

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, January 29, 2024 – 5:30 PM

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

GLPC Commission Members Absent: Tommy Willis

Staff: Matt Martin - City of Valdosta Planner; JD Dillard – Lowndes County Planner, 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 Ron Bythwood. 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: November 27, 2023

Chairman Hightower called for additions, questions, and corrections of the November 27, 2023, GLPC meeting minutes. There being none, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to approve the November 27, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Rountree second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3

REZ-2024-01 Gresham Event Venue, Old Valdosta Road, 0008 087, ~10.40 acres
Current Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural)
Proposed Zoning: PD-R (Rural Planned Development)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to PD-R (Rural Planned Development) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to utilize the property as a Club, Lodge, Meeting or Event Facility, primarily for weddings, family reunions, birthday parties, corporate events, community gatherings, etc., with the ability to accommodate overnight guests. The subject property possesses road frontage on Old Valdosta Road and Salem Church Road, a collector and local road respectively, and is within the Rural Service Area and Agricultural/Forestry Character Area.

Aspects of this case worthy of consideration include: 1) The nature of the request as it pertains to a rural setting, 2) Current trends of event venues in rural areas, 3) Surrounding agricultural and clustered residential use of lands.

The TRC considered the request and is supportive of the following Staff-recommended conditions:

1. Uses permitted in the Estate Agricultural (E-A) zoning district, and
 - a. A club, lodge, meeting or event facility, with overnight accommodations, where the operation of the facility is limited to meetings, retreats, celebrations, and weddings for groups no larger than the fire code allows for the proposed buildings/area. Outdoor performances by bands or ensembles that are accessory to a meeting, retreat, celebration, or wedding shall be allowed.
2. Unless otherwise noted on the LCBOC approved site plan, the use of the property shall be subject to all standards applicable to properties in the E-A zoning district.
3. The operation of the event facility shall adhere to the Lowndes County Noise Ordinance.
4. Exterior lighting shall be shielded to avoid direct illumination of adjacent properties.

Vice-Chair Steve Miller asked what capacity the fire code allows, to which Mr. Dillard replied that 16 overnight guests are allowed before sprinkling is required. Commissioner Bailey asked if the fact they want to open to the public is what triggered this rezoning request. Mr. Dillard explained that opening to the public constitutes a change in use. Chairman Hightower verified that the closest property owner is 1500' from the site. Commissioner James Miller asked if there is a timeline for building the additional structures depicted on the site plan. Mr. Dillard explained that for PD zoning, a site plan is approved and that is what the applicant must abide by. Any changes require coming back to amend, so applicants are encouraged to depict anything they think they may want for future growth up front. Commissioner Bailey asked if the 3200 sq ft is inclusive of all structures depicted. Mr. Dillard stated that the 3200 sq ft is only the existing lodge. Commissioner Rountree verified that if the property owner wanted to make any changes in the future, it would require a PD Amendment. Mr. Dillard confirmed.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Bill Holland, Applicant's Representative – 109 S. Ashley St.

Mr. Holland stated the applicant, Mr. Gresham also owns the Live Oak Plantation in Cook County and the intent of this request is to enable the handling of overflow from there. He also confirmed that the house was initially built as a residence and there are no immediate plans for expansion.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Brad Folsom, Representing adjacent property owners – 2611 N. Patterson St.
- Carla Penny – 8601 Morven Rd.

Mr. Folsom stated concerns about the site plan's depiction of significant future expansion. This area is rural and agricultural, not commercial. There are also concerns regarding adherence to the Noise Ordinance, traffic and parking issues.

Commissioner Rountree asked staff for clarification to the Noise Ordinance. Mr. Dillard explained that the Ordinance states that noise is measured after 10pm from inside the home and Code Enforcement enforces adherence.

Ms. Penny stated she lives 1 mile from an existing venue and is particularly sympathetic to the adjacent neighbors of the proposed venue and their "noise pollution" concerns. She implored the Commission to consider the noise implications in rural areas when considering this case.

