

**HARRIS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION**

October 21, 2020
7:00 PM

Members Present: John Britt, Chris Lintner, Paul Dasher, Bobby Irions, Gene Weldon. Member Present (via phone due to COVID-19): John Brent. Members Absent: Chance Carlisle. