

MINUTES
GLYNN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
February 17, 2004 - 6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Perry Fields, Chairman
Robert Ussery, Vice Chairman
Mike Aspinwall
Ann McCormick
Gary Nevill
Jonathan Williams

ABSENT: Jay Kaufman

STAFF PRESENT: York Phillips, Planning Manager
Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary

Chairman Perry Fields called the meeting to order and the invocation was given, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He then gave a brief recap of the rules, voting procedure and audience participation in discussing agenda items.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Gary Nevill and seconded by Mr. Jonathan Williams, the agenda for the February 17th Planning Commission meeting was approved and unanimously adopted.

PP-2004-0116-1115 Hunter's Point

Application by Sundown Properties, Inc., owner, for approval of a preliminary plat for property located on the south side of Cassell Road and east of the abandoned right of way of the A, B, & C Railroad. The property lies approximately 560 feet southeast of New Sterling Road and 1,400 feet northeast of the intersection of New Sterling Road and New Jesup Highway (US 341). The proposed subdivision consists of 78 lots on 57.674 acres. The property is zoned FA (Forest Agricultural).

Mr. Ron Sluder was present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for the Planning Commission's review:

There are a number of small subdivisions in the vicinity of this site. The remaining area is generally undeveloped. Staff has reviewed this proposal and has no significant comments that cannot be addressed during the construction plan review phase. A variance to the requirement to connect to county water and sewer systems will be required. A request has been made and is being processed.

Staff's recommendation is for approval subject to approval of the variance for water and sewer, and subject to all comments being addressed in the construction plans.

Mr. Gary Nevill stated that there are a few required items that are not shown on the plat, i.e., the lot dimensions and the requested setback for the zoning. He further stated that Environmental Health requires at least a 100 ft. lot width, and although it

appears that most of the lots meet the requirement, they also require a 50 ft. setback for septic and drain fields adjacent to any jurisdictional wetlands.

Mr. Nevill pointed out that the railroad right-of-way is shown as an individual strip. He would like to know its intended use. Mr. Sluder explained that there is a discrepancy in the ownership of that particular parcel and therefore it will not be used, as recommended by his attorney, Carroll Palmatary. He stated that they purchased the A, B&C Railroad property from Plumb Creek but there was also some discrepancy at one time as to its ownership. There was no recorded easement for the right-of-way. Mr. Nevill stated that for future use for utilities or drainage easements, he suggested that Mr. Sluder include a note indicating that ownership is undetermined at this time. Mr. Sluder concurred. He stated that they actually own the property but there was discrepancy as to whether there was ever an easement given.

Mr. Nevill asked Mr. Sluder if he would be willing to make these revisions, clear up the technical deficiencies and bring the request back in two weeks. Mr. Sluder replied yes. It was therefore the consensus to continue this item at the March 2nd Planning Commission meeting.

PP-2004-0121-1610 Captain's Cove

Application by Atlantic Survey Professionals, agent for Nina Lewis, owner, for approval of a preliminary plat for property located on the west side of George Lotson Avenue approximately 120 feet south of its intersection with Cummings Lane and 300 feet north of its intersection with Johnson Street. The proposed subdivision contains 13 lots on 2.595 acres. The property is zoned R-6 One-Family Residential.

Mr. Mike Clements and Mr. Ernie Johns were present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for the Planning Commission's review:

This site was the subject of an earlier request for a zoning change from R-6 to MR Medium Residential to allow an 18-unit addition to the Captain's Walk project. The current proposal does not require a zoning change. In addition, this proposal differs from the earlier one in that it relies entirely on access from George Lotson Avenue.

Staff has reviewed this proposal and concluded that there are a few issues that will need to be addressed in the construction plan review phase. One general design issue is whether a better layout would be to place the street along the north side of the property and have all lots be on the south side of the street. Several advantages of this layout would be: (1) more regular lot arrangement and less difficulty in sitting houses, (2) easier to address drainage issues, and (3) opportunity to access existing parcels to the north that currently have poor access. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission discuss the layout issues.