The Public Hearing portion of the case was closed. Commissioner Wildes asked about ingress/egress requirements. Mr. Dillard explained that the site plans were presented to the County Engineer and Fire Marshall who had no initial comments and that occupant loads would be addressed during plan review. Further discussion from the commissioners involved the number of venue sites in the area.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Bailey made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented with conditions. Commissioner Ball second. Three (3) voted in favor, five (5) opposed (3-5). Motion failed.

Commissioner Rountree made a motion to recommend Tabling the request until such time the county can research further, six months. Vice Chair Steve Miller second. Chairman Hightower voiced concern about tabling. Four (4) voted in favor, five (5) opposed (4-5). Motion failed.

Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend denial of the request based on issues brought up by Mr. Folsom and concerns regarding ingress and egress, and continuing to disturb rural areas which are a precious commodity. Commissioner James Miller second. Five (5) voted in favor, three (3) opposed (5-3). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4

REZ-2024-02 Byrd Road Project, 3725 & 3715 Byrd Road, 0212 001, ~7.5 acres

Current Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural)

Proposed Zoning: R-1 (Low Density Residential)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to subdivide the property into conforming lots for individual residences. The subject property possesses road frontage on Byrd Road, a locally maintained County Road, and is within the Rural Service Area and Agricultural/Forestry Character Area.

The subject property was created in 1969, and the two existing houses have historical construction dates of 1971, which predate the County's adoption of subdivision regulations in 1972, including the awareness of setbacks.

The neighboring properties along the northeast side of Byrd Road were rezoned in 1996 from A-U (Agricultural Use) to S-A (Suburban Agricultural), and then subdivided for the applicant's children; in essence, a precursor to Family Ties. These lots range in size from 1.86ac to 3.86ac in size.

Based on the survey, R-1 would allow for the creation of five (5) lots that meet County standards, including the separation of the existing homes onto individual lots. While not a condition for rezoning, it is worth noting that twelve and a half (12.5) feet should be reserved for future right-of-way for any widening/paving of Byrd Road, which might impact the overall lot sizes.

While R-1 is not recommended by the Comprehensive Plan in this area, it does state that "residential subdivisions should be severely limited and any minor exceptions should be required to follow a rural cluster zoning or conservation subdivision design." The TRC reviewed the request and had no technical objections, noting that the unique shape of the property coupled with the requirements for individual well and septic systems naturally limits the overall development. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the request for R-1 zoning.

Vice-Chair Steve Miller asked if Byrd Rd. is slated to be paved any time soon, to which Mr. Dillard responded it is not currently on a paving list, but the conceptual plan does account for Engineering's request that Right of Way be reserved in case it does get paved in the future.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Tripp Talley, Applicant – 113 Fairway Dr.

Mr. Talley stated he was present to answer any questions the commissioners might have.

Commissioner Rountree pointed out the front yards would be minimized considerably if Byrd Road does get paved.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Rountree to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Bailey second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5

CU-2024-01 Fairway Independent Mortgage Corp. (201 Woodrow Wilson Drive)
CUP for a Financial Institution in R-P zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a proposed Financial Institution in the form of a mortgage-origination services office, in a Residential Professional (R P) zoning district. The subject property consists of 0.41 acres located at 201 Woodrow Wilson Drive, which is at the SE corner of Woodrow Wilson Drive and Slater Street. The property contains an existing professional office building (2,922 sf) that is already occupied by a financial consulting firm (Legacy Partners). The applicant is proposing to simply co-occupy the building with their own office, with only very minor interior renovations. There are no significant changes proposed for the exterior of the building or the site. The applicant's business license application is currently pending.

The subject property is located within an Institutional Activity Center (IAC) Character Area which is associated with the South Georgia Medical Center (SGMC) across the street to the north. The existing R-P zoning is compliant with this Character Area designation.

