

MINUTES
GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
LOWNDES COUNTY SOUTH HEALTH DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
September 28, 2015
5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

-Dasher representative-
Johnny Ball, III
Tommy Willis
W. Keith Sandlin

STAFF PRESENT:

Jason Davenport, County Planner
Carmella Braswell, Recording Secretary
Matt Martin, City Planning & Zoning Adm.
Ariel Godwin, Southern Ga Regional Comm

VISITORS PRESENT:

(See Attached Sign-In Sheet)

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. 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 continued to explain 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 is listed on the agenda.

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

AGENDA ITEM #1: **Approval of the Minutes: August 31, 2015**

Chairman Bailey called for questions and discussion concerning the August 31, 2015, meeting minutes.

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

Commissioner Folsom made a motion that the minutes be approved. Commissioner Wildes seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey asked if there was any discussion concerning the motion. There being none, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried. (Vote 6-0)

Chairman Bailey announced that the cases will be called in the following order: City of Lake Park, Lowndes County, and the City of Valdosta.

CITY OF LAKE PARK

Agenda Item #2

2015-07-31 Walter Keith Sandlin

Nature of Request: Mr. Godwin stated the request is for a Special Exception to establish a 2-family dwelling in an existing building located at 202 W. Cotton Avenue, Lake Park, Georgia, which is within the city's C-C (Community Commercial) zoning district. The existing structure has been vacant for approximately 15 years, and the applicant plans to spend a substantial amount to make improvements. The area is of mixed character, although the zoning is commercial, and residential uses are appropriate. The residence in the rear will be approximately 1,500 square feet, and the other residence will be approximately 1,800 square feet. Four (4) off-street parking spaces will be required as per the ordinance which shall be constructed of asphalt, concrete, or other material to ensure the surface can properly drain and resistant to erosion. Staff has reviewed the request and finds it consistent with City's Zoning Ordinance as there are no conflicts expected. Staff is recommending for its approval.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for those wishing to speak in favor of the request.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for those 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.

Commissioner Gladwin asked about the differences between the packets given at the work session

Mr. Godwin responded that page 4 of the staff report gave an expounded explanation of the parking requirements.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Bailey entertained a motion.

Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend approval as presented by staff. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried. (Vote 6-0)

LOWNDES COUNTY CASES:

Agenda Item #7

REZ-2015-16 Bemiss Knights

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated the subject property is a portion of a larger parcel, approximately 30 acres. The request is to rezone the subject property from E-A (Estate Agriculture) to R-10 (Suburban Density

Residential). Staff reviewed the request and has recommended for its approval. Staff has no further updates from the work session.

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

Commissioner Gladwin asked staff to clarify the subject property's frontage and width, and the interior road system.

Mr. Davenport stated in reviewing the conceptual site plan by the applicant, the existing Hoyle Lane will be improved and dedicated to Lowndes County for maintenance. The property is wide enough to get two entrances – as such, there are no concerns for lots facing interior roads. The County Engineer has not indicated any concerns with their proposal.

There being no further questions, Chairman Bailey called for those wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Clint Joyner, 3101 Rocky Ford Road, stated they represent Knights Development and they were seeking to rezone the property and are present to answer any questions.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for those wishing to speak in opposition.

Mr. Jerry Dickerson, 3926 Trotters Ridge Circle, stated his property adjoins the subject property. His concerns are with the proposed infrastructure to access the homes. Trotters Ridge Circle is a partial street, only about 200 feet that was constructed in the 90s for future development. There are lots of children in the neighborhood that play in the streets. There are no sidewalks. The added traffic will present a danger. Their main objection is supporting infrastructure that accesses the proposed lots in the subdivision.

There being no questions for the speaker, Chairman Bailey called for anyone else 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.

Commissioner Gladwin asked what is the capacity of Hoyle Lane?

Mr. Davenport stated currently Hoyle Lane is an unimproved local road. In order for the proposed development to move forward, the road will meet county standards i.e. paved. At this phase, there will be no further improvements regarding lighting, decel/accel lanes, etc.

Commissioner Folsom asked where will the paving end.

Mr. Davenport stated the paving will be from Bemiss Knights Academy Road to the development's second entrance which is yet to be determined. The development will empty out onto Hoyle Lane and from Hoyle Lane to Bemiss Knights Academy Road.