Chairman Fields emphasized that it is not the duty of the Planning Commission to design subdivisions and therefore they cannot comment on whether or not they like the design of the layout. They can only address the issues of meeting the requirements. Mr. Phillips stated staff believes that the current proposal meets the requirements. Earlier discussions were leading up to a request for variances, but that is no longer the case. He explained that while a zoning change requires a public hearing and legislative action, preliminary plats require administrative action. The purpose of this review is to determine whether or not the proposal meets the requirements of the ordinance. Mr. Phillips stated that staff's comments (as noted in the packages) are very typical and can be addressed during the construction plan review process.

Chairman Fields had questions concerning lots 8 and 10 relative to a possible easement. Mr. Phillips stated that apparently the pipe that is shown was picked up on the existing conditions on the survey. According to Mr. Clements, it was temporarily

installed for the drainage of the Captain's Walk project. The pipe was left in place but it is not functional. If some type of feature has to be installed to serve this particular project and the drainage pattern in the area, the feature will be indicated on the construction plans. Any necessary easements will be shown on the final plat.

Mr. Jonathan Williams expressed deep concerns about the close proximity of the road to the Cummings' residence located on George Lotson Avenue. Mr. Phillips explained that the subdivision was platted in the 1950's before there were any regulations or subdivision standards and there is a 20 ft. access serving the eight lots in the subdivision. One of the existing houses actually encroaches on the access way. He stated that the road in question is not a county road and there are no county facilities or utilities in the road, which makes the situation a private issue among the owners of the property within that particular development.

Mr. Mike Aspinwall asked if it is staff's opinion that this application is in compliance with all of the county regulations. Mr. Phillips replied that it is his understanding that the application is in compliance subject to the essential items being addressed at the construction plan phase. Mr. Aspinwall expressed concerns about the number of trees in the area. Mr. Phillips stated that a tree survey is not required in this case. However, Mr. Clements pointed out that he does have a tree survey and he will be able to save about 50 oak trees. A few of the pine trees will be removed, but he will try to save as many trees as he possibly can.

Chairman Fields reminded everyone that this is not a public hearing item, but he would welcome any comments from the public at this time.

Ms. Eileen Hutcheson, a resident of Village Green Condominiums, read the following statement submitted by Mr. Frank Quinby, Chairman of the Sierra Club:

“This subdivision has major drainage problems. The eastern half of Captain's Walk Condominiums drain onto the subdivision property by means of an inlet and drain which is located approximately 375 ft. from the most south westerly corner of the proposed subdivision... Years ago when St. Simons Heights was approved the drainage from that subdivision drained onto the Barnes property. When the Barnes property was developed and the wetlands filled, it cost nearly \$1,000,000. 00 to solve the drainage problem... The above property has the same problem. For years adjacent properties have discharged their storm water run off to this tract...”

“I urge you to delay any approval of this subdivision until the Glynn County Engineering staff can do a thorough study of the drainage in this entire area... Also, the plan does not show contours, wetlands, and adjacent structures that could be affected by this development... This is a virgin Maritime Forest and every effort should be made to reduce the damage to specimen trees. These trees should be shown on the plan in order to plan lot lines to protect the natural beauty of this forest.”

Ms. Hutcheson stated that she would also like to present the following statement on her behalf and for other owners of the Village Green Condominiums:

“I believe it is a great travesty that this property, along with the 4 acres adjoining it, is not zoned Conservation Preservation in perpetuity. This land is a part of ‘Southend,’ an historic area of the African-American Heritage and should not be developed. It is the last stand of Maritime Forest on the Southend of the Island and is of great ecological value for its trees, its wildlife and its wetlands...Mrs. Lewis acquired this property by default – paying the original owner's taxes on it for an approximate amount of \$30,000. She is now asking \$1.2 Million for it. She could realize a reasonable profit on the land by selling it to the Greenspace for a sum of money within their budget, thus claiming for the Island and its people a fast disappearing piece of God's earth. I request this application be denied.”

