

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES  
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE  
Tuesday, May 28, 2019 – 5:30 PM

**GLPC Commission Members Present:** Franklin Bailey, Lou McClendon, Ed Hightower, Vicki Rountree (Chairperson), Johnny Ball, Calvin Graham, Jody Hall, Debbie Sauls

**GLPC Commission Members Absent:** Tommy Willis, Chip Wildes, Chris Webb

**Staff:** Molly Stevenson, Lowndes County Engineering/Planning Technician, Trinni Amiot, Lowndes County Planner (Recorder), Matt Martin, City Planning & Zoning Administrator

**VISITORS PRESENT:**

(See Sign-In Sheet)

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Rountree called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the GLPC meeting. Chairperson Rountree explained that the Planning Commission serves as an advisory body to the local member governments regarding land use requests. Chairperson Rountree 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. Chairperson Rountree explained the meeting procedures and announced the dates of the public hearing for the local member government as listed on the agenda.

Chairperson Rountree asked Commissioner McLendon to lead the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes: April 29, 2019**

Chairperson Rountree called for questions, corrections, and approval of the April 29, 2019, GLPC meeting minutes. There being none, Chairperson Rountree called for a motion.

Commissioner Bailey made a motion to approve the April 29, 2019, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. There being no further discussion on this matter, Chairperson Rountree called the motion. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**TWR-2019-01, East Valdosta G8022, US Hwy 84E**

**Nature of Request:** This request was tabled at the April 29, 2019 meeting.

No one spoke in favor of or against the request.

There being no further discussion on this matter, Chairperson Rountree called the motion. Commissioner Hall made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**REZ-2019-08, Knudson & Son Outdoor Activities, 3435 Bemiss Knights Academy Rd.**

**Nature of Request:** This request represents a change in zoning of approximately 14 acres of a 36.46 acres property, from R-21 (Medium Density Residential) zoning to R-A (Residential Agricultural) zoning. The motivation behind this request is to create an outdoor recreation facility. Access to and from the subject property is off Bemiss Knights Academy Road, a minor collector road. Concerning the Comprehensive Plan Future Development Map, the subject property is within the Urban Service Area and depicted as in a Suburban Character Area. Per Comprehensive Plan guidance, R-A zoning is listed as a permitted zoning district within a Suburban Character Area. In addition to the above information the following factors should also be considered: 1) the adjacent R-A zoning, 2) the subject property's service by County water and sewer, 3) the elimination of a split-zoned parcel. The TRC considered this request and had no objectionable comments. Staff found the request overall consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommends for its approval.

Chairperson Rountree recused herself from this item due to a familiarity with the applicant. Vice-Chairman Hightower presided over the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Josh Knudson. Mr. Knudson discussed the various aspects of the proposed outdoor recreation facility and explained the components of an airsoft game.

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The Commissioners had several questions for Mr. Knudson regarding hours of operation, noise, occupation of the existing residence on the property, and the maximum attendance at one time.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Adam Khail
- Laura Pepler
- Bradley Nerdel

The statements of opposition revolved around adequate notice of the rezoning request, property values, safety of the adjacent neighborhood, noise, traffic, and environmental effects of airsoft pellets.

The Commissioners had several minutes of discussion. Vice-Chairman Hightower called the motion. Motion to recommend denial of the request was made by Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Sauls. Commissioners Hall, Sauls, and Graham voted in favor of the motion to recommend denial. Commissioners Bailey, Ball and McLendon voted against the motion. The motion to recommend denial of the request failed 3-4 (Vice-Chair Hightower broke the tie, voting against the motion).

Commissioner Bailey then made a motion to recommend approval of the request, seconded by Commissioner Ball. Commissioners Bailey and Ball voted in favor of the motion to recommend approval. Commissioners Graham, Hall, McLendon and Sauls voted against the motion. The motion to recommend approval of the request failed 2-4.

After additional discussion, another motion to recommend denial of the request by Commissioner Hall was made, and seconded by Commissioner Sauls. Commissioners Hall, Sauls, and Graham voted in favor of the motion to recommend denial. Commissioners Bailey, Ball and McLendon voted against the motion. (Vice Chair Hightower broke the tie, voting against the motion.) The motion to recommend denial of the request failed 3-4.