There being no further questions or discussion, Chairman Bailey entertained a motion.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to recommend approval as presented by staff. Commissioner Folsom seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called for questions and discussion concerning the stated motion. There being none, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried. (Vote 6-0)

Agenda Item #8

REZ-2015-17 Branham

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated this subject property was previously seen in 2007 for a rezoning to R-1 (1-acre density) but was not developed. The subject property has recently sold and the request is to go from a 1 acre density (R-1) to a ½ acre residential density (R-21). Staff has reviewed the request, and based on its proximity to the middle school, the growth of the area, and the proposed infrastructure i.e. the county installing water and sewer along Lester Road, staff can support the requested R-21 zoning. Staff would like to clarify the 2 conditions of approval: 1) the allowance of one lot fronting on Copeland Road – this is the existing residence, and all other proposed lots shall front on interior roads; 2) if there are any proposed entrances off of Lester Road, the developer will be required to pave Lester Road from the entrance to Copeland Road – the developer shall be responsible for the design, utility relocation, and any necessary acquisition of right-of-way. Staff did receive a few calls of opposition as the main concern was with the change in density, traffic congestions, and the potential for more trash in the area.

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

Commissioner Folsom asked if the existing house shown on the aerial remain.

Mr. Davenport stated yes; the conceptual site plan depicted the large house to remain with R-21 lots surrounding the main lot in a u-shape street system.

Commissioner Gladwin asked how many proposed lots.

Mr. Davenport stated the original indication shown on one conceptual site depicted about 21 lots.

Commissioner Raker asked regarding water and sewer, will the proposed lots be constructed using individual wells and septic tanks with ½ acre lots.

Mr. Davenport stated the developer can speak to that - the end of year is the predicted due date for the finalizing water and sewer in this area. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed lots will utilize the County's water and sewer system.

Commissioner Hall asked why the developer not connect to Copeland Road in lieu of a cul-de-sac road system.

Mr. Davenport stated the developer was concern that the second entrance to Copeland was too close to Lester Road.

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

Mr. Rodney Tenery, 106 North Street, stated he was present to represent the applicant and to answer any questions regarding the application.

Commissioner Gladwin asked was he familiar with the 2 proposed conditions.

Mr. Tenery stated yes.

Chairman Bailey 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.

Mr. Rick Guest, 3001 Lester Road, stated he did not receive a public hearing notice in the mail. He built a home about 1 year ago with the hopes of not being in someone's back yard. They are against this proposal. All surrounding properties are fair in size and acreage. If this development is approved, there will be more children, noise, and traffic in an already congested area – it will become even worse. Lester Road is heavily traveled and their family will be affected. Mr. Guest asked those in attendance to stand who were opposed to the rezoning.

Chairman Bailey asked Mr. Guest where he lived.

Mr. Guest stated he lives directly behind the proposed development, but his family has property across the street.

Commissioner Gladwin asked staff to give a comparison between the R-1 zoning and the R-21 zoning.

Mr. Davenport stated the R-1 is one acre minimum; R-21 is ½ acre minimum – both zoning have the same lot width requirement with water and sewer.

Commissioner Gladwin asked staff to clarify the zoning that is south of the subject property, the future plans for the area, and if there were any concerns with the traffic.

Mr. Davenport stated the zoning to the south is believed to be a mapping error and should reflect the same R-10 zoning as shown for the rest of that property; staff expects this area to be developed as suburban residentially, and did not expect the water and sewer plans to be as aggressive; regarding traffic, there were no concerns, although staff is aware that there are peak hour traffic concerns, but there was not any trigger mechanisms to require something extra.

Commissioner Folsom asked if a vegetative buffer help.

Mr. Guest stated a buffer would help; however, if the request passes, they would like to see trees or something along the property line.

Chairman Bailey made one final call for those in opposition wishing to speak.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to recommend approval with the conditions as presented by staff.

The motion failed. – (lack of second).

Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend denial of the request. Commissioner Raker seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried. (Vote 5-1 [Hall])

Agenda Item #9

REZ-2015-18 Blanton

Nature of Request: Mr. Davenport stated the subject property is located just north of previous case on Lester Road. The subject property was brought before the Board of Commissioners in the last ten (10) years for residential subdivision. The applicant has purchased a large portion of the residentially zoned property and wants to rezone to an agricultural zoning district. The applicant has indicated the proposed use for row crops, however, other uses are allowed. Staff reviewed this request and feels that R-A zoning is a good compromise for existing agricultural and residentially zoned properties, and gives the applicant the zoning he needs for agriculture uses. The applicant intends to combine several of these tracts into one (1) lot.

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

Commissioner Gladwin stated her concern for the property's frontage at its narrowest point.

Mr. Davenport stated the road frontage is approximately 120' wide.

Commissioner Raker asked what is the back line following.

Mr. Davenport stated he believes the surveyor has followed the wetlands line.

Commissioner Gladwin asked what will happen to the existing CON zoning.

Mr. Davenport stated the applicant is only proposing to rezone what is shown on the map - remainder CON zoning will remain CON, and the area to north will go from CON to R-A (approximately 4-5 acres).

There being for further questions, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone was present wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Tim Blanton, 3341 Lester Road, stated he has been in the area all of his life – their family farmed the property when he was 12 years old. He has property that is adjacent to it that is also zoned agriculture.

