

HARRIS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR SESSION

August 21, 2019
7:00 PM

Board Members Present: John Britt, John Brent, Bobby Irions, Chad Kimbrough, Chris Lintner. Members Absent: Chance Carlisle, Matthew Newberry. Staff Present: Brian Williams, Community Development Director; Nancy McMichael, Recording Secretary.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Britt called the meeting to order
2. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2019 Regular Session was made by Mr. Brent, seconded by Mr. Lintner, and passed with a vote of four in favor (Brent, Lintner, Britt, Irions), no opposition, and one abstention (Kimbrough, due to being absent from the July 17 meeting).
3. **DECISIONS BY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
 - A. **Application of Neil Block/Backwater Plaza LLC** to Rezone 1.19 acres of Land Lot 058, Land District 19, Map 016, Part of Parcel 058, from A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry) to C-4 (Highway Commercial); current use vacant; proposed use to provide septic drainage field for adjacent commercial mini-mall; property located behind 5175 GA Hwy 219, Fortson. Approved
 - B. **Application of Jedidiah B. Duncan** to Rezone 2.41 acres of LL 48, LD 19, Map 045, Parcels 178 & 179, from C-3 (Neighborhood Commercial) to C-4 (Highway Commercial); current use gas station and self-storage; proposed use gas station/mercantile, self-storage, and outdoor power equipment sales and service; property located at 6107 GA Hwy 315, Fortson. Approved withdrawal of application.
 - C. **Application of Benjamin Q. Johnson to Amend the Text of the Zoning Ordinance, Article V, Section 8**, related to the storage of certain vehicles and equipment. Approved withdrawal of application.
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Preliminary Plat: Abberly Lakes, Phase 6; 24 lots; Curtis Rodgers/Mount Pleasant Properties, Developer.** Stephen Ginn, representing Curtis Rodgers/Mount Pleasant Properties, appeared before the Commission to respond to questions regarding the plat. In response to questions, Mr. Ginn said the houses will be located on the proposed lots in accordance with required setbacks or even further back; that they are proposing a total of 24 lots; that adjacent property is for future development; and that all lots are two acres or greater and on septic tanks. There being no further questions, the motion to approve this Preliminary Plat was made by Mr. Kimbrough, seconded by Mr. Lintner, and passed unanimously.
5. **PUBLIC HEARINGS @ 7:15 PM**
 - A. **Explanation of Public Hearings.** Chairman Britt explained the procedures for the scheduled Public Hearings.
 - B. **Application of Brian M. Devine, for Verizon Wireless, for a Special Use Permit for Wireless Tower as an ancillary use, on 87.14 acres of property located at the northwest corner of Georgia Hwy 18 and Interstate 185, on Map 038, Parcel 033, Land Lots 98, 99 & 107, Land District 3, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry).** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the specifics of the application. Brian Devine, applicant, appeared before the Commission and said that Verizon Wireless is proposing a monopole tower in the northwest corner of SR 18 and I-185; that it will not be lit as it does not exceed FAA requirements; that with the exception of the top of the tower, it will not be visible from the road; that it will provide coverage in the area and along I-185; and that there will be room for at least three (3) carriers on the tower with room for their equipment in the compound area. In response to questions, Mr. Devine said that he is not employed by Verizon Wireless; that Verizon is responsible for compliance with all state, federal and local laws regarding the tower. There being no further comments, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this Special Use Permit. There being none, he closed

the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit was made by Mr. Kimbrough and seconded by Mr. Lintner. Mr. Brent asked if evidence can be provided that the tower has met all state and federal requirements, to which Mr. Devine responded that he would provide such to Brian Williams, Community Development Director. The motion to recommend approval, with the condition that evidence is to be provided to verify that the tower complies with/meets all federal and state requirements passed unanimously

- C. **Application of Grey Rock Development, LLC/David B. Erickson, to Rezone 137.87 acres on Land Lot 80, Land District 18, Map 047, Parcel 031, from R-1 (Low Density Residential/Single Family) to PRD (Planned Residential Development); current use vacant land; proposed use residential homes with commercial out-parcels and green spaces; property located about 2/10 of a mile east of intersection of Grey Rock Road and US Highway 27/US 1/Veterans Parkway, Cataula.** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order, stated that those speaking in favor of or opposed to the application will have three (3) minutes to speak; that the application is to rezone property from R-1 to PRD which is a zoning district that has been in place since 2001 and was recently modified; and that the two acre minimum applies to R-1 zoning districts. Dave Erickson, applicant, appeared before the Commission and said that the proposed development meets the requirements of the PRD ordinance; that the lots will be as small as 1/4 acre; that the national trend is to have large houses on small lots, which is something that millennials prefer; that the property is on the south side of Grey Rock Road; that to the north is the quarry, to the east is Greater Life Baptist Church, to the south is Pierce Chapel property and Grey Rock Development, LLC, property; that 196 lots are planned with sizes ranging from 1/4 acre to 1/2 acre; that this is a long term development, probably taking about 10 years; that 48 acres will be in greenspace, playground and parks; that 11 acres are for commercial; that house prices will range from \$250,000 to \$300,000; that, as required, it will have sanitary sewer with a lift station to pump the sewage downstream to Columbus Water Works site at Wooldridge and US 27; that he contacted 8 of the 11 property owners on Grey Rock Road about the project with three being neutral and five indicating support; that to connect to Columbus Water Works line will require a simple amendment to the current agreement they have with the County; and that as developer, he will be paying all costs associated with the sewer lift station, sewer system, sewer piping, water connections, road building, power, street signs, and stop signs.