More discussion ensued. Another motion to recommend approval of the request was made by Commissioner Bailey, seconded by Commissioner Ball. Commissioners Bailey and Ball voted in favor of the motion to recommend approval. Commissioners Graham, Hall and Sauls voted against the motion. Commissioner McLendon abstained. The motion to recommend approval failed 2-3.

After additional discussion, Commissioner Graham made a motion to table the further consideration of and recommendation for the request until the next GLPC meeting, June 24, 2019. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall. The motion to table was approved by a 5-1 vote. Those voting in favor of this motion: Graham, Hall, McLendon, Ball, Sauls. Commissioner Bailey voted against the motion to table.

**CU-2019-03, Chad Bailey, 4019 Forrest Run Circle.**

**Nature of Request:** Mr. Chad N. Bailey is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to establish a "Family" Personal Care Home facility in a Residential-Professional (R-P) zoning district. The subject property consists of 0.14 acres (6,000-sf) located at 4019 Forrest Run Circle. This is along the north side of the "south loop" of the street, and is approximately 4 houses east of the subdivision entrance. The subject property contains a single-family residence (3 bedrooms, 2.5 bath)(1,756-sf) with a small driveway and no garage or carport. The applicant acquired the property as their residence in 2014, but has now relocated to another residence and is proposing to utilize this existing residence as a Personal Care Home with 6 children (teenage girls) which will be known

as "Bailey's Blossoms". The applicant is proposing this to be part of the State's "Child Caring Institution (CCI)" program. The State of Georgia defines these as a child-welfare facility with full-time room, board, and watchful oversight to 6 or more children ages 6-18. The minimum number of residents the State allows to be considered for this program is 6 children. The applicant is not proposing any building expansions or changes to the site. Staff Recommendation: Find consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommend approval to the City Council subject to the following conditions:

- Approval shall be granted for a Family Personal Care Home in R-P zoning not to exceed 4 children, and in the name of the applicant or his immediate family members, only.
- There shall be no more than 2 on-site staff persons at any one time, and no more than 2 vehicles shall be parked on the subject property at any one time. All parking shall be within the existing driveway of the subject property, and there shall be no on-street parking.
- The property shall maintain its single-family residential character, have no outdoor signage, and shall be kept clean and mowed at all times.
- Conditional Use approval shall expire after 2 years from the date of approval if no Business License application has been submitted by that time.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Chad and Natalie Bailey
- Rosemary Bailey

The Commissioners had several questions for the speakers regarding age of children, physical size of the bedrooms, staff on the premises, hours of operation for staff, etc.

Speaking against the request: no one.

There being no further discussion on this matter, Chairperson Rountree called the motion. Commissioner Hall made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion. Those voting for the motion: Hall, McLendon, Graham, Ball. Those voting against the motion: Bailey, Hightower, Sauls.  
Motion carried, 4-3.

**HA-2019-01, Jimmy Cone, Hahira Veterinary Clinic, 600 GA Hwy 122W.**

**Nature of Request:**

Jimmy Cone, on behalf of the Hahira Veterinary Clinic (Dr. Doug Ruff), is requesting several variances from Section 4-5 of the Hahira Zoning Ordinance as they pertain to the design requirements of the Hahira Gateway Corridor Overlay District. The subject property is zoned Highway Commercial (C-H) and consists of 2.00 acres located at 600 Georgia Highway 122 West. This is along the north of the street, directly across from the Harvey's grocery store shopping center and about 1,100' east of Union Road. The property contains a veterinary clinic building (about 4,000-sf) which was constructed about 10 years ago. The applicant is proposing to construct a separate kennel building (about 2,000-sf) immediately behind the existing clinic, as well as construct a future 1,000-sf building addition on the west side of the clinic for future expansion of the clinic itself. A listing and description of the proposed Variances to the Overlay District requirements is outlines in the chart below. All other applicable development requirements appear to be in compliance. Staff Recommendation: find the variance requests consistent with the Variance Review Criteria, and recommend approval to the Hahira City Council as presented and based on the currently proposed development plans.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Jimmy Cone

Mr. Cone offered to answer any questions the Commissioners may have.

