that attaches the house to the gravel parking, and a 5' walk. The site plan also depicts a change in various square footages as an update. To staff's knowledge, there are no other changes according to applicant and their architect. Staff is recommending approval with no conditions based on the updated site plan.

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

Chairman Bailey asked if the proposed 5' wooden deck and walkway a requirement.

Mr. Davenport stated staff wanted to ensure that pedestrians and persons with special needs are able to get to the hard surface parking lot and spaces – the proposals make for good pedestrian access whereby the previous site plan did not.

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

Mr. Jimmy Cone, architect, stated his office is located at 1806 Plum Street. He is present with the property owner to answer any questions.

There being no questions, Chairman Bailey thanked the speaker and asked if anyone else was present wishing to speak 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, Chairman Bailey closed the public participation portion of the request and entertained further questions and discussion from the Planning Commission.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Willis made a motion to recommend following staff's recommendation of approval. Commissioner Wildes seconded the motion.

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

AGENDA ITEM #4:

TWR-2016-01

Baker Donelson – 4278 Lakeland Highway, Valdosta, Georgia

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated the applicant is requesting the ability to construct a new telecommunications tower. The current proposal is for the construction of a maximum 100' tower – 95' tower with a 5' antennae structure. Staff has been in discussion about the proposed tower with the applicant since April. The initial tower height was proposed at 160'; however, was backed down to 100' after discussions and negotiations with Moody Air Force Base (MAFB). In response to some of the questions that were raised at the GLPC's work session, staff prepared a few slides to depict MAFB's runway to the east of the subject property and the range runway being located to the west. The proposed tower site almost splits the runway areas. The subject property is located on the corner of Lakeland Highway and Old State Road. From the map, there's a very large gap in the coverage area and from other existing towers. The applicant has documentation to support their request from local representatives from MAFB. Staff has also received notice from Mr. Rotenstreich and his team that places staff on notice regarding the procedural process in the case that the request is denied. Regarding lighting, staff believes the intent is to not provide lighting on the proposed tower. According to the applicant, it is not practical to provide lighting for towers that are less than 160' in height; however, between now and the County Commission meeting, staff would like to follow up with the FAA regarding this matter. Lastly, staff would like to note that Mrs. Jennifer is present with Mr. Rotenstreich as a court reporter.

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

Chairman Bailey asked if the lighting requirement in the ULDC.

Mr. Davenport stated yes, there is language in the ULDC for providing lighting on towers - only official feedback that staff has received is from MAFB's request that the lights are not white.

Chairman Bailey asked how long had staff been working with the applicant – since April?

Mr. Davenport stated yes, the initial pre-application meeting was with the County's staff, Mr. Rotenstreich, and his staff. Between that time and now, Mr. Rotenstreich and the staff of MAFB have worked together to submit the request as presented. Because the subject property where the tower is proposed is outside of the Moody Activity Zone (MAZ) district, it is a choice that staff has to contact MAFB – in this case, staff chose to get MAFB's input because of the close proximity the property is to the MAZ.

Commissioner Folsom stated is it better to move forward with a condition regarding the lighting concerns.

Mr. Davenport stated conditions should be fine – there's just not enough evidence for staff to require lighting and staff is hesitant to require it.

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

Mr. Andy Rotenstreich stated he is present on behalf of Verizon and ForeSite Towers. The property owners are Ben Wetherington and Mary Ann Ratcliff. The property is about 225 acres plus, mostly wooded, and is zoned E-A. Under the ordinance, towers are permitted within this zoning district and subject to supplemental standards for telecommunication towers. They are proposing a ninety-five (95') feet monopole - no guy wires and no 3-legged lattice tower - along with a five (5') feet lightning rod on top. Verizon Wireless is in desperate need for wireless coverage in this area. The negotiations for this location started about 2-3 years ago. Initially, the proposal was to construct a two hundred eighty (280') feet tower, but later withdrew the request. The second proposal then dropped to one hundred sixty (160') feet, and after meeting with MAFB, the proposed tower height finally dropped to one hundred (100') feet. Co-locating on existing towers was their first choice and since there was not one available for their needs, the next alternative was to request to construct a new tower. They meet the provisions with regards to lighting the tower as the ULDC requires. The ULDC provides that lighting shall be required when the FAA requires it. The verbal communication with MAFB was if the tower is to be lit, do not use white lights. Typically, they do not light their towers unless the FAA requires lighting, and do not have plans to construct lights on the proposed tower. The proposed tower will be strong enough to accommodate additional carriers. The site will be secured with a fenced in compound with anti-climbing devices. The proposed setbacks will comply as the ordinance requires ($1/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the height). While the FAA will allow for their initial proposed height of 160', they are proposing to construct a tower with a lesser height. Mr. Rotenstreich stated the proposed tower did not impact any current known operations and explained the proposed site plan. Verizon's antennae will be at the top with other carrier's antennae beneath. There are no other towers within 2 miles of the proposed site. The green areas as depicted on the map indicates the best coverage for services for Verizon users. The yellow areas as depicted on the map indicates good coverage for users in their vehicles; and, the red areas depict outdoor coverage that needs improvement. The map on the last page is the proposed coverage with the new proposed tower. There is an existing church (Pleasant Way) in the area that is over 700' from the proposed tower, and the nearest house is over 1,300 feet away. The request has received a positive recommendation from the staff.

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

Mr. Bill Bryan, Chief Engineer at MAFB, stated they experienced a similar situation at a location just east of the main gate. The recommendation was for a similar height. The proposal sounds like a best solution and request that the tower be lit with a non-LED light (or incandescent) due to the night vision goggles. With this recommendation, MAFB is in favor of the request.

Commissioner Raker asked if the recommended light a typical color.

Mr. Bryan stated a LED light is a concern for night vision goggles that do not reflect very well.

Mr. Rotenstreich stated that the FAA will speak to the lighting requirement and normally suggests a dual lighting system for which white lights are used during the day and red lights used during the night to reduce glare.

Commissioner Willis asked if Verizon has a problem with the lighting as MAFB is suggesting.

Mr. Rotenstreich stated no.

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

Mrs. Sandra Blanchard, 4044 Old State Road, stated she resides behind the church is concerned about the lighting. She rather not have a light. Her son resides across the street.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey closed the public participation portion of the request, and entertained questions and discussion from the Planning Commission.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Folsom made a motion to recommend approval of the request with a condition that the proposed tower be lighted as proposed by MAFB and the FAA. Commissioner Raker 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 7-0)

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Bailey asked if there is any other business for discussion.

Mr. Davenport pointed to the attention of the new IT upgrades (i.e. monitors, microphones, etc.) and how the hardware will improve staff's presentation to the public and the Planning Commission.

There being no further business, Chairman Bailey adjourned the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Franklin S. Bailey, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC)

Date