Brian Williams, Community Development Director, clarified his opinion of approval by saying that while based on the zoning standards, the development could cause issues (adverse impact on adjacent properties and could cause a burden to schools, roads, water, emergency personnel, etc.), the development meets all the criteria of the PRD ordinance.

In response to questions, Mr. Erickson said that he is willing to meet with Brian Williams, Community Development Director, and the Planning Commission to work on the layout of the development; that utilities will be underground; that they have anticipated hitting rock at some point during development; that the houses will probably be two-story with four or five bedrooms; that there will be a continuity in the design of the houses over the 10 year build-out; that regarding dust from the quarry, the wind usually prevails from the south, so dust may not be an issue; that regarding noise, which is more prevalent during the night, with wind prevailing from the south, it may not be a big issue; that the houses may be 2,400 to 2,500 square feet; that the civil engineer is mandated to address the various detention ponds for water runoff; that the commercial areas will be built when there is interest shown for such; that there will be curb & gutter on the roads; that the open spaces would more than likely be for use of the residents within the subdivision rather than open to the public; that the HOA would control the open spaces; that he has had HOA experience since 1997; that once the sewer lift station is turned over to Harris County Water Works, it would be responsible for the maintenance of the lift station; and that he will provide the HOA template to Mr. Williams.

There being no further comments, Chairman Britt reminded those in attendance that comments would be limited to three (3) minutes and the speaker is to provide their name and address before making comments. He then asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application. There being none, he asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition.

Ed Lee, citizen who lives on Hamilton Mulberry Grove Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he is concerned about the proposed development; that he likes the rural atmosphere and low tax base; that if development continues, the County will not be what it is and we might not like what we get.

James Parnell, citizen who lives on Pintail Court, appeared before the Commission and said that he has been involved in HOAs where people move in, developer leaves, and several years later it looks like a ghetto; and that HOAs do not work.

Charles Hunsaker, citizen who lives on Red Fox Court, appeared before the Commission and said that he does not think the proposed development is in the best interest of the County; that during the last election, 83% of the voters indicated they wanted to keep the two acre minimum lot size; that PRDs must have public water and sewer, which means they can be developed near West Point, Pine Mountain, Waverly Hall and Hamilton; and that he strongly urges the disapproval of the rezoning.

Kevin Boykin, citizen who lives on Old Gate Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he is opposed to the rezoning; that it does not comply with the 2019 Comprehensive Land Use Plan; that that the development will put an undue burden on the school system, as well as on water, solid waste, emergency services and utilities; and he urged the Commission to recommend disapproval of the rezoning.

Mike Broderick, citizen who lives on Kennon Drive, appeared before the Commission and said that he is opposed to the rezoning.

Faith Birkhead, citizen who lives in Hamilton, appeared before the Commission and said that during her tenure with Hamilton City Council, she was in charge of public works, which includes sewage; that sewer lift stations are expensive to maintain; that she is concerned about the quality of life in Harris County; and that the development would have an impact on the aesthetics of the County.

Neil Callahan, citizen who lives on Piedmont Lake Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he is opposed to the rezoning; that approval would be against the will of the people of the County; that he moved to Harris County for the open spaces, no traffic, and low taxes; and HOAs usually have problems.

Marcia Smith, citizen who lives on Hudson Mill Circle, appeared before the Commission and said that the development will be burden on schools, ems, traffic, and roads in the immediate area; that GDOT has plans to widen US 27/Veterans Parkway in the area of the development; and that she is opposed to the rezoning.

Steve Melton, citizen who lives on GA Hwy 315, appeared before the Commission and said that the minimum lot size was two acres when he moved to the County' that he was watched more houses being built and understands there is a need for more housing, but not on 1/4 acre lots; and that lots should be large enough so that if his son wanted to "pee off the porch" he could do so without being seen by neighbors.

Justin Finney, citizen who lives on GA Hwy 219 and Assistant Superintendent for Harris County Schools, appeared before the Commission and said that more housing means more schools; that the State has a method in place regarding schools based on the student count for the last five years, not for future needs; that for the last five years, there has been an increase of 30 to 40 students per year; and that the burden is not just with schools, but with teachers, buses, and all the services provided to students.

