

MINUTES
MAINLAND PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 3, 2013 - 6:00 P.M.
Historic Courthouse, 701 G Street

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Brunson, Chairman
Buddy Hutchinson, Vice-Chairman
Larissa Harris
Thomas Boland, Sr.
Tim Murphy

ABSENT: Eddie Wildsmith
John Williams

STAFF PRESENT: David Hainley, Community Development Director
Eric Landon, Planner II
Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary

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

MINUTES
August 6, 2013 - Regular Meeting
August 20, 2013 - Called Meeting

Upon a motion made by Mr. Tim Murphy and seconded by Mr. Tom Boland, the Minutes of the **August 6th Regular Meeting** were approved and unanimously adopted.

A motion was made by Mr. Buddy Hutchinson to approve the Minutes of the **August 20th Called Meeting**. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Boland. Voting Aye: Mr. Tom Boland, Ms. Larissa Harris, Mr. Buddy Hutchinson and Mr. Tim Murphy. Mr. Brunson did not attend the August 20th Meeting and therefore abstained from voting.

Agenda - **Additions, Deferrals, Deletions, Postponements**
Application **ZM2672** was advertised for public hearing; however, this item was inadvertently omitted from the agenda. Upon a request made by Mr. David Hainley, Application **ZM2672** was added to the agenda for public hearing.

At this time, Chairman Brunson gave a brief recap of the rules, voting procedure and audience participation in discussing agenda items.

ZM2672 301 Scranton Road: Consider a request to rezone from the M-9, One-Family Manufactured Home to the Mh-9, One-Family Mobile Home Zoning District a 0.44 acre property located on the north side of Scranton Road across from its intersection with Mills Drive. The purpose of the rezoning is to correct an error to allow mobile home use on the property. Parcel ID: 03-04426. David Hainley, RLA, ASLA, as Director of Glynn County CDD, agent for Rodney Wiggins, owner.

Mr. Rodney Wiggins was present for discussion.

As agent for the applicant, Mr. Hainley explained that this is a request to correct a 1974 zoning case. He stated that throughout the discussion during the Board of Commission Meeting there was mention of a mobile home; however, when this item was put to a final vote, the Board referred to M-9 which is the designation for manufactured home (not mobile home), and even though the item was properly advertised, the wrong zoning designation was given to the applicant. Therefore, today's request is an effort to correct the error to allow the applicant to legally have a mobile home on his property.

There was no discussion from the floor. Following review, a motion was made by Mr. Buddy Hutchinson to recommend approval of **ZM2672** to rezone from M-9 One-Family Manufactured Home to Mh-9 One-Family Mobile Home. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Boland and unanimously adopted.

PP2678 Canal Crossing - Consider approval of a Preliminary Plat for a single lot of 1.447 acres and a public right-of-way consisting of 1.276 acres. The property is zoned HC Highway Commercial, LC Local Commercial, GC General Commercial, and PD Planned Development. Parcel ID: 03-09725. John Callaway, applicant.

Mr. Bobby Shupe was present for discussion. Mr. Callaway was also on hand to answer questions.

According to the staff's report, this property is currently vacant; however, the proposed zoning allows for the property to be developed commercially.

Glynn County is working cooperatively with the applicant to make improvements to this intersection. The plat will increase the width of Canal Road at this location and will provide an additional right-of-way to Gateway Center Boulevard.

Mr. Landon stated that staff recommends approval of application **PP2678**, Canal Crossing, subject to meeting all requirements during the development process.

Mr. Boland wanted to know if there is any indication of what will be placed on the property. Mr. Landon stated that staff has not seen any plans yet, but the ultimate goal is to widen Canal Road. Mr. Bobby Shupe added that there is a project underway that the county is in the process of awarding a contract for. Also, there will be additional paving on Canal Road.

Mr. Boland asked if the right-of-way would have a negative impact on traffic flow. Mr. Shupe stated that he has not received any negative comments from the Traffic Safety Division. He stated that the change in the intersection will help coordinate a connection between the two roads and it will actually help facilitate traffic in the area.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Tom Boland, seconded by Mr. Tim Murphy and unanimously adopted to approve application **PP2678**, Canal Crossing, subject to meeting all requirements during the development process.

