

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, February 26, 2024 – 5:30 PM

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

GLPC Commission Members Absent: Franklin Bailey, Johnny Ball, and 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 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: January 29, 2024

Chairman Hightower called for additions, questions, and corrections of the January 29, 2024, GLPC meeting minutes. There being none, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to approve the January 29, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Webb second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (5-0). Motion carried.

Commissioner James Miller arrived at 5:40pm after the Approval of Minutes

Agenda Item #3

VA-2024-02 Trevor Shaw, 3305 & 3317 Cherry Creek Road
Rezone 9.89 acres from R-15, to a combination of R-10 and R-6

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone a total of 9.89 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to a combination of Single-Family Residential (R-10) [4.18 acres], and Single Family Residential (R-6) [5.71 acres]. The subject properties are located at 3305 & 3317 Cherry Creek Road, which are along the west side of the road about 300 feet south of the intersection with Beckenridge Drive. This is also directly west of the traffic light intersection with North Oak Street Extension. Each parcel currently contains a single-family residence. The applicant is proposing to demolish both residences, combine the properties together, and then replat and redevelop the total property as a conventional single-family residential subdivision on public streets and lot sizes based on the proposed R 10 and R-6 zoning pattern. The R-10 portion of the development would have about 14 lots, and the R-6 portion about 20 lots (about 34 lots total).

The subject property is located within a Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of both R-10 and R-6 zoning.

The subject properties are the last remnants of a semi-rural estate subdivision with 5-acre lots along North Oak Street Extension and Cherry Creek Road, which was first developed more than 60 years ago. Over the past 35+ years in response to growth pressures along these road corridors, all of these lots have been redeveloping into higher density residential subdivisions as well as small office parks. Individual houses on 5-acre lots is no longer consistent with the surrounding land use, nor zoning patterns of the area.

This request is a classic example of proposed "infill development of a residential nature. However, the challenge in this case is how to balance or mitigate the existing pattern of low density residential on one side, and relatively higher density development on the other. The Windsor Park and Windsor-2 neighborhoods to the north and west are zoned R-15, while the Kingswood subdivision to the south is zoned PRD with an R-6-like lot pattern. Also to the south there is a vacant tract (1.7 acres) that is zoned R-P, which allows apartments or offices, To the east, through the street intersections is the Three Oaks Apartment complex. With this existing pattern of a graduated scale of density from one side of the property to the other, that applicant is proposing a transitional pattern of R-10 zoning next to the R-15, and regular R-6 zoning next to the PRD and R-P development. These proposed zonings are consistent with the zoning and land use patterns for the "overall area", and serve as a transitional pattern between these opposing development densities.

Another point to consider in all of this is that of development access. Although the subject property abuts the existing R-15 development area, it has no direct means of access connection to that other neighborhood. However, the PRD development to the south contains two (2) stub-out streets into the subject property. By code, development of the subject property is REQUIRED to connect to this PRD development, unless a variance otherwise granted. Both the PRD development and the subject property each need more than one access connection to the City street system, and connecting through each other satisfies this requirement for both. Developing the subject property entirely as an R-15 subdivision with frontage along this portion

of Cherry Creek Road and mandated two (2) points of connected access to existing R-6 density development, seems a little out of character with what should be a transitional pattern of infill development.

Staff finds the requested combination of R-10 and R-6 zoning consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council.

Vice-Chair Steve Miller asked if the eastern lots on the north and south corners have road access. Mr. Martin explained they would currently be accessed off Cherry Creek Rd.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Zachary Cowart, Attorney for Applicant – 109 W. Adair St.

Mr. Cowart stated the intent is for the lots to contain single family residences, between 1200 and 1600 sq ft. in size, the current trending desire of older adults. Additionally, Restrictive Covenants will be in place.

Commissioner Rountree inquired as to the number of lots that can be created with its current zoning, and what the net addition would be. Mr. Cowart stated the current zoning could accommodate up to 28 individual lots and if the request is granted, 36 to 37 lots could be created for a net increase of 8 to 9 lots. Mr. Martin stated with necessary infrastructure, as currently zoned, it is more realistic that approximately 22 lots could be fit on the subject property and approximately 34 lots would fit if the rezoning request is granted. Commissioner James Miller asked if the net addition would have a serious impact onto Cherry Creek Rd. Mr. Martin stated three ingress/egress points would lessen the stress on any one access point.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Joy Hall – 3528 Lenox Dr.
- Joe Leonard – 3531 Lenox Dr.

Ms. Hall stated concerns about maintaining the integrity of the surrounding subdivisions and that the current sizes of homes in the area are between 1380 and 2211 sq ft. Additional comments were concerning heavy/increased traffic and safety measures.