David Bussey, citizen who lives on Greenridge Road, appeared before the Commission and said that smaller lots will end up with cars parked on the streets along with motor homes and cause hazards for emergency services; that he would like to see the two-acre minimum remain in place; and that he is opposed to the rezoning.

Myrna Pizarro, citizen who lives on Ruth E. Willett Drive, appeared before the Commission and said that with all the growth in the south part of the County, it's beginning to feel like north Columbus; and that while she doesn't mind growth, she is not in favor of smaller lots.

Gene Weldon, citizen who lives on Denney Road, appeared before the Commission and said that the intent of the proposed development is to sell homes; that he is mainly concerned about the impact on the school system; and that he encourages a vote of disapproval on this rezoning.

Tony Link, citizen who lives on Grey Rock Road, appeared before the Commission and said that Grey Rock Road has a lot of traffic as a connector road between Veterans Parkway and Warm Springs Road; that the County should get ready to spend money on the road because it is in bad shape and will only get worse with the addition of 200 houses; and that the rural beauty and environment of the County is cherished by the citizens.

Bobby Watson, citizen who lives on Old Gate Road, appeared before the Commission and said that the development will bring more traffic, higher taxes, lower property values, and an increase in crime; and that he does not think this development will be good for the County or its citizens.

Brenda Bradshaw McGrotha, citizen who lives on Layfield Branch Road, appeared before the Commission and said that her children still live in Harris County on 13, 5 and 4 acres, so when Mr. Erickson said that housing on smaller lots is what millennials want, he must be referring to “city” millennials, not “country” millennials.

Bill Berry, citizen who lives on Denney Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he moved to Harris County many years ago for a serene “Mayberry” lifestyle and would like to see it stay that way; that he does not want to see developments that will be slums in 20 years; and that he would like to see the rezoning denied before it leaves the County ashamed about it.

Meghan Guenther, citizen who lives on Hamilton Mulberry Grove Road, appeared before the Commission and said that the tax rate was just increased, deputies are underpaid, County employees are underpaid, and there is not enough money in the budget for any new hires; that such a development will put a burden on the County schools, sheriff’s office, emergency services, volunteer fire departments, etc., and that all PRDs should be tabled until the County can figure out to handle such development.

Lynn Morgan, citizen who lives on Peed Smith Road, appeared before the Commission and said that it takes a lot of planning for such a development; and that this rezoning was not thought out as it does not provide enough space.

Debbie Graham, citizen who lives on Voorhees Road, appeared before the Commission and said that the County needs to think about what its doing; that a lot of people live paycheck to paycheck; that people like the “Mayberry” way of life; and that consideration to what the citizens want.

John Joy, citizen who lives on Hamilton Mulberry Grove Road, appeared before the Commission and said that based on the voters, this type of development is not wanted; that no one in attendance has spoken in favor of this development; and that the Commission should listen to the people.

John Palomo, citizen who lives on Commodore Drive, appeared before the Commission and said that developers are only responsible for a development until it is turned over to an HOA; that HOAs need to be looked at; that he is not opposed to growth, but it has to be done slowly; and that he opposes the rezoning.

Sam Schuler, citizen who lives on Wildwood Plantation Lane, appeared before the Commission and said that once such a development is allowed, then it’s all down hill.

Connie Friou, citizen who lives on Grey Rock Drive, appeared before the Commission and said that she is concerned about first responders; that with her second heart attack she had to wait 20 minutes before the ambulance arrived; that more houses will increase the population; and that the County can’t handle the growth and can’t afford more first responders.

There being no further comments in opposition, Chairman Britt asked Mr. Erickson for rebuttal. In rebuttal, Mr. Erickson said that the build out of the development will take about 10 years; that regarding schools, every development brings more students and the only way to control that is to stop all permits; that regarding sewer, only those in the development will pay for the sewer and invoiced by Harris County Water Works; that regarding sewer lift stations Muscogee County has 10 to 12 and he knows of no issues with any; that regarding medical needs, many citizens want the County to stay as it is, but people move here everyday, each adding to the number of citizens that may require ambulance services. In response to questions from the Commission, Mr. Erickson said that the PRD must have sufficient greenspace, but that ecological analysis have not been done; that the development meets all the requirements for the PRD and is consistent with the 2019 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

There being no further questions or comments, Chairman Britt closed the Public Hearing and asked that the Impact Sheets be completed.

The motion to recommend disapproval of this rezoning was made by Mr. Lintner and seconded by Mr. Brent, who said there were compelling reasons for him to disapprove the application. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Brent said that he appreciated the comments from everyone; that during his five years on the Planning Commission, this is the first time he has seen such a large turnout; and that all citizens should take responsibility and take part in governmental issues.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lintner, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed unanimously.

John Britt, Chairman

Nancy McMichael, Recording Secretary