SP2541 Coastal Village Phase IV amendment - Consider a request to amend an approved Site Plan for Coastal Village Phase IV located between Bel Air Circle and Spur 25. The property is zoned PD Planned Development. Parcel ID: 03-04003. Foley Design Associates, applicant.

There was no one present to represent this request; therefore, a motion was made by Mr. Buddy Hutchinson, seconded by Mr. Tom Boland and unanimously adopted to defer this item until the October 1st MPC Meeting, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

TA2668 Section 705.5: Consider a request for an amendment to Article VII Section 705.5 of the Zoning Ordinance of Glynn County, Georgia to lower the minimum lot size of Resort Residential single-family to 4,000 sq. ft. and lot width to 40 ft.; and for other purposes. Hal Sigman, Sigman Appraisal Company, applicant.

Mr. Hal Sigman was present for discussion.

The following report from staff was included in the packages for review and was presented by Mr. Hainley:

The proposed changes to Section 705.5 of the Zoning Ordinance are requested in an application by a property owner dated July 26, 2013. The purpose is to establish a smaller lot size and width for single-family use in the Resort Residential Zoning District.

The application indicates that “this change will help preserve the single-family character of the neighborhood by encouraging developers to create single-family lots versus more high density condominium buildings. If not changed, it could lead to the demise of single-family in this very sensitive beachside neighborhood and to a decline in values for the few remaining single-family properties.”

According to Section 1103(a) (1) of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance, ordinance amendments may be initiated by the Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission, or the owner(s) of property within Glynn County. The Planning Commission shall consider and take formal action on ordinance amendments within 365 calendar days from the date that an application is filed with the Community Development Director in the case of an amendment initiated by a property owner.

Glynn County established the current modern zoning districts in 1966. Based upon a search of available records, staff believes that the current minimum lot size and lot width were established at that time. Amendments have been adopted that changed other areas of the district requirements but it is believed that these standards remain unchanged. The minimum lot size and width match the R-6, Single-Family Residential District, MR Medium Residential District and HR High Residential District requirements which are the smallest lot size permitted by right in standard zoning districts in the county for single-family dwelling lots. Therefore it would seem a logical extension to carry this lot size to the Resort Residential District for single-family residential lots because the Resort Residential district is a mixed used district that also allows higher density attached housing like MR and HR. Given the blanket zoning nature of the initial adoption of the zoning standards it is also believed that the authors knew there would be the probability of non-conforming smaller lots in the district and they included a section on substandard lots this is attributed to the development pattern that had occurred on St. Simons which is where the majority of the district is located.

There are currently 182 lots zoned Resort Residential that are either less than 6,000 square feet or less than 60 feet in width. Resort Residential Districts can be found on St. Simons and Sea Island as well as the mainland. The districts on Sea Island and the mainland are post zoning adoption districts. There is a total area of 610 acres zoned Resort Residential comprised of 478 tax parcels (adjacent lots are combined into one “parcel” per ownership) with 382 of them being developed. Some of the properties zoned Resort Residential cannot be developed because they are located seaward of the Johnson Rocks.

Due to the size of the district on St. Simons Island, most of the discussion regarding potential impacts will be centered on that district. There are a number of associated impacts, all of which center around density. Land development/zoning

regulations have a vital part in affecting density. Examples of concern with density exist throughout the Glynn County Planning & Zoning and Board of Commissioners minutes and records.

The applicant for the Section 705.5 amendment states that reducing single-family lot area and width requirements (i.e. in East Beach where the RR zoning district is prevalent) will bolster the stability of a very sensitive beachside neighborhood, and preserve values for the few remaining single-family properties. Although this is a seemingly noble objective, the flaw in this reasoning is that reducing the lot size and width increases density and leaves little to no opportunity for open space and landscaping. The assumption that a single-family dwelling is owner occupied is not necessarily valid in a resort or beach area, and in fact such a dwelling may be leased multiple times per year by an absentee owner. The Island has a history of approximately 20% of the properties being rental units.

Reducing the lot size and width could result in an increase in density that may not be noticeable in the overall district but there could be isolated impacts on local streets where lot assemblages could result in a spot increase of 33% in residential units and this would not be a panacea to increase property values for existing single-family housing. However, it could also be argued that the reduction in lot size and width could serve as an incentive to decrease the demand for condominiums or row houses though there is nothing that restricts the lot size to redevelopment of existing higher density development into lower density single-family lots.

