

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, August 28, 2023 – 5:30 PM

GLPC Commission Members Present: Franklin Bailey, Johnny Ball, Ron Bythwood, James Miller, Ed Hightower (Chairman), Steve Miller, Vicki Rountree, Chip Wildes, and Chris Webb

GLPC Commission Members Absent: Tommy Willis

Staff: JD Dillard - County Planner, Lowndes County; and Molly Stevenson - Lowndes County Planning Analyst (Clerk)

VISITORS PRESENT:
(Sign-In sheet available in file.)

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Hightower called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Chairman Hightower led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Invocation by Commissioner Bailey. Chairman Hightower welcomed everyone to the GLPC meeting and explained that the Planning Commission serves as an advisory (recommending) body to the local member governments regarding land use requests, and the final determination of the requests presented at this meeting will be made by the applicable local governments. Chairman Hightower then explained the meeting procedures and announced the dates of the public hearings for the local member governments, as listed on the agenda.

Agenda Item #2

Approval of the Meeting Minutes: July 31, 2023

Chairman Hightower called for additions, questions, and corrections of the July 31, 2023, GLPC meeting minutes. Commissioner Bythwood pointed out that former Commissioner Graham was listed as present and Commissioner James Miller was omitted. Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Wildes made a motion to approve the July 31, 2023, meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3

REZ-2023-04 Chase Property, 6119 Quarterman Rd., 0022 102, ~18 acres

Current Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural)

Proposed Zoning: R-A (Residential Agricultural)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on approximately 18 acres at 6119 Quarterman Road from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to R-A (Residential Agricultural) zoning, in order for the property to be subdivided.

The subject property is in the Rural Service Area and an Agricultural/Forestry Character Area, with access to and from the property off Quarterman Road, a County maintained local road. While the general area is depicted as Agricultural/Forestry on the Future Land Use Map, the existing land use pattern, especially along the southern boundaries of Quarterman Road, aligns more with a Rural Residential description. Both character areas encourage maintaining the rural character by limiting new development and promoting rural clusters or conservation subdivision strategies, with high degrees of building separation. Per Comprehensive Plan guidance, R-A zoning is listed as a recommended zoning within both character areas.

For reference, there are 131 properties that have access to Quarterman Road, with an average lot size of 12.10 acres.

- 86% of these lots are below the 12.10-acre average
- There are 87 lots in the Quarterman Crossing Subdivision, zoned R-21, with an average lot size 0.68 acres.

Along the southern boundaries of Quarterman Road, there are 19 properties, including the subject property, that contain at least one, single-family dwelling, with an average lot size of 11.66 acres.

- 68% of these lots are below the 11.66-acre average
- There are 11 lots between 4.79 acres and 7.98 acres

The TRC considered the request and had no other objectionable comments, and staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. If approved, staff recommends the following condition:

- All lots must have a minimum lot width of 210'.

Commissioner Bailey asked if the nearby 1-acre lots are developable. Mr. Dilard explained that those lots are legal non-conforming and are allowed be developed. Mr. Dillard also clarified that the 210' minimum lot width is measured at the building line.

Chairman Hightower asked if there were any questions for staff from the commissioners. There being none, Chairman Hightower opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor of the request:

Speaking against the request:

- Gretchen Quarterman – 6565 Quarterman Rd.
- Carolyn Selby – 6361 Quarterman Rd.
- Paris Stoeffler – 5869 Quarterman Rd.
- John Quarterman – 6565 Quarterman Rd.

Mrs. Quarterman spoke on the letter previously submitted requesting denial of the request. Additional concerns included traffic, covenants and the Dorfman Report.

Ms. Selby is concerned about urban sprawl and over-building. Development should happen where there is infrastructure and services available.

Ms. Stoeffler's concerns included affects on wildlife, more dogs barking, more traffic, etc. She stated the neighbors want to maintain a 5-acres minimum.

Mr. Quarterman spoke to the letter provided in addition to water effect concerns –more impervious surfaces and more clear-cutting. Concerned about the precedent it would set and spoke about the history of the land.

Commissioner Bailey asked staff if the homeowner wants to subdivide the whole piece of property or if he wants to maintain the homesite and divide the remaining. Mr. Dillard explained that the homeowner is not looking to develop immediately but exploring future possibilities. Commissioner Rountree asked if the applicant had considered dividing into 5-acres parcels. MR. Dillard stated the applicant had decided against that option. The commissioners' questions and discussion focused primarily on how the parcels could ultimately be reconfigured with the current zoning and if the request were approved.

Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Based on the fact that rural areas are an asset and agricultural areas are supposed to be protected, Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend denial of the request. Commissioner Rountree second. Commissioner Bailey stated that while totally agreeing with the sentiment, the net addition is only one lot, maintaining the 210' lot width. Commissioner Millr added that the owner can divide the property without a change in zoning. Seven voted in favor, one opposed (7-1). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4

REZ-2023-10 Copeland, 3728 Mt. Zion Church Rd.,0147 057, ~4 acres

Current Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural)

Proposed Zoning: R-21 (Medium Density Residential)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on approximately 3.5 acres at 3728 Mt. Zion Church Road from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to R-21 (Medium Density Residential) zoning, in order for the property to be developed as a neighborhood.

The subject property is in the Urban Service and Suburban Character Area, with access to and from the property off Mt. Zion Church Road, a County maintained Collector Road. Per Comprehensive Plan guidance, R-21 zoning is listed as a recommended zoning within that character area.

Historically, the property was zoned A-U but changed to R-21 in 2006 with the adoption of the ULDC. The previous owners requested it be returned to A-U/E-A, and it has remained such ever since.

The TRC considered the request and had no objectionable comments, and staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the existing land use pattern.

Chairman Hightower asked if there were any questions for staff from the commissioners. There being none, Chairman Hightower opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Calvin Graham – 1701 Dedo Dr.

Mr. Graham stated approval of this zoning change will be an asset to the area.

No one spoke against the request.

Commissioner Bailey asked if a layout had been presented to which Mr. Dillard answered no – the request will “clean up” the zoning pattern. Commissioner Bythwood asked if there had been any opposition expressed to staff. Mr. Dillard explained that one citizen had expressed concerns about potential duplexes to which he explained that the citizen’s own property is zoned allowing duplexes. Commissioner Bailey asked about surrounding density. Mr. Dillard stated that there is R-6 zoning nearby within the City of Valdosta limits.

Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Bythwood to recommend approval of the request s presented. Commissioner Webb second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

There being no other business, Chairman Hightower adjourned the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Ed Hightower, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date