Commissioner Rountree asked staff if there are currently stub outs to Lenox Dr. and Sussex Dr. from the original site plan. Mr. Martin replied yes – it was a requirement for additional access. The number of homes dictates the number of required access points. Commissioner James Miller asked for clarification that the original site plan indicated the plan for expansion. Mr. Martin confirmed and the current zoning allows for the growth but less dense. Commissioner Steve Miller asked if the current number of houses in the existing subdivision has already triggered the additional access – points requirement. Mr. Martin confirmed.

Mr. Leonard's concerns were traffic focused saying there is already congestion during peak hours.

Commissioner James Miller verified again that the current zoning allows for the development of at least 22 homes. Mr. Martin confirmed.

The Public Hearing portion of the case was closed. There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Steve Miller made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Wildes 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. All voted in favor, no one opposed (6-0). Motion carried.

*****Agenda Items #4 and #5 were presented together with separate recommendations and motions/votes - Separate motions and vote results follow Public Hearing notes*****

Agenda Item #4

VA-2024-03 Stateline Investment Management, LLC, 4081 mt. Zion Church Rd.
Rezone 26.66 acres from R-21 (County) to R-15 (City)

Mr. Martin presented both VA-2024-03 and VA-2023-04 together as they are the same property. Stateline Investment Management LLC, represented by Jason Glas and Bobby Diaz, is requesting to rezone 26.66 acres from Medium-Density Residential (R-21)(county) to Single-Family Residential (R-15)(city). The subject property is located at 4081 Mt Zion Church Road, which is along the north side of the road, about 2,300 feet east of the intersection with Jaycee Shack Road and diagonally across from the intersection with Hayes Road. (The applicant is also seeking annexation of the property, which is being reviewed concurrently under file # VA-2024-04) The property currently contains a single-family residence. The applicant is proposing to demolish the residence and redevelop the entire property as a conventional single-family subdivision on public streets. The proposed subdivision will contain about 52 homes, a community open space area with pond & walking trails, a landscaped divided entrance from Mt Zion Church Road, a landscaped & fenced non encroachable buffer elsewhere along Mt Zion Church Road, as well as an HOA with protective covenants, etc...

The subject property is located within a Suburban Area (SA) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-15 zoning.

The subject property was rezoned from R-1 to R-21 in 2021, and was proposed as a subdivision with half acre lots. However, that development never materialized and the property has sat for 3 years while changing ownerships. The applicants (as new prospective buyers) are proposing to develop the subdivision with a little higher density and a more upscale design. Their proposal requires connection to a public water & sewer system, and the only reasonable availability for this is connection to the City of Valdosta utility system via the adjacent Knights Mill Subdivision.

The surrounding land use pattern is mostly residential on one-acre-plus lots along the Mt Zion Church Road corridor, with smaller lots in the Knights Mill subdivision to the north and west, as well as the Lauren Estates subdivision to the SE. The surrounding zoning pattern is also reflective of this pattern, with mostly R-1 and R-A zoning along Mt Zion Church Road, R-15 in Knights Mill and R-21 in Lauren Estates. This overall area is on a slow urbanizing trend, and is developing with a residential land use pattern with higher density subdivisions building in from the west. The applicant's proposal for R-15 zoning is identical to the adjacent Knights Mill subdivision. It is also only slightly more dense than the existing R-21 zoning, and is a logical progression of the overall developing pattern of the area. R-15 zoning only allows single family residential homes, no mobile homes or duplexes.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council.

Agenda Item #5

VA-2024-04 Stateline Investment Management, LLC, 4081 mt. Zion Church Rd.
Annex 26.66 acres into the City of Valdosta

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant, represented by Jason Glas and Bobby Diaz, is requesting to annex 26.66 acres into the City of Valdosta. The subject property is located at 4081 Mt Zion Church Road, which is along the north side of the road, about 2,300 feet east of the intersection with Jaycee Shack Road and diagonally across from the intersection with Hayes Road. The property currently contains a single-family residence. The applicant is proposing to redevelop the entire property as a conventional single-family subdivision with about 52 homes. 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 # VA-2024-03). ** See previous Agenda items for further details and discussion of the existing zoning patterns, and proposed rezoning request.

The subject property is 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 Valdosta city limits and it is fully eligible for annexation into Valdosta. 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 Valdosta is currently the only nearby provider of sufficient water/sewer services necessary to accommodate the scope of this development.

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

Speaking in favor of the requests:

- Jason Glas and Bobby Diaz, Applicants – 805 Harmon Dr.
- Bill Kent, Innovate Engineering – 2214 N Patterson St.

Mr. Glas explained that the County previously approved a 37 lots development and the proposed development is consistent with and compliments the surrounding subdivisions and will include sidewalks and landscape buffers as well as amenities to include a fenced playground and picnic shelter near the pond. Mr. Diaz stated they, as contractors will be building the homes themselves. There will be a single ingress/egress from Mt. Zion Church Rd.

