

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, September 8, 2020

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Clay Griner
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker

Commissioners Scott Orenstein and Demarcus Marshall were not in attendance.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 24, 2020 and the regular session of August 25, 2020. No changes to the minutes were requested.

APPOINTMENT

Greater Lowndes Planning Commission, County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the reappointment of Mr. Tommy Willis for the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission. Mrs. Dukes stated his term will expire October 31, 2020.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2020-10 Benny Cowart, 4115 Ezelle Rd., 0188 160, 7.9 ac., EA to R1, well/septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the request stating the applicant would like to divide the property between his four children. Mr. Dillard further stated the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request and the TRC had no objectionable comments.

REZ-2020-11 Bella Mill Plantation, 8450 Ousley Rd., 0017 096, 15.8 ac., EA to PD, well/septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated the applicant would like to rezone P-D for the purpose of using the property as an event facility/venue for weddings, reunions, birthday parties, corporate events, etc. The Planning Commission recommended approval with three conditions and TRC recommended approval with three conditions. Mr. Dillard stated correspondence was received from attorney, Mr. Bill Nijem representing Mr. Bill Altman. Commissioner Evans stated she wasn't sure if Spain Ferry Road could handle the traffic. Chairman Slaughter asked since Spain Ferry Road was a dirt road what would be the position of the county's planning from the stand point of the entrance out to Ousley Road, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher,

answered in the past the county hasn't allowed event facilities to come out on dirt roads due to the maintenance of the road and traffic without improvements being done to the road. Chairman Slaughter asked the distance from Ousley Road to the proposed entrance, Mr. Dillard responded 1,100 feet. Vice Chairman Griner asked is there enough space on Ousley Road for the entrance to be moved north so the lights aren't shining directly on the house across the road, Mr. Dillard stated he believed there was enough road frontage. Vice Chairman Griner stated he would rather the entrance be moved so it's not directly across the street from the houses, if there's enough space. Commissioner Wisenbaker, stated there was an event facility, in south Lowndes County on a dirt road, Quail Branch Lodge, and the county has been able to maintain that road.

REZ-2020-12 Southern Tractor & Outdoors Valdosta Facility, US Hwy 84, 0059 090, 43.8 ac., EA to CH, water/sewer, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the request to change 43.8 acres from E-A zoning to CH zoning. Mr. Dillard stated this request is to subdivide the parcel into two lots, with one lot being purchased by Southern Tractor and Outdoors for an agricultural equipment sales facility. Mr. Dillard further stated the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request and the TRC had no objectionable comments. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked who is the applicant, County Engineer, Mike Fletcher stated a Kubota dealer.

TWR-2020-02 Kinspy Rd., 7346 Porter Rd., 0226 005, 37.3 ac., EA, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item for a new 300 ft. telecommunications tower to be constructed within an approximate 32.5 acre tract, east of Highway 41 South, south of Lake Park. The new tower at the subject property will help with gaps in the existing coverage area. The Planning Commission recommended approval and the TRC had no objectionable comments regarding this request.

REPORT - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, introduced Celine Gladwin, architect with Gladwin Vaughn Architecture, to give the commission an update regarding the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse Project. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mrs. Gladwin for the presentation and stated Judge McLane would like to maintain the historic preservation of the courthouse. Chairman Slaughter thanked Project Manager, Chad McLeod, for his work with the architects. Additionally, Chairman Slaughter also stated the future use and utilization of the historic courthouse will be a topic of discussion for the near future. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked regarding the seating capacity in the main courtroom in the historic courthouse, Mrs. Gladwin responded approximately 270.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the work session at 9:18 a.m.

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, September 8, 2020

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Clay Griner
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Slaughter recognized Commissioner Joyce Evans' birthday. He also recognized Edgar Roberts, former commissioner, who passed away this past weekend. Chairman Slaughter announced the Valdosta Lowndes 9-11 memorial ceremony being held on Friday, September 11th at 9:00 a.m. at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse, also being live streamed on the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County Facebook pages.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Scott Orenstein

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Scott Orenstein

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 24, 2020 and the regular session of August 25, 2020. Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT

Greater Lowndes Planning Commission, County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated the seat currently held by Mr. Tommy Willis will expire October 31, 2020 and Mr. Willis would like to continue to serve. Chairman Slaughter recommended Mr. Tommy Willis be reappointed. There being no other nominations, Mr. Tommy Willis was reappointed by acclamation.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2020-10 Benny Cowart, 4115 Ezelle Rd., 0188 160, 7.9 ac., EA to R1, well/septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated the applicant would like to rezone from E-A to R-1 to divide properties between his four children. Mr. Dillard stated the Planning Commission recommended approval, adding the TRC had no objectionable comments. Vice Chairman Griner asked how many lots, Mr. Dillard responded four. Vice Chairman Griner asked if

