

DRAFT

MINUTES

ISLANDS PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 15, 2009 - 6:00 P.M.
The Casino Bldg, 530 Beachview Drive, SSI

MEMBERS PRESENT: Preston Kirkendall, Chairman
Desiree Watson, Vice Chairman
John Dow, Jr.
Patricia Laurens
William Lawrence
Paul Sanders

ABSENT: Joan Wilson

STAFF PRESENT: David Hainley, Community Development Director
York Phillips, Planning Manager
Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary

Chairman Preston Kirkendall called the meeting to order and the invocation was given, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

August 18, 2009 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. John Dow to approve the Minutes of the August 18th Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patricia Laurens. Voting Aye: Mr. John Dow, Mr. Preston Kirkendall, Ms. Patricia Laurens, Mr. William Lawrence and Ms. Desiree Watson. Mr. Paul Sanders did not attend the August 18th Meeting and therefore abstained from voting.

PP1678 (I) Oyster Grove

Consider approval of a preliminary plat for 23 lots with a minimum area of 6,000 sq. ft., on a property consisting of 4.874 acres located west of the intersection of Lawson Avenue with Ledbetter Avenue and Redfern Drive off Frederica Road. The property is zoned R-6 One-Family Residential and is to be served by public water and sewer, and with private streets. Approval includes approval of two variances: (a) allow more than two lots to be served by a dead-end street without a cul-de-sac; and (b) allow a street to be below the minimum elevation of 7.5 ft. MSL. Parcel IDs: 04-01867 through 04-01877 inclusive and parcels 04-01909 through 04-01921 inclusive [24 tax parcels]. Tommy Stroud, representing ETS Family Limited Partnership, owner.

Messrs. Bobby Shupe, Peter Schoenaur, Tommy Stroud and Robert Ussery were present for discussion.

The following report was included in the packages for review and was presented by Mr. York Phillips:

This site is located in the north of Demere and west of Redfern Village on St. Simons Island, in a low density residential area on the Future Land Use Map. The Comprehensive Plan encourages low-density single family residential uses at one to four dwelling units per acre with higher densities for areas such as the subject site with water and sewer service.

There is an existing subdivision plat titled “Central Park” (when recorded in 1929) that will be re-subdivided at the time of final plat approval for Oyster Grove. The Board of Commissioners has already approved the abandonment of the former streets with the proposed subdivision. The proposed use is for residential.

Although a subdivision is generally not allowed on St. Simons Island in existing residential subdivisions, an exception is when the number of lots decreases from the original. The proposed configuration is for 23 lots, whereas the existing plat has 24 lots. Oyster Grove Subdivision’s smallest proposed lot is 6,218 sq. ft. Larger lots, including the largest proposed at 9,749 sq. ft., border adjacent marshland.

Planning staff found the preliminary plat to be compliant with most requirements. Setbacks on odd shaped and corner lots are depicted. The same regulation requiring dead-end streets with more than two (2) lots to provide a cul-de-sac terminus [SRGC Section 602.2(g)] allows streets with two lots or less to utilize another configuration, such as the proposed “dart” shaped streets. The proposed layout could support up to four (4) lots to access these streets and the Planning Commission will need to grant a variance to permit this.

According to County Engineering staff, one issue that is to be addressed now is that a variance request is being submitted to the Planning Commission for the required 7.5 ft. road height. Other issues identified as comments by Engineering were resolved or a strategy worked out to handle issues for the preliminary plat.

This property is served by Frederica Road at a section for which traffic counts and level-of-service information is not available. At build out, this project would be expected to produce approximately 230 average daily vehicle trips.

The proposed residential subdivision is to be served by public water and sewer; however, the streets are to be private. There were no issues reported on public or fire safety.