Chairman Hightower inquired as to the proposed home sizes. Mr. Glas stated the homes will be 1800 to 2200 sq ft. Commissioner Bythwood asked if there would be any stub outs in addition to the single proposed access point. Mr. Glas stated there would be stub outs for future expansion. Commissioner Rountree asked if a single access point meets the requirement. Mr. Martin confirmed and further stated there is not enough road frontage off Mt. Zion Church Rd. for 2 entrances, so the solution is stub outs.

Mr. Kent explained that cul de sacs are designed so emergency vehicles can turn around and the pond will be utilized for stormwater management

Speaking in opposition to the requests:

- Glenn Koepp – 3586 Knights Mill Rd.
- David Washabaugh – 4125 Mt. Zion Church Rd.
- Andy Curry – 4107 Mt. Zion Church Rd.

Mr. Koepp stated he is not necessarily opposed to the request but is interested in the plans for the drainage ditch that runs along the eastern boundary of the subject property.

Mr. Washabaugh stated his adjacent property is zoned agricultural in the County where hunting is allowed. He is concerned that unnecessary calls to law enforcement may be made. Additionally, he asked who is responsible for emergency services "on the cusp".

Mr. Curry inquired as to whether privacy fences will be required.

Commissioner Rountree asked if Privacy Fences/Barriers can be a condition. Mr. Martin confirmed.

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

Regarding VA-2024-03, Commissioner Wildes made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Webb second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (6-0). Motion carried.

Regarding VA-2024-04, Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Rountree second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (6-0). Motion carried.

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

REZ-2024-03 Southern Gardens, 4609 Bemiss Road, 0145D 004, ~5.0 acres
Current Zoning: C-G (General Commercial)
Proposed Zoning: P-D (Planned Development)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from C-G (General Commercial) zoning to P-D (Planned Development) zoning, in order to develop a 60-unit apartment complex with amenities. The subject property possesses road frontage on Bemiss Road, a state-owned Arterial Road, and is within the Corridor Overlay, Urban Service Area and Neighborhood Activity Center Character Area.

The neighboring properties along the east, northeast and northwest are zoned P-D, and are comprised of single family, two-family, and multifamily dwellings, with a portion fronting Bemiss Road zoned C-H. The properties to the west and south are vacant commercially zoned parcels, with development potential for high-density residential, office, commercial, or a combination of the three under a planned development approach.

The TRC reviewed the request and had no technical objections with the proposed site plan, noting the difference in parking proposed by the applicant of one and a half spaces, and the two spaces per dwelling unit of ULDC Table 6.01.03(A); which is allowed per 4.06.02(B). Staff offered alternative design considerations for the site's layout, aimed at providing greater separation and privacy to the existing 1-story dwellings abutting the property, including relocation of buildings and reductions in height.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and surrounding land use pattern, and therefore recommends Approval.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Melanie Ferrell, Applicant's Representative – 3548 N. Crossing Cir.

Ms. Ferrell explained she was present to answer any questions the Commissioners might have.

There being none, Chairman Hightower asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition of the request.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Matthew Cox – 4095 Glen Laurel Dr. E.

Mr. Cox voiced concern about he proposed 3-story building looking directly into the backyards of the homes of Glen Laurel Dr., insufficient landscape buffer requirements, and wonders about potential dropped property values.

Chairman Hightower closed the Public Hearing portion of the case. Commissioner Bythwood asked Ms. Ferrell if there is concern about the reduction of the parking requirement. Ms. Ferrell stated historically, most residents are single-vehicle families. She also confirmed the development would be a Department of Community Affairs Tax Credit Program Development. Commissioner Rountree asked about public transportation availability. Ms. Ferrell explained SGRC Transit and the Valdosta On Demand programs are options. Commissioner Steve Miller asked is all units will be 2 bedroom. Ms. Ferrell said the majority are but there are also 1 and 3 bedroom options. Commissioner Rountree inquired as to the total number of units proposed. Ms. Ferrell answered there are 60 units designed.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for a motion. Commissioner Rountree made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Steve Miller second. Five (5) voted in favor, One (1) opposed (Bythwood). (5-1). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7

REZ-2024-04 Clyattstone Road Subdivision, Clyattstone Road, 0053 060, ~61.7 acres

Current Zoning: R-1 (Low Density Residential)

Proposed Zoning: R-10 (Suburban Density Residential)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to R-10 (Suburban Density) zoning, in order to develop a 110-lot subdivision. The subject property possesses road frontage on Clyattstone Road and Rocky Hill Church Road, a County owned Collector and Local Road respectively, and lies within the Urban Service Area and Suburban Character Area.

