

# HARRIS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## REGULAR SESSION

January 15, 2020  
7:00 PM

Members Present: John Britt, John Brent, Chance Carlisle, Bobby Irions, Chris Lintner, Matthew Newberry. Member Absent: Chad Kimbrough. 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 December 18, 2019 Regular Session was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed unanimously.
3. **ORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION**
  - A. **Chairman.** The motion to reappoint Mr. Britt as Chairman was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Lintner, and passed unanimously.
  - B. **Vice-Chairman.** The motion to appoint Mr. Lintner as Vice-Chairman was made by Mr. Newberry, seconded by Mr. Carlisle, and passed unanimously.
  - C. **Secretary.** The motion to appoint Mr. Newberry as Secretary was made by Mr. Lintner, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed unanimously.
4. **DECISIONS BY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
  - A. **Application of Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc.,** to Rezone 299.9 acres property located on Map 044, Part of Parcel 014, Land Lots 38, 39, 46 & 47, Land District 19, from A-1 (Agricultural & Forestry) to R-1 (Single Family Residential). Unanimous approval on January 7 with the condition of two access points for ingress and egress.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. **Final Plat: Abberly Lakes, Phase 6; Land Lots 98 & 127 in Land District 18; 25 lots on 99.691 acres; Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., developer.** Stephen Ginn, representing Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., appeared before the Commission to respond to questions regarding the Final Plat. There being none, the motion to approve this Final Plat was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Irions, and passed unanimously.
  - B. **Appeal of Administrative Disapproval re Subdivision of 6+/- acres on Cherokee Trail: Daniel Kosobucki.** Daniel Kosobucki, citizen, appeared before the Commission to appeal the administrative disapproval of Brian Williams, Community Development Director, regarding the subdivision of 6+/- acres from a larger tract of property. Mr. Kosobucki explained that he originally purchased the 6+/- acres in order to have access to his property from Mt. Airy Road; that because his other property was in conservation, it only made sense to have the 6+/- acres combined with the larger tract; that he has been approached by an individual to purchase the 6+/- acres but because of current County regulations he cannot subdivide and sell the property because his property is on an easement road (Cherokee Trail). Following discussion, the motion to overturn the disapproval of the subdivision of the 6 +/- acres with the condition that no further subdivisions will take place was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Lintner, and passed with five in favor (Carlisle, Lintner, Brent, Irions, Newberry) and one opposed (Britt).
6. **PUBLIC HEARING @ 7:15 PM**
  - A. **Explanation of Public Hearing.** Chairman Britt explained the Public Hearing procedures.
  - B. **Application of Pamela Pruett for a Special Use Permit for a Special Events Facility and Outdoor Wedding Venue on 15+/- acres of property on Map 040, Part of Parcel 010, Land Lot 299, Land**

**District 20, located at 495 Beech Springs Road, Pine Mountain, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural & Forestry)**. Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the specifics of the application. Pamela Pruett, applicant, appeared before the Commission and said that she would like to build a barn for a wedding venue. In response to questions, Mrs. Pruett said that the barn will be about 100' x 65'; that the barn will accommodate up to 500 people; that the parking area will probably be crush and run; that she anticipates holding 35 events a year; that lighting will be in the parking lot area and wherever needed; that she anticipates being open Thursday, Friday and Saturday for weddings, and on other days if necessary; that hours will be 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM; that most of her neighbors are members of her family; that access would be from Hopewell Church Road to Beech Springs Road; that she will provide traffic control if required by the County; that she will leave the pecan trees; that she hopes to renovate the 1900's home on the property; that for safety purposes, the building will have sprinklers; that the sound system will be only in the barn; and that she plans to have the capability to close the sides of the barn when an "open air" venue is not needed.

There being no further questions, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the application. There being none, he asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to the application.

Jim Billings, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he raises horses; that he is opposed to the application; and that there is another venue within 10 miles.

Daniel Ferrone, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that nothing has been said about how people will be vetted; that there is a facility on McGee Road for which deputies are constantly being called out due to noise, shots being fired, loud voices, and other issues; that special events tend to get out of control; and regarding traffic, there are dangerous curves on the roads in the area.

John Scully, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he has lived in the area about 15 years; that the average number of vehicles is about 40 a day and an increase will make conditions worse; and that there is a rusted out culvert where water is routing to a much smaller, older culvert.

Charles Koone, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that on behalf of Hopewell Methodist Church he is opposed to the Special Use Permit because the increase in traffic will disturb church activities; that on a personal level, he lives on Wright Road and is opposed to the application; that the venue could bring another 200 to 250 cars for each event; that the roads are very dark at night; that he objects to the traffic, alcohol, noise and light pollution; that eventually people attending events could object to normal country activities like shooting and the smells of animals; that residents ride horses on the roads; and that there is another venue less than five (5) miles away.

Sue Koone, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and gave a presentation, with photographs showing the various dangerous curves and areas of the three roads (Beech Springs Road, Wright Road, and Oliver Road), which are basically one road, as well as the sharp turn onto Nathon Thompson Road; that there are three points of access and none are safe; and that based on the information provided by the applicant, 75 events are planned with up to 500 people at each event.

Ernest Koone, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he is opposed to the application; that the facility could turn into a commercial venture; and that the property is in the country and people in the area discharge weapons.

Jeff Hutcherson, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said he has lived in the area 19 years; that he moved there to be in a rural area; that he does not want to be in a commercial area; that the event center is not something that is wanted in the neighborhood; that there are a lot of elderly people in the area that walk or ride bikes on the roads; that regarding sprinklers for the building, the water would have to be from a well since county water is not in the area; that the tenant in the house on the subject property has the junkiest yard on the road; and that if the applicant allows her tenant to keep the house property in such a manner, the event center could be questionable.

Mercer Buffington, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he lives adjacent to the subject property; that he is concerned about the sewer needs for the event center; and that he is against the application.

Jesse James, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he is opposed to the event center; that he does not want the additional traffic that will occur for each event; that he wants the area to remain peaceful and not have the noise and traffic that will result from events; and that GPS tends to give wrong directions in the area which results in people having to turn their vehicles around.

Rhonda James, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that the three roads really form a five mile circle; that there are two dirt roads; that she is opposed to all the traffic and noise that will result from the events; and that having 75 events in a year averages having one at least once a week or more.

Steve Koone, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that GPS devices lead people down Oliver Road, a dirt road, which has a small one lane bridge.

Robin Koone, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that she does not want the additional traffic; that she is concerned about the effect on property values; that she does not want the event center in the neighborhood; and that she would like the area to remain quiet.

Cindy Majors, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that she drives past the subject property every day; that she walks and bikes on the roads in the area; that she is on-call for her job every six to eight weeks and having to drive out of the area behind the additional traffic that could occur for each event would only delay her getting to her job; and that she moved to the area to be in the country for peace and quiet.

Rick Scarbrough, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he owns property adjacent to the subject property; that he is concerned about this grandchildren with a possible increase in traffic, especially if alcohol is involved.

Nick Marino, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said "ditto" to everything that has previously been said; that the area is currently peaceful and quiet; that many people walk the five mile (of the roads); that property values will drop; and that the applicant does not live on the subject property, and will be able to go home each night and the event activities won't bother her.

Josh Seward, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he moved to the area so that his kids can be outside and safe; and that he is opposed to the application.

Christie Seward, citizen who lives on Wright Road, appeared before the Commission and said that she is concerned for the safety of her children; that she wants her kids to grow up without being fearful; that there could be issues resulting from having 500 people at an event; that she is concerned about the increase in traffic; and that she is opposed to the application.

Bernie Talley, citizen who lives on Beech Springs Road, appeared before the Commission and said that there is basically one road so he is not sure why there are three names; that traffic usually consists of the mailman each day, the trash truck once a week, and church traffic on Wednesday and Sunday; that he has 38 years of law enforcement experience specializing in traffic enforcement and crash investigation; that the roads are not built for the kind of traffic that will come in; that the curves in the roads are dangerous; that people unfamiliar with the roads will have issues with the roads and adding alcohol to the mix will only increase the danger; and that he has worked security at various special events and with alcohol, people tend to get loud, want to fight, and he doesn't want that in his neighborhood.

There being no further comments in opposition, Chairman Britt asked Mrs. Pruett for rebuttal comments.

Mrs. Pruett, in rebuttal, said that the property taxes were paid on December 20; that it was nice to hear from her neighbors and put names with faces; that other venues are not within five miles; that she will have an architectural engineer design the barn; that she lives in Troup County; that there will be a sewer septic system in the plans; that she has talked to Harris County Water Works about a water line to provide County water, for which she would have to pay the costs for installation; that the average number of events may be 35; that she would like to have all improvements to the 1900's house made. In response to questions from the Commission, Mrs. Pruett said that people renting her venue would have to provide liability insurance, even though she will also have same; that clientele could be limited; that the hours will be 9 AM to 9 PM; that the

barn will be insulated and have an HVAC system; that regarding security, she does not know what the county requires; and that she doesn't think the event center will bring down property values and will be an improvement to her property and the historic home.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Britt closed the Public Hearing. He then made the motion to recommend disapproval of this Special Use Permit application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brent and passed unanimously.

7. **NEW BUSINESS (CONTINUED)**

- C. **Master Plan Revision of Woodland Hills: CJC Partners, LLC, Lee Duncan, representative.** Chris Brazell, with EMC Engineering in Columbus and representing CJC Partners, appeared before the Commission and said that the revision to the Master Plan is to provide betterments to the community by providing some estate lots, that golf is not the most advantageous use of the land; that there is no change in the overall net density; that the only change is to the 34.4 acres zoned R-3 to increase the lots size; that there will be sewer and water and the developers are working with Columbus Water Works regarding same; that there will be a lift station in the lower southeast corner of the property and will be pumped to the nearest Columbus Water Works station. In response to questions, the existing homes will not be required to connect to the sewer; and that lots in 34.4 acres are the estate lots 150' x 300', which is about 45,000 SF, or one acre lots. It was pointed out to Mr. Brazell that if the R-3 property will be used for single family homes, it will have to meet the R-1 requirement of having two acre minimum lots. Lee Duncan, developer, said he was not aware that was a condition but they should be able to meet the requirement. He said that they will abide by the County's requirements.

Discussion included that the lots within the Resort zoning are less than two acres lots; that everything outside of the existing 115 lots will have sewer; that the biggest modification is to utilize the golf course; that the existing roads within the development do not belong to the County; that the previous Master Plan approval (in 2013) included a condition that there be no private roads in the development; and that the intent is to have no private roads. Mr. Duncan, regarding the roads, said that there are two elements regarding the roads - the undeveloped area will have roads developed to County standards with the intention of turning same over to the county, and 115 lots are on roads which ownership interest is not known at this point in time and they are spending time to determine that issue, but there is no answer at this time. He said that there are challenges regarding the road ownership, but they are trying to work through a logical progression to come up with a solution.

In response to questions, Mr. Brazell said that the burden for maintenance for the water and sewer would be through an intergovernmental agreement between Columbus Water Works and Harris County with some type of funding mechanism for usage fees; that anyone who would purchase a lot with the water and sewer would receive a fee for same; that the agreement would dictate who would operate and maintain the system; that he is a licensed professional engineer in the State of Georgia, has designed lift stations, is aware of what Columbus Water Works requires; that the lift station will be sized appropriately and will be a duplex pump system in the event of electrical failure, and include an alarm system, a SCADA system; that the sewer lines will not go through existing lots; and that there will be a water system, a storm system, and a sewer system; and there should be some type of retention/detention ponds and more engineering is necessary.

Regarding the lakes and dams, Mr. Duncan said that there are three dams in the property, one on Day Lake Drive whose ownership is in question; that the other two dams are on the north end of the property off Mehaffey Road, with a dam immediately to the right and another about 300 yards on the left and both will be the responsibility of the developer; that any new construction and development will be their responsibility; that they understand they have to comply with the Safe Dams Act and in accordance with State law. Mr. Duncan said that to get the Master Plan revision actually reduces the number of homes previously approved by 62 units; that it provides a more sensible configuration; that it is a massive rehabilitation for the property; and that it is the first step for approval in order to take the plan to their lenders.

Regarding the common/amenity areas, Mr. Duncan said they will dedicate all the common areas to the homeowners association; that there will be two homeowners associations - one for those currently living in

the community and the other for the new homes, which will require membership in a mandatory association which will control all the common areas, walking trails, ponds, amenities (swim, tennis, kid play areas, etc.); that the existing homeowners, if they wish, can join the mandatory association; that they will not encumber the existing 115 homeowners and try to build around them and minimize any impact during any construction.

Regarding ownership of the main lake off Day Lake Drive, Mr. Duncan said he is not sure as to who owns the lake; that the lots surrounding the lake could go into the lake; and that he is not certain as to ownership.

Mr. Duncan said that funds have been set aside to bring sewer to the property; that he plans to sit down with the existing homeowners to share with them what is planned; that he has been extremely reluctant to do that up to this point; that he may need to make modifications for the homeowners; and that he wants to be able to please the existing homeowners.

In response to questions regarding utilities and infrastructure, Mr. Duncan said internet and cable are critical services and engineers are working with local service providers to determine who can best serve the community; and that they are in the planning process to get such answers.

Regarding the 10-acre commercial tract, Mr. Duncan there will be an anchor store of about 20,000 SF; that behind the tract are the cottages with anterior roads, like those in Longleaf in Callaway Garden; and that formally, they are offering to provide the County with a location for fire protection, emergency medical, or law enforcement.

Regarding security, Mr. Duncan said that they do not plan to be a gated community; and that security is something, cameras or whatever, will probably evolve.

Regarding build-out, Mr. Duncan said build-out is expected to be in 7 to 12 years; that they have met with four different brokerage agencies and enthusiasm is pretty high; that he has found three high quality builders to be part of this project - Jones, Bee Smart, and Brown - with whom design standards will be developed to reflect the values of this community.

Regarding schools, Mr. Duncan said that he has spoke to Roger Couch, who has not expressed any concerns regarding the development of this property, and that he did not express concern about the number of potential students; and that he has also talked to Skip Wyatt regarding fire protection for the property and will comply with the prevailing standards.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Britt closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion.

The motion to recommend approval of the Master Plan Revision, to include the conditions on the October 2013 Master Plan was made by Mr. Lintner, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed unanimously. The conditions are (1) no private roads, (2) all lots less than two acres must be on sewer except those lots, owned by individuals other than the developer, that were platted and recorded prior to October 1, 2013, (3) roads with dams to be considered for County acceptance must have ten-year bonds, and (4) roads with dams to be considered for County acceptance must have a minimum 60' right of way out of water.

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

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John Britt, Chairman

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Nancy McMichael, Recording Secretary