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

Ms. Bonnie Katzka, 3219 Lester Road, stated she had a question - what will happen to the property and ponds across the street.

Mr. Blanton stated the property in question is not relevant to the subject property – nothing is proposed at this time.

There being no further questions, 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 discussion.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Folsom made a motion to recommend approval as presented by the staff. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called for questions and discussion concerning the stated motion. There being none, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried unanimously. (Vote 6-0)

CITY OF VALDOSTA CASES

Agenda Item #3

CU-201503 Bennett

Nature of Request: Mr. Martin stated this is a request for a Condition Use Permit (CUP) approval for property located at 2891 Green Meadow Drive, for an accessory dwelling unit in a Single-Family Residential (R-15) zoning district. The GLPC may recall a previous case for an accessory dwelling in this area that was recommended with conditions. The accessory dwelling unit is a part of the main dwelling and not a detached dwelling unit. In this case, this is an existing residence that has been remodeled and an increased floor area – the total heated floor area of the building is now 4,240 square feet, of which 3,061 is the primary dwelling and 1,179 is the accessory dwelling. The interior remodeling work will result and function as one (1) dwelling unit. The staff report provides some history regarding the subject property. Staff explained the floor plan as depicted. Staff stated the application meets the standards for the CUP review criteria and staff finds the request consistent subject to four (4) conditions: 1) Conditional Use approval shall be granted for an attached (internal) Accessory Dwelling Unit, not to exceed one bedroom, and as depicted on the submitted floorplan. The dwelling unit shall maintain compliance with all applicable current code requirements for such dwelling units. 2) The exterior side entry door for the Accessory Dwelling Unit shall remain a single door, and any porch covering feature over the entryway shall not exceed 6’x6’ in area. 3) The applicant shall obtain proper City approvals and comply with all Engineering Departmental requirements for the recent driveway and sidewalk improvements. 4) Conditional Use approval shall expire after 2 years if the dwelling unit is not completed and occupied by that date. The applicant is in process of working with the City Engineering Department.

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

Commissioner Folsom asked if staff knew what the improvements were in the pool house.

Mr. Martin stated it is basically a pool house – a large room with 2 water closets.

Commissioner Gladwin asked if Condition #3 a land use regulation.

Mr. Martin stated staff wanted to ensure that the applicant meets Engineering requirements – the fact that there has been work constructed within the City’s right-of-way would still trigger this requirement. Staff would like to see this issue resolved.

Chairman Bailey asked what were the conditions of the zoning case some time ago regarding an accessory dwelling in this area - his recollection was regarding the removal of the kitchen as a condition.

Mr. Martin stated the previous case was a proposed rear addition and the conditions were basically the same with the exception of condition #3; there was no condition set by the Mayor-Council regarding the kitchen. Accessory dwellings by definition is subordinate to the primary dwelling.

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

Mr. Rob Plumb, 1007 N. Patterson Street, stated he is representing the applicant. There was never any intention for anything other than for a single family dwelling. They are aware of the proposed conditions. As far as they are concerned, this is a single family residence.

Commissioner Folsom asked if there are any issues with removing the side door.

Mr. Martin stated the removal of the side door will remedy the use as an accessory dwelling if the CUP were denied.

There being no questions for the speaker, Chairman Bailey 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.

Mr. Charles Satterwhite, 3116 Northfield Road, stated while he is not in objection to the CUP, he is concerned with the unfinished business concerning the circular driveway that has created a blind curve. His concern is with the safety of the entire area.

Mr. Martin stated what is there now has yet to be inspected - that is a separate issue.

There being no further questions to the speaker, Chairman Bailey called for those in opposition to the request.

Mr. Bernie Napier, 3 Charles Way, stated he adjoins the subject property. Can there be a future use restriction that the subject property not be used as rental property.

Mr. Martin stated the Fair Housing Act may have some concerns if a restriction such as this is forced – the main unit has to be owner-occupied.

There being no further questions to the speaker, Chairman Bailey made one final call to those in opposition to the request.

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

Commissioner Gladwin asked if there were any parking criteria.

Mr. Martin stated yes – the applicant meets the criteria.

Commissioner Folsom stated the LDR may need to be amended to state that accessory dwelling units shall be accessible through interior doors, and amended to address both interior and detached accessory dwellings – this matter appears to be a policy issue.