Mr. Jack McDonald stated that his house faces the south boundary of the proposed development. He asked at what point will drainage be addressed. He stated that he has not seen any plans for a retention pond and wonders if there will be one. Chairman Fields explained that the drainage issues would be addressed during the construction plan stage of this development as indicated by staff. He stressed that no exception is being made in this case and no preferential treatment is being given to this project. Mr. Clements assured the residents and the Planning Commission that drainage would not be an issue. He stated that he has to comply with the county regulations. All of the water on the property has to be contained and cannot run off on Captain's Walk or any other property.

Ms. Ann McCormick stated that she agrees with the concerns expressed about the greenspace and added that she would vote in favor of the greenspace if they were being asked to, but they are not. She stated that the Planning Commission is being asked to approve the preliminary plat, which meets all of the specifications.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gary Nevill to approve this request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Ussery. Voting Aye: Mr. Perry Fields, Ms. Ann McCormick, Mr. Gary Nevill and Mr. Jonathan Williams. Voting Nay: Mr. Robert Ussery. Abstained From Voting: Mr. Mike Aspinwall.

SP-2004-0126-1600 Cloister Renovation, Phase I
Application by Sea Island Company, owner, for site plan approval for the Cloister Renovation, Phase I including the portion of the site located on the west side of Sea Island Drive, north of the Black Banks bridge, and consisting of 24.15 acres.

Messrs. Bill Edenfield, Bill Foster, Jr., and Charles Ezelle were present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for the Planning Commission's review:

This site is referred to as the "West Campus" and is included in a proposed planned development rezoning currently in the approval process. (Final action is scheduled for the Board of Commissioners on February 19th.) Under the Zoning Ordinance, approval of the site plan will be subject to the Board of Commissioners approval of the zoning change.

The review process for this project is ongoing due to its overall size and complexity. The larger issues (utilities, traffic circulation, drainage, fire safety, etc.) are basically resolved, subject to finalization of details related to individual buildings at the building permit stage. Because of the sequencing of construction, issues related to one specific building may not be fully resolved before other buildings are permitted and construction begins. Staff is currently reviewing specific plans for the main hotel building and the north and south hotel wings.

Staff and the applicant's design team have begun an ongoing series of meetings to ensure coordination of any issues that might arise during this process. Already, these meetings have led to preemptive resolution of some minor problems (including construction-phase siltation control measures and street redesign issues). Staff plans to continue these meetings as the project progresses in order to facilitate finding solutions to problems.

Staff's recommendation is for approval of the site plan subject to the Board of Commissioners approval of the zoning change.

Following a brief discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Robert Ussery to approve this request subject to the Board of Commissioners approval of the zoning change. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Aspinwall and unanimously adopted.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting: February 18, 2003

The Minutes of the February 18, 2003 Planning Commission meeting were approved and unanimously adopted.

Regular Meeting: February 10, 2004

The Minutes of the February 10, 2004 Planning Commission meeting were approved and unanimously adopted.

In other business, Mr. Phillips reminded the Planning Commission of the special workshop scheduled for March 9th at 5:00 p.m. at Selden Park Recreation Gym. The purpose of this workshop is to hear a presentation and discuss plans for the Steamboat City project (part of the Golden Isles Gateway Planned Development).

Also in other business, Ms. Ann McCormick expressed an interest in possibly having a workshop to discuss wetlands. She stated that this issue is very vague and she feels that a workshop would help her and perhaps others who are interested in understanding the distinction between regulated wetlands, jurisdictional wetlands and non-jurisdictional wetlands. Chairman Fields stated that he has done extensive research and he is well versed on the subject of wetlands. He agreed to meet with Ms. McCormick and share his expert knowledge on the subject in an effort to clarify her concerns.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.