Mr. Phillips stated that staff recommends approval of preliminary plat application **PP1678 (I)**, known as “Oyster Grove,” subject to meeting all requirements and with a variance to allow up to four (4) lots to access a dead-end street without a cul-de-sac bulb at its terminus [602.2(g)], and also subject to a variance to allow the elevation of the road to be 5.5 ft. MSL in lieu of the 7.5 ft. standard [602.2 (p)].

Ms. Desiree Watson wanted to know if there would be 1200 ft. from the center of the Frederica line to the end of the cul-de-sac in accordance with the requirements of Section 602.2 (g). Mr. Hainley stated that the 1200 ft. would be from Lawson Street which facilitates a turn-around. He explained that when the street was abandoned, Lawson was the street that had to be built, which is where the turn-around is now, and one of the stipulations on the abandonment was that Lawson Street had to be built first to maintain the maneuvering ability.

Mr. Dow had questions about the elevation of Ledbetter and asked if it is at 7.5 ft. Mr. Phillips stated that the elevation is not indicated on the preliminary plat. Mr. Hainley explained that elevation is not a required item at this time. There are approximately 10 houses located within the lower area of the 5.5 ft. elevation. A portion of Oyster Drive will be 7.5 ft. and then taper down toward the cul-de-sac to 5.5 ft. Mr. Dow stated that if Ledbetter is higher than 5.5 ft. would this then mean that Oyster Drive will serve as the run-off drainage for Ledbetter, Lawson and Redfern. He also wanted to know if this will be a gated community and if so, will there be a homeowners association because it appears that Lot 1 and a portion of Lot 2 are serviced by a public road rather than private. Mr. Hainley stated that the applicant would have to address most of these issues but it would be required, whether it's gated or not, to have a homeowners association due to the nature of the private road. He stated that the applicant would have to address the inclusion or execution of certain lots.

During a brief presentation, Mr. Peter Schoenaur explained that the applicant is asking for the ability to vary from the 7.5 ft. elevation requirement. He stated that he selected 5.5 ft. as an arbitrary elevation because he doesn't know how low they will actually have to go. They are only proposed to go as low as it makes drainage and the grading work sufficiently. He pointed out that they want to save as many of the beautiful trees as possible. The main function is to allow the property to maintain its natural course of drainage.

In addressing Mr. Dow's questions about accepting drainage run-off from Ledbetter and Redfern, Mr. Schoenaur stated that historically, the drainage has gone that way and nevertheless he needs to account for it. He will convey it to a discharge on either the ditch or the marsh, which will be part of his engineering design.

Ms. Watson had questions about the size and location of the trees that are proposed to be saved. Mr. Robert Ussery stated that they have done a tree survey and they laid out the lots roughly based on the survey. Most of the trees are still in the same location as they have been for several years.

Mr. Dow had additional concerns about drainage. He stated that he wants to be sure that whatever is done to benefit the proposed subdivision will not create any adverse drainage issues on Ledbetter, Redfern and Lawson. Mr. Shupe stated that the drainage issues will be taken into consideration in the engineering design once the preliminary plat is approved. Mr. Schoenaur added that he is anticipating some dedicated easements during this process. Ms. Watson asked if there would be water and sewer easements as well. Mr. Shupe replied yes. He stated that Mr. Schoenaur has met with the Joint Water & Sewer Commission regarding this issue.

Mr. Sanders questioned whether there has to be a homeowners association. Mr. Ussery explained that for a private road there has to be some mechanism to maintain the road and if the applicant chooses to have private roads there would have to be some sort of association to maintain the roads. Mr. Shupe stated that the roads will meet all standards and regulations whether they're private or public roads.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Paul Sanders for approval of preliminary plat application **PP1678 (I)**, known as "Oyster Grove," subject to meeting all requirements and with two variances: 1) to allow up to four lots to access a dead-end street without a cul-de-sac bulb at its terminus [602.2(g)], and 2) a variance to allow the elevation of the road to be 5.5 ft. MSL in lieu of the 7.5 ft. standard [602.2 (p)]. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Dow and unanimously adopted.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.