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

Commissioner Folsom made a motion to recommend approval with conditions as presented by staff.
Commissioner McClendon seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called for discussion concerning the motion.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried unanimously. (Vote 6-0)

#4

VA-2015-12 Nijem

Nature of Request: Mr. Martin stated this is a request to rezone 1.49 acre from conditional Community Commercial (C-C w/c) to Community Commercial (C-C) without conditions. The subject property is located 607 Baytree Road. The property was rezoned in 2005 and developed in 2007; the property is currently developed as a small multi-tenant commercial center (13,200 square feet) with a parking lot to the rear and west side. The concerns then was about the streetscape along Baytree Road being overbuilt, prior to the adoption of the LDR and the creation of the Baytree-University Corridor Overlay. The applicant wishes to add additional parking to the front yard and a second driveway to Baytree Drive. There were 3 conditions of approval for the 2005 rezoning – two of the conditions relating to the front yard setback and minimum number of parking spaces. The current C-C zoning now allows the building to be closer to the road, hence, the condition is no longer needed. The number of parking spaces deviation is no longer needed as consistent with existing developments since the time of the rezoning. With the current overlay district requirements, staff is comfortable with the conditions being lifted. As such, staff finds the request consistent with Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power and recommends approval.

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

Commissioner Gladwin asked staff about the placement of the dumpsters.

Mr. Martin stated there are still a few items to be reviewed on the site plan and those will be addressed at the time of permitting – items to include handicap parking need to be added in the upper left corner, the monument sign within parking space needs correcting, etc. The site plan is flexible.

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

Mr. Jon Nijem, 8428 Coffee Road, stated he is working with Lovell Engineering to address staff's concerns.

There being no questions for the speaker, Chairman Bailey 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 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 as presented by staff.
Commissioner Wildes 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 unanimously. (Vote 6-0)

Agenda Item #5

VA-2015-13 Thomas

Nature of Request: Mr. Martin stated this is a rezoning request for 2 tracts totaling 2 ½ acres. The request is to rezone from Single-Family Residential (R-10) and (R-6) to Highway Commercial (C-H). Mr. James Thomas, owner of Thomas Collision and other related businesses, also owns some nearby C-H zoned properties in the area. Mr. Thomas has acquired properties for his is growing business and needs C-H zoning for his proposed uses. The subject properties are located on both side of Seymour Street. The subject properties are located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) character area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-H zoning. This area is an old pocket of residential zoning from a county island. The character of this area has completely changed and is dominated by commercial uses. Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power and recommends approval.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey asked if anyone was present wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. James Thomas, 3308 Bellemeade Drive, stated he owns Thomas Collision. His desire is to build a showroom for his show car business on the back property that is zoned R-6 and R-10. He also have an agreement for purchase on other adjacent properties when the time is right.

There being no questions for the speaker, Chairman Bailey 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 discussion from the Planning Commission.

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

Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Folsom seconded the motion.

Chairman Bailey called for questions and discussion on the stated motion.

There being none, Chairman Bailey called the motion and it was carried unanimously. (Vote 6-0)

Agenda Item #6

VA-2015-14 Bonner

Nature of Request: Mr. Martin stated this is request for an amendment to the Future Development Map – to change the Character Area designation from Transitional Neighborhood (TN) to Community Activity Center

(CAC). Both character areas are fairly similar. TN is a lesser category that is designed to either stop the transitioning effect that is already happening to a neighborhood, or otherwise expedite its transition to something none-residential. The CAC allows more intensive commercial zoning districts. This area was once a county island. This neighborhood has changed its character from owner-occupied to a more renter-occupied development. The area abuts intense commercial development and is across the street from the Valdosta Mall Corners development along Norman Drive. The proposed change will include eight (8) parcels. Under the current Future Development Map, these properties are not eligible for Community-Commercial (C-C) or Highway-Commercial (C-H) zoning. Staff has received letters of authorization from the property owners to designate the properties for a CAC character area thus making their property eligible for a future rezoning request. Nearby, there is a Regional Activity Center (RAC) character area designation. Staff is of the opinion that the request appears to be appropriate, is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the map amendment review criteria, and is recommending approval.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for those wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Richard Bonner, 1510 Hickory Road, stated he is requesting the change. He believes the neighborhood has been waiting for this change. There are businesses in the neighborhood and apartments in the back. This corridor between Highway 84 and Interstate 75 is an area for fast growth.

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

Mr. Steven Bonner, Gordon, Georgia, stated his property is a part of their family's estate. They have watched the change from rural to residential, and now commercial. They would like to eventually sell the property.

There being no further questions for the speaker, Chairman Bailey called for those wishing to speak in opposition to the request.

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

There being none, Chairman Bailey called for a motion.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner McClendon 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 unanimously. (Vote 6-0)

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Bailey called for other business by staff and the Planning Commission.

Mr. Davenport stated Commission Willis' appointment is coming up for a potential renewal. Staff has been in communication with him and he is interested in serving an additional term. Staff is planning to take his interest to the Board of Commissioners at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Mrs. Braswell stated her placement of an invitation at the Chairman's seat for an upcoming Homebuilders Association Banquet. All interested persons can contact staff to RSVP.

There being no further business, Chairman Bailey adjourned the meeting (7:18 p.m.)

Franklin Bailey, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date