Speaking against the request: no one.

There being no further discussion on this matter, Chairperson Rountree called the motion. Commissioner Hightower made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner McLendon seconded the motion. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**HA-2019-02, Bensariben Patel, 1311 GA Hwy 122W**

**Nature of Request:**

Bensariben Patel is requesting variances from Section 4-5.11 of the Hahira Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to the size and height of a freestanding sign in the Hahira Gateway Corridor Overlay District. The applicant's property is located at 1311 GA Highway 122 West, is zoned C-H, and consists of 6.51 acres. The property contains a gas station and convenience store. The property is in the Hahira Gateway Corridor Overlay District, which was adopted to encourage architectural uniqueness, connectivity, and promote infill development and revitalization. The applicant is updating signage due to GDOT reconfigurations of Exit 29 of I-75. In March of 2019, the applicant permitted a 74.5 sq. ft monument sign of just under ten feet in height. In April, the applicant's sign contractor approached staff regarding a second freestanding sign, consisting of 157.875 sq. ft and is 30 feet in height. The Hahira Zoning Ordinance allows corner lots such as this one to

have two freestanding signs— one monument sign no taller than 10 feet and no larger than 75 sq. ft., with the second sign being no taller than 10 feet with a maximum size of 37.5 sq. ft. Given that the sign is larger than what staff could approve, the applicant submitted the variance request. (Staff could approve a secondary sign of 10 feet tall and 37.5 sq. ft. in size with no variance needed.) Variances are reviewed and approved based on a demonstrated hardship that is unique and peculiar to the property or is the result of extraordinary conditions related to a specific situation. In this particular case, there is no hardship. The applicant installed the newly permitted sign, and has an existing billboard easily visible to travelers. Staff understands that such signs are typical of gas stations; however, with a newly permitted sign and an existing billboard, staff cannot support the request. If the request was denied, the applicant could still permit and install a sign that meets the regulations. Staff Recommendation: Find the variance request inconsistent with the Variance Review Criteria, and recommend denial to the Hahira City Council.

Those speaking in favor of the request:

- Allen Crump
- Jimmy Patel

Mr. Crump and Mr. Patel explained the motivation behind the request and answered any questions the Commissioners may have. Several minutes of discussion followed between Mr. Crump and Mr. Patel and the Commissioners.

Speaking against the request: no one.

There being no further discussion on this matter, Chairperson Rountree called the motion. Commissioner Graham made a motion to recommend approval of the request as made by the applicant. Commissioner Bailey seconded the motion. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

As a separate motion but part of this discussion, Commissioner Hall made a motion for the City of Hahira to look at the Overlay District because of the construction at the Interstate and improve it, seconded by Commissioner Bailey. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

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### **Other Business**

Chairperson Rountree raised the subject of the joint ordinance. She asked everyone to look over the updates to the one in effect, which is over twenty years old. Chairperson Rountree explained that a motion was needed from the Commissioners to accept the draft ordinance, then staff would forward the draft ordinance on to each municipality represented in the ordinance. The new ordinance includes Remerton.

After some discussion between the Commissioners and staff, Chairperson Rountree called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Graham to address the changes requested by City of Valdosta staff, and for Chairperson Rountree to work with Trinni Amiot, County staff,

on those changes, seconded by Commissioner Hightower. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion Carried.

Chairperson Rountree addressed the attendance policy, stating the policy will be enforced. The language has not changed with the exception of removing work session attendance requirements. Also addressed was the excused vs non-excused verbiage, being removed in its entirety. Chairperson Rountree stated this policy would go into effect January of 2019.

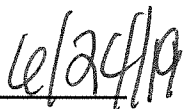
There being no further discussion on this matter, Chairperson Rountree called the motion. Commissioner Hightower made a motion to recommend approval of the policy with the current language. Commissioner Bailey seconded the motion. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

There being no other business, Chairperson Rountree adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.



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**Vicki Rountree, Chairperson  
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission**



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**Date**

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