The subject property is part of the well-established office institutional corridor along Woodrow Wilson Drive that is associated with South Georgia Medical Center (SGMC). All of these properties along the south side of Woodrow Wilson consist of offices, many of them medical-related. Despite all of the properties being zoned R P, there are virtually no residential uses along this corridor. Based on this land use pattern, this is really more of an O-P type corridor than R-P. If the subject property were zoned O-P instead, the proposed mortgage services office would be a "permitted use" and no CUP would be required. In this particular case with the subject property, it was a simple choice of either requesting the CUP or rezoning the property to O-P (slightly higher fees but the same public hearing process). Because there is no existing O-P zoning anywhere else in the area, it was recommended the CUP be requested instead.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommends approval to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval shall be granted for any form of a financial-related office such as a brokerage or other financial planning/consulting firm where such professional services are rendered.
2. Conditional Use approval shall expire 2 years from the date of approval if no Business License application for this kind of use has been submitted by that date.

Commissioner Bailey asked if the current business is also operating under a Conditional Use Permit, to which Mr. Martin responded no. At the time that business began, it was categorized differently, but Condition 1 addresses that.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Chip Alger, Applicant – 4203 Big Oak Cir.

Mr. Alger explained that the prospective business is not a depository institution and accordingly has very low traffic, approximately 5-10 customers per week.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Motion by Vice-Chair Steve Miller to recommend approval of the request as presented with Conditions. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #6

CU-2024-02 Harden Rental Network LLC (2607 Bemiss Road)
CUP for an Animal Boarding & Daycare facility in C-C zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a proposed Animal Boarding & Daycare facility in a C-C zoning district. The subject property consists of 5.93 acres located at 2607 Bemiss Road, which is along the east side of the road about 600 feet north of Northside Drive. This is also diagonally across from the intersection of Bemiss Road and Connell Road. (This includes the same property which was rezoned from R-P to C-C at the request of the applicant back in November --- file # VA-2023-17). The front portion of this property contains an existing single-family residence which is currently vacant. The remainder of the property is currently undeveloped and heavily wooded. The applicant is proposing to redevelop the entire property as a dog kennel/boarding & daycare facility with 30+ dogs. This includes converting the existing residence to a business office, constructing a dog kennel building (10,000-sf) in the rear portion, with animal outdoor play areas in the center. The applicant is also seeking ZBOA Variance approval from the LDR supplemental regulations for Pet Boarding; specifically, the requirement for outdoor animal yards to be at least 200 feet from a property line (file # APP-2024-05).

The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The existing C-C zoning is compliant with this Character Area designation.

The subject property is part of a much broader commercial area along the Bemiss Road corridor which is dominated by various levels of commercial zoning, as well as a mostly commercial land use pattern. Although there is an existing single-family neighborhood to the east, there is no physical connection or access to the neighborhood from the subject property. The City's general

development standards will require substantial buffering between these different zoning areas, and fortunately there is already dense vegetation throughout this required buffer area. The City's supplemental standards for dog kennels also require greater setbacks from property lines (see page 4). The minimum required distance between buildings and property lines is 100 feet. The applicant more than meets this requirement by proposing 200 feet from the neighborhood boundary to the east, and 115 feet from the side property lines to the north and south. The minimum required distance for outdoor animal areas is 200 feet from any property line. The applicant is proposing more than 300 feet from the neighborhood boundary to the east, but less than 50 feet from the commercial side property lines – and hence the Variance request that is currently pending before ZBOA. It should be noted that this proposed outdoor animal area is NOT a concentrated animal enclosure, but an open yard which allows the dogs to run freely, and therefore the impacts of such an area will be much less concentrated.

This is the first known facility of this kind (at this scale) in the City and there seems to be little basis for accurate comparison. However, staff believes the abundant size of this site (nearly 6 acres) with relatively little development surrounding it, and the adjacent neighborhood being more than 200 feet away from the kennel operation, all together makes this location a very good candidate for this use --- within a non-rural setting. However, there should still be some upward limits on its initial allowable size to see if the proposed use indeed establishes a positive track record. If later the applicant wants to expand this facility to accommodate more animals, then that would be a future CUP request than can be more accurately analyzed to determine the level of actual impact.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommends approval to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval shall be granted for a household animal boarding & pet daycare facility with no more than 50 animals on site at any one time, and developed in general accordance with the submitted site plan..
2. Conditional Use approval shall expire 2 years from the date of approval if no building permit has been issued for the new proposed building by that date.