there was enough road frontage, Mr. Dillard answered yes. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Wisenbaker made the motion to approve the item as presented, Vice Chairman Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2020-11 Bella Mill Plantation, 8450 Ousley Rd., 0017 096, 15.8 ac., EA to PD, well/septic, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented this request. Mr. Dillard stated the applicant would like to rezone P-D for the purpose of using the property as an event facility/venue for weddings, reunions, birthday parties, corporate events, etc. TRC recommended approval with three conditions and the Planning Commission recommended approval with three conditions. Commissioner Marshall asked the amount of property being rezoned, Chairman Slaughter answered 15.8 acres. Commissioner Evans asked County Engineer, Mike Fletcher, to explain the egress on Spain Ferry Road, Mr. Fletcher stated typically the county doesn't allow commercial establishments to have the egress off of a dirt road due to the amount of traffic and maintenance of a dirt road. Commissioner Marshall asked did the applicant offer to pave the road, Mr. Dillard responded not at this current time. Commissioner Orenstein asked is this use allowed in C-C zoning, Mr. Dillard stated a letter was received. Bill Nijem, 1007 North Patterson Street, spoke against the request. Mr. Nijem gave a response to Commissioner Orenstein's question previously mentioned to Mr. Dillard, this particular use isn't allowed in C-C zoning and presented a letter from his office, Langdale Vallotton, LLP, regarding that matter. Mr. Nijem stated there are four reasons why this zoning should be denied: the application for rezoning does not meet the requirements for PD zoning, the proposed use as a commercial event/meeting facility is inconsistent with the Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan, the application should be denied due to the precedent it will set, and lastly the application should be denied because it does not meet the standards for exercising zoning powers under the ULDC. Mr. Nijem stated other event spaces currently zoned P-D, Highgrove Farm on Knights Ferry, which is closer, is entirely surrounded by family land and the owners live right behind it. Chairman Slaughter asked the County Attorney, Walter Elliott, if this fits as a P-D requirement, Mr. Elliott stated the ULDC provides the application shall maintain compatibility with nearby development, that is the principle issue. Preliminary to that the ULDC does provide the proposal shall accommodate a mixture of land uses, as presented to you, it does permit and accommodate uses under the E-A and proposed event facility, which is a mixture of land uses. Mr. Elliott stated whether this proposal meets the requirement of the ULDC, to maintain compatibility with nearby development. Mr. Nijem responded there is one use. Tom Clay, 8070 Ousley Road, stated he was concerned with the noise and he's totally against this rezoning. David Sims, 8447 Ousley Road, stated he lives right across from the gate of the proposed property rezoning and he's against it. Brandy McCrary, 4305 Fouracre Place, Valdosta, GA 31601 spoke in favor of the request. Mrs. McCrary stated she would like to reserve her constitutional right to file an appeal of any adverse zoning decision on file here today. Mrs. McCrary stated she and her husband wanted to thank the Board of Commissioners for taking this into consideration for a much needed wedding venue and special event center for the community. Commissioner Marshall asked if the neighbors were in support, Mrs. McCrary responded, we had blessings of every neighbor except for Mr. Altman. Chairman Slaughter asked what type of events would be held, Mrs. McCrary answered weddings, anniversaries, birthday parties, family reunions, fundraisers, but no concerts. Vice Chairman Griner asked would you be willing to move the entrance on Ousley Road north so the lights don't shine on the neighbors' houses, Mrs. McCrary responded that would be a consideration, however with other venues they haven't been asked to move their entrance/exit on dirt roads, maybe if the county could help with funding of a new culvert. Vice Chairman Griner asked the cost of the entrance, Mrs. McCrary responded \$15,000.00. Vice Chairman Griner stated, in his opinion, it would be worth the additional money to make your neighbors

happy. Justin McCrary, 4305 Fouracre Place, Valdosta, GA 31601, stated regarding the exit to property, it has been considered to change the location due to lights shining on the neighbors' property, in regards to mixed use development, there's a timber farm located on the property and regarding aesthetics, there are very few things that don't fit with the surrounding area. Mr. McCrary stated this venue will greatly benefit the area. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to deny the request, Commissioner Evans second. Vice Chairman Griner asked if there could be additional discussion. Vice Chairman Griner stated additional traffic shouldn't be an issue, but as far as moving the entrance further north, that seems like a solution to help with the lights on the neighbors' property. Commissioner Orenstein stated he was concerned with the compatibility of the venue and the neighbors. Also, Commissioner Orenstein was bothered that an event space isn't allowed in C-C zoning. Commissioner Marshall stated he was also concerned with the compatibility of the venue and the neighbors. All voted in favor to deny the request, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2020-12 Southern Tractor & Outdoors Valdosta Facility, US Hwy 84, 0059 090, 43.8 ac., EA to CH, water/sewer, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, presented the request to change 43.8 acres from E-A zoning to CH zoning. Mr. Dillard stated this request is to subdivide the parcel into two lots, with one lot being purchased by Southern Tractor and Outdoors for an agricultural equipment sales facility. Mr. Dillard further stated the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request and the TRC had no objectionable comments. No one spoke against the request. Clinton Milligan, 3998 Inner Perimeter Road, spoke in favor of the request. Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioners Wisenbaker and Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

TWR-2020-02 Kinspy Rd., 7346 Porter Rd., 0226 005, 37.3 ac., EA, Planning and Zoning Director, J.D. Dillard, stated this sight has been selected to install a new 300 ft. telecommunications tower within an 32.5 acre tract, east of Highway 41 South, south of Lake Park. Mr. Dillard stated the Planning Commission recommended approval and the TRC had no objectionable comments. No one spoke against the request. Jonathan Yates, 105 Broad Street, Charleston, South Carolina, spoke in favor of the request on behalf of the applicant. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked what was the range of the tower, Mr. Yates stated three miles. Vice Chairman Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORT - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated the final 70% of the CARES Act funding has been received. Also, Mrs. Dukes stated staff is creating a presence on the website for the historic courthouse project which citizens can follow as it progresses. Lastly, Mrs. Dukes mentioned finances under the audit process have begun and hopeful to complete by December 31, 2020.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD - None

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Evans second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the regular meeting at 6:20 p.m.