In 2020, the adjoining property to the east was rezoned to an R-10 site plan with conditions that included lots abutting Clyattstone Road be no less than 0.5 acres in size, lots fronting interior roads, the inclusion of sidewalks, and neighborhood amenities.

In keeping with the Comprehensive Plan's guidance, new development should be master-planned at a moderate density in these areas, with a greater focus on traditional neighborhood development residential subdivisions; including compatible architecture styles to maintain the regional character of the area, and as a way to capitalize on the recent investment in water and sewer infrastructure.

The TRC reviewed the application and had no technical objections, and Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and land use patterns, and therefore recommends Approval with the following condition:

Lots abutting Clyattstone Road shall be a minimum of 0.5 acres in size.

Commissioner Steve Miller asked if the second access point is through the Ballantyne Subdivision. Mr. Dillard confirmed.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Ferrell Scruggs, Representing Applicant – 502 Eager Rd.
- Stephen Cooper – 4709 Summerfield Dr.

Mr. Scruggs stated the infrastructure is in place to support the request. He further stated some residents of the Meadow Wood subdivision are supportive of the development.

Commissioner James Miller asked if there is a plan to sell the development to a national development firm. Mr. Scruggs replied there have been no talks about that at this point.

Mr. Cooper stated he has been in discussions with Mr. Scruggs regarding mirroring the Ballantyne Restrictive Covenants prohibiting vinyl siding and other requirements.

Chairman Hightower asked if there are Covenants in place yet. Mr. Scruggs stated those are being created.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Larry Kean – 4903 Meadowood Cir.

Mr. Kean was concerned about already heavy traffic being added to and asked if there would be some sort of landscaping requirements included in the Covenants. Additionally, he inquired about whether or not turn lanes or ingress/egress lanes would be created off Clyattstone Rd. and is concerned about overcrowding the schools.

Chairman Hightower asked staff if there are plans for turn lanes. Mr. Dillard explained the Engineering Department factored in the potential growth of R-10 density when Clyattstone Rd. was paved.

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 condition. Commissioner Rountree second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (6-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #8

REZ-2024-05 Dasher, 1776 Old Clyattville Rd., 0125D 001, ~115 acres

Current Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural) and CON (Conservation District)

Proposed Zoning: M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) and CON (Conservation District)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) and CON (Conservation) zoning to M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) and CON zoning. The subject property possesses road frontage on Old Clyattville Road, a Major Collector, and lies within the Urban Service Area, the Valdosta Airport and Old Clyattville Road Overlays, and is split between the Regional Activity and Conservation Character Areas. Additionally, portions of the property are within the VLD Approach and Horizontal Surface Zones, though primarily in the areas depicted as CON zoning.

Of the 115 acres total, ~16.45 are being requested to change from E-A to M-2, with ~18 acres requested to change from E-A to CON zoning; increasing the total Conservation zoning to ~98 acres.

While M-2 is not recommended within the Character area, the predominant zoning patterns and land uses to the north and east are M-2 within the Valdosta City limits, transitioning to larger tracts zoned for the operation of commercial and industrial activities towards the interstate, mixing M-1, M-2, and C-H.

- C-H, Highway Commercial. This district is intended to provide areas for commercial activities which provide products and services that generally require locations with the highest level of access to major collector roads, arterial highways, and regional transportation systems.
- M-1, Light Manufacturing. This district provides for light industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odor, smoke, or dust and do not produce, store, or handle hazardous wastes. Permissible uses include activities involved in warehousing, assembly, storage, and commercial services.
- M-2, Heavy Manufacturing. This district provides for the manufacturing, assembling, storage, distribution, and sales activities that are generally high intensity. For those industries which may have negative impacts or nuisance factors associated with their use, supplemental standards shall apply within the district.

The TRC had no technical objections, and Staff finds the request consistent with the land use patterns and goals of the Comprehensive Plan, and therefore recommends Approval with the following conditions:

1. Section 10.02.05(C) must be completed and submitted to the County Manager, or their designee, by any and all future prospects for review prior to any development approval from the local issuing authorities
2. Correctional Facilities, Transitional Care Facilities, and Junk and Salvage Yards are not allowed.

Commissioner Steve Miller asked for confirmation that M-2 zoning requires twice the buffer required in M-1. Mr. Dillard confirmed, but it can be even more depending on the use.

Speaking in favor of the requests:

- Mike Newsome, Representing Applicant – 209 Hunters Hill CT., Macon, GA

Mr. Newsome stated he was present to answer any questions from the Commissioners.

There being none, Chairman Hightower asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Hightower called for motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to recommend approval of the request as presented with two conditions. Commissioner Wildes second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (6-0). Motion carried.

There being no other business, Chairman Hightower adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**Ed Hightower, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission**

Date