Chairman Hightower inquired as to the size of the structure. Mr. Martin stated the building is approximately 10,000 sq ft. Vice-Chair Steve Miller asked if the outdoor area is the subject of the Variance request. Mr. Martin confirmed and that the structures themselves meet all setbacks.

No one spoke in favor of nor in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented with Conditions. Commissioner Webb second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7

VA-2024-01 Richard Hill (1621 & 1625 River Street, 308 & 310 Nan Street)
Rezone 1.94 acres from R-10 to C-C

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone a total of 1.94 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Community Commercial (C-C). The subject property consists of four (4) existing contiguous parcels located at 308 Nan Street, 310 Nan Street, 1621 River Street and 1625 River Street. These are clustered at the SW corner of the intersection of River Street and Nan Street, which is located about 650 feet west of North St Augustine Road. All of the properties are currently owned by the applicant or his family members. Three of the parcels each currently contain a single-family residence. The applicant is proposing to simply market all of these properties for sale as future commercial or office development. The request is speculative and the submitted site sketch is purely conceptual in nature and simply demonstrates a potential magnitude of commercial development.

The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-C zoning. It should be noted that the existing R-10 zoning on the property is “non-compliant” with the CAC Character Area (not intensive enough).

The subject properties are part of a residential neighborhood that was one of the unincorporated “islands” that were annexed by the City in 2006. These properties had R-10 zoning in the County and were given R-10 zoning in the City upon annexation. This area originally developed decades ago as a low-density semi-rural residential neighborhood – before the widening of N St Augustine Road and the explosive commercial growth that occurred on the vacant lands to the west (Norman Drive & Enterprise Drive area). The southerly portions of this neighborhood still retain its quiet sparsely residential character. However, the northerly portions are dominated by very old but nonconforming RV and mobile home parks, as well as the beginnings of commercial development along River Street. Because this area is completely surrounded by intensive commercial corridors, it was designated as part of the Community Activity Center (CAC) character area with the updated Comprehensive Plan in 2006. As a result, all of the existing R-10 zoning areas became non-compliant because they were “not intensive enough” for the CAC character area. The overall future land use pattern for the surrounding commercial corridors is abundantly clear, and this includes the River Street corridor to transition to all-commercial since it is currently the only pathway that traverses the area connecting Norman Drive with N St Augustine Road. However, with the abundance of commercial development around the perimeter, staff believes the interior side roads such as Nan Street and the residential areas to the south should transition to high-density residential and perhaps some offices located closer to the outer edges. The questions then become “where to draw the line” between the exterior/interior portions, and WHEN should this infill transition of land uses actually occur and in what manner ?? Because there has been very little transition or infill development in this area over the past 20+ years, staff views the R-10 zoning as an obstacle to this and believes that perhaps a limited rezoning to serve as a small catalyst, might be a good idea to get the redevelopment process started. For this neighborhood, it would be good to start this on the northerly edge along River Street and let

the transition then work its way southward in logical but controlled manner. There is also the immediate concern that Nan Street is a substandard local street with narrow inverted crown pavement – that is not conducive for commercial traffic. Good site planning will help alleviate this, but it should also be weighed as a limiting factor for the short term.

The applicant's rezoning proposal is truly speculative. It has the potential to be a catalyst for the kind of redevelopment/infill that is being sought, but its size (proposed depth) also has the potential to allow commercial development that is perhaps too large or intrude too deeply into the existing neighborhood – or too prematurely. Staff believes the parcels fronting River Street have the strongest argument in favor of commercial zoning, but believes the Nan Street parcels need to be protected at least a little while longer or until there is a non-speculative proposal being put forth. Placing office or multi-family residential zoning on these parcels would greatly enhance their marketability from R-10, but still protect the remaining neighborhood from an over-intrusion.