Coast Cottages on St. Simons was developed in the late 1990's apparently as a detached row house with 36 ft. wide lots with the smallest lot size of 2,470 square feet. Though row house is not defined in the Zoning Ordinance, the general zoning term usually means an attached single-family dwelling with three or more attached to for a row. There are also several Planned Developments such as Sea Palms and Hampton Plantation that have areas that allow lot sizes smaller than 6,000 square feet.

In summary, density on SSI has been, and remains a legitimate concern, which the approval of the current request to reduce RR single-family lot size and width would tend to augment. For this reason, staff recommends that considerable study, thought and caution go into how this regulation might be revised in such a manner that a clear and obvious advantage would be gained.

Chairman Brunson commented that as of this moment, the developer could put four or more attached townhomes on the property or six 2-bedroom units without the Planning Commission's approval. However, Mr. Hainley clarified that if the developer were to choose that particular route he would have to obtain a preliminary plat approval. Chairman Brunson wanted to know the size of the lots at Coast Cottages. Mr. Hainley stated that the lots are 36 ft. wide with the smallest lot size being 2,470 square feet.

Mr. Boland referenced a past issue of a request to subdivide property and asked if it had any impact on this particular case or vice versa. Mr. Hainley replied no. The case that Mr. Boland is referring to is a Planned Development and stands alone. It was designed initially to be a twin house that was attached and then split down the middle. This particular request is a fee simple lot and the process is different. Mr. Boland wanted to know if the main problem in this case (if approved) would be a little more increase in traffic. Mr. Hainley replied yes, traffic is one of the issues as well as density.

At this time, the applicant, Mr. Hal Sigman, gave a brief presentation. He explained that this request does not affect any other area in Glynn County except the beachfront area from the Coast Guard Station to Demere Road. It does not affect any other Resort Residential property on Sea Island, Highway 82 or the property located near Epworth. Again, he stressed that this request is unique to the one block wide beach area from the Coast Guard Station to Demere Road. Mr. Sigman stated that this is a prime example of how staff and others have presented misleading information. The neighborhood primarily has lots that are less than 6000 sq. ft. and the only way this situation would come up in the future is when there is an assemblage of two or more of those existing lots, which means that something would have to be torn down.

Mr. Sigman stated that all he is trying to do is to stop the trend of condominiums being built on these sites. He pointed out that there would be no increase in density if the beach cottages were allowed. Also, the bedroom count would not change because the 35 sleeping rooms per acre is a controlling factor. He stated that there would be 50% site coverage with the same setbacks. Mr. Sigman stated that he is merely asking the Planning Commission to help preserve the beach cottage character of a unique area on St. Simons Island.

Mr. Boland commented that there would be less traffic with the smaller houses versus condominiums. Mr. Sigman agreed and added that there would be permanent residents living on the property as opposed to vacationers.

Mr. Hainley pointed out that Mr. Sigman incorrectly indicated that this amendment would not affect any other property except a portion of property located on the Island. For the record, Mr. Hainley stated that this amendment, as proposed, would in fact affect everything zoned RR, Resort Residential. He stated that there is no geographic distinction on the proposed changes. Mr. Sigman then suggested that this be restricted to one particular area of the Island. He stated that the Planning Commission has the authority to designate the area in question as a special Resort Residential Zoning District that this proposed amendment would only apply to.

There was no other discussion from the floor and therefore the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Brunson stated that this item needs to be examined very carefully and he certainly needs more clarification before voting on it. The remaining members agreed. Thereupon, a motion was made by Mr. Brunson to defer this item to a joint workshop for additional discussion (which would take place in the Second Floor Conference Room of the Harold Pate Building; day and time to be determined later). The motion was seconded by Mr. Buddy Hutchinson. Discussion continued, during which time Mr. Boland asked that staff provide information on the impact that this proposal would have on other areas, as well as possibly designating one particular area that the proposal would only be applicable to as suggested by the applicant. Mr. Hainley concurred. At the end of discussion, the motion for deferral was unanimously adopted.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.