Staff finds a combination of C-C and R-P zoning consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council for the rezoning of the existing parcels fronting River Street (1.18 acres) to C-C, and the parcels solely fronting Nan Street (0.76 acres) to R-P.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Richard Hill, Applicant – 2419 S. 40

Mr. Hill stated that he had originally requested C-H zoning, explaining that the surrounding R-10 zoned area will likely be zoned commercial in the future and would therefore like the entire subject properties to be approved for commercial zoning. He further stated that the conceptual plan shows all buildings oriented toward River St. and R-P zoning would prohibit retail use.

Commissioner James Miller inquired whether or not the conceptual plan is a site plan for definite use of future spaces. Mr. Hill replied it is strictly a conceptual plan. Commissioner Rountree asked for verification that Retail use is not allowed in R-P zoning. Mr. Martin confirmed but that the southern building on the site plan is the only building that would be affected.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Vice-Chair Steve Miller asked about other restricted uses in C-H and R-P zonings. Mr. Martin stated C-H zoning allows for automotive intensive uses and R-P is generally utilized for offices and multi-family use.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Bailey made a motion to recommend approval to rezone all subject parcels to C-C zoning. Commissioner Wildes second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

*****Agenda Items #8, #9 and #10 were presented together with separate recommendations and motions/votes - Separate motions and vote results follow Public Hearing notes*****

Agenda Item #8

HA-2024-01 Cre8tive Development Partners LLC. (5901 US Highway 41 North)
Rezone 26 acres from R-21(county) and R-15(city), to a combination of
R-10(city) and R-6(city)

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant Cre8tive Development Partners LLC, represented by Jode Hewett, is proposing to rezone a total of 26 acres from a combination of Medium Density Residential (R 21)(county) and Single-Family Residential (R-15)(city), to a combination of Single-Family Residential (R-10) and Single-Family Residential (R-6) all in the City of Hahira. A large portion of this property (25.48 acres, zoned R-21) is also being proposed for annexation (see file # HA 2024-03 below). The end result after annexation and rezoning would be 21.98 acres zoned R-10, and 4.02 acres zoned R-6, all in the City of Hahira. The subject property is currently vacant and located at 5901 US Highway 41 North. This is along the west side of the road, immediately across from the newly-developing “McNeal Estates” subdivision. The applicant is also seeking Planned Development master plan approval (see file # HA-2024-02 below) for a mixed residential development consisting of townhome apartments, as well as single-family residences.

The subject property is located within a Suburban Area (SA) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to develop the property as a mixed-residential private development consisting of about 110 total dwelling units in the form of both townhomes and single-family residences. The applicant is also seeking Planned Development approval for this development, which is being reviewed and processed under file # HA 2024 02, as well as annexation of the majority of the property which is being reviewed and processed separately under file # HA-2024-03 (see next Agenda items).

In terms of surrounding development patterns, the area is dominated by the developing McNeal Estates subdivision directly to the east, as well as other residential developments in the City of Hahira to the south – including Audubon Heights which is also a residential Planned Development. To the north it is more sparsely developed with a rural residential character. To the west it is also a rural residential development pattern. However, the western boundary of the subject property is the Norfolk-Southern railroad line which forms a hard boundary for the progression of any development expansion.

In terms of surrounding zoning patterns, the area is dominated by residential zoning of various densities; including R-10 zoning in the city limits area to the east, R-15 zoning in much of the city limits area to the south, and R-21 for the surrounding unincorporated area. Most of the applicants rezoning proposal (85% of the acreage) is for R-10 zoning which matches the existing City subdivision to the east. The applicant’s remaining proposed R-6 zoning portion is only for

the purpose of augmenting their Planned Development proposal, by adding a potential multi-family residential component, as well as potentially a few more dwelling units to offset the quantity of land that is to be set aside for open space throughout the overall development. Even though there is no existing R-6 zoning nearby, and this portion of the request could be considered an isolated district (spot zoning), the proposed R-6 portion is located and configured in such a way that if it were developed on its own “conventionally”, its density magnitude would be very small and irregular. The R-6 portion is a long narrow strip along the railroad, and much of its length is existing pond(s). Its only effective purpose is to add some variety and offsetting density to the mixed-residential development.

Mr. Martin explained that the parcels to remain in Unincorporated Lowndes County have been configured so as not to create islands, which is prohibited by state law. Additionally, he pointed out that R-10 zoning in Hahira has a minimum 10,000 sq ft lot area, but the intent for the lot sizes within this proposed development, in the R-10 portion, is for them to be larger. Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommends approval of R-10 and R-6 zonings as requested.

Agenda Item #9

HA-2024-02 Cre8tive Development Partners LLC. (5901 US Highway 41 North)
Planned Development approval for a mixed residential development on 26 acres
in R-10 and R-6 zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant Cre8tive Development Partners LLC, represented by Jode Hewett, is requesting Planned Development master plan approval for a mixed-residential development in R-10 and R-6 zoning. The subject property consists of 26 acres located at 5901 US Highway 41 North, which is along the west side of the road immediately across from the newly-developing “McNeal Estates” subdivision. The property is currently vacant. The applicant is proposing to develop this with 68 luxury townhomes divided among 8 two-story buildings arranged in the rear of the property, as well as 38 single family residences on standard R-10 lots arranged along a private road system. The development will constitute a “gated community” that is developed and managed under one entity, to include strict architectural standards, covenants, etc.. (see attached conceptual master plan and Letter of Intent for further details)

The subject property is located within a Suburban Area (SA) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which supports residential zoning and development.

*** Although staff is generally supportive of the applicant’s currently proposed concept for the proposed development, there have been a few recent concerns that have arisen during the staff review process. These are mostly about the proposed external access points (entrance locations) along US 41 North, as well as some of the internal access design features (internal drive configurations) among the various parts of the development. Resolving these concerns is a

satisfactory way, is very likely to affect parts of the overall design layout. Staff would very much prefer to continue a positive dialog with the applicant about these concerns, and then review a revised final layout design before rendering a detailed recommendation of approval (with conditions) to the GLPC and City Council. Therefore, staff is requesting this Planned Development request be tabled for 2 months to allow sufficient time for these revisions to be made and re-circulated for review (& re advertised at City expense) before the final design is presented at public hearing. Because the Annexation and Rezoning requests each stand on their own merits, and do not require a development master plan for approval, it is NOT necessary to table these items as well.

Staff Recommendations:

1. Conduct the current public hearing to gather public input, then consider and discuss general aspects of the proposed master plan and development features. Then render constructive feedback to the Applicant regarding any requested revisions to the development proposal that may be warranted.
2. Then recommend TABLING of this Planned Development request for two (2) months to allow sufficient time for revisions to the proposed master plan, re-review, and re-advertisement to take place before the final public hearings.

Agenda Item #10

HA-2024-03 Cre8tive Development Partners LLC. (5901 US Highway 41 North)
Annex 25.48 acres into the City of Hahira

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant Cre8tive Development Partners LLC, represented by Jode Hewett, is proposing to annex 25.48 acres into the City of Hahira. The subject property is located at 5901 US Highway 41 North, which is along the west side of the road immediately north of the existing Hahira city limits and directly across from the newly-developing “McNeal Estates” subdivision. The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to develop it as a mixed-residential development. The applicant is requesting annexation in order to receive City utilities and other City services to support the proposed development. Concurrent with the annexation, the applicant is also requesting Rezoning of the property (file # HA-2024-01), as well as Planned Development master plan approval (file # HA-2024-02). ** See previous Agenda items for further details and discussion of the existing zoning patterns, and proposed rezoning request, and the requested Planned Development approval.

The subject property is currently located within a Suburban Area (SA) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. There is currently no proposed change to this Character Area designation as a result of annexation.

The subject property is contiguous to the existing Hahira city limits and it is fully eligible for annexation into Hahira. This annexation request has been properly noticed to Lowndes County pursuant to State law and to date, there have been no land use disputes raised by the County as part of the request. The applicant’s proposal for an all-residential development fits in well with

both the zoning and development patterns of the area, and the City of Hahira is currently the only nearby provider of sufficient water/sewer services necessary to accommodate the magnitude of this development.

Staff finds the annexation request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommends approval to the City Council.

Commissioner Bailey asked for clarification that there is no planned ingress or egress from US Hwy 41 N. Mr. Martin confirmed. Commissioner Rountree discussed the number of proposed units versus the potential number in the current zoning. Commissioner James Miller clarified that the Planned Development request is what staff recommends tabling. Mr. Martin confirmed. Commissioner Bailey asked staff what edits to the site plan would be necessary, to which Mr. Martin replied the majority would involve verbiage of the conditions and access drives, particularly on the south. Commissioner Bythwood asked if the R-6 zoning would be along the western boundary along the railroad tracks. Mr. Martin explained that while that is the intent, the actual lines may be shifted, but having R-6 zoning as part of the master plan enables and introduces mixed-use. Planned Development zoning allows for the possibility to place multi-family outside of actual drawn zoning lines.

Speaking in favor of the requests:

- Jode Hewett, Applicant – 5633 Barber Cir.

Mr. Hewett explained that in order to incorporate a multi-family component into the development plan, R-6 zoning is required. He also reminded the commissioners that P-D zoning is tied to the site plan. He stated he was careful to compliment the surrounding area of R-10 zoning with the R-10 section of his development plan. He further explained that the entire development will be gated and contain HOA restrictions. Mr. Hewett stressed that this design brings a new idea of development to Lowndes County and provides for market value rental properties. He stated that 27% of the homes in Hahira are rental properties.

Commissioner Bailey inquired as to the total number of lots in the McNeal Estates Subdivision. It is believed that there are approximately 150 lots, with 40+ of those being rental properties. Commissioner Bailey went on to compliment Mr. Hewett on the design. Commissioner Rountree stated as the Hahira representative she feels compelled to express the desires of the residents, who are opposed to R-6 zoning and have concerns about infrastructure issues that are already affecting the residents. Commissioner Bailey referred to a grant recently released by the Governor for water and sewer in workforce developments.

Speaking in opposition to the requests:

- Chris Connell– 5996 US Hwy 41 N

Mr. Connell, the developer of McNeal Estates stated that the subject property is old family property. He voiced concerns regarding infrastructure issues and the R-6 zoning portion, stating the citizens don't want it and there is wide spread concern over quality control with rentals and

market conditions dictate rental rates. Also of concern is the potential for absentee owners. The R-10 zoning would be acceptable but wants the R-6 element removed.

Commissioner Rountree asked Mr. Connell about the number of rentals in McNeal Estates who said the numbers provided were inflated.

Chairman Hightower ended the Public Hearing portions of the meeting.

Commissioner Rountree stated there are still unanswered questions. She asked the applicant about the possibility of remaining within Unincorporated Lowndes County. Mr. Hewett suggested the County would institute an Extra-Territorial Agreement for utilities.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for motions on the three requests.

Regarding HA-2024-01, Commissioner Bailey made a motion to recommend approval of the request to rezone 26 acres from R-21(county) and R-15(city), to a combination of R-10(city) and R-6(city). Commissioner Wildes second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

Regarding HA-2024-02, Commissioner Bailey made a motion to recommend TABLING the Planned Development request for two (2) months to allow sufficient time for revisions to the proposed master plan, re-review, and re-advertisement to take place before the final public hearings. Commissioner James Miller second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

Regarding, HA-2024-03, Commissioner Bailey made a motion to recommend approval of the request to annex the subject property containing 25.48 acres into the City of Hahira. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (8-0). Motion carried.

There being no other business, Chairman Hightower adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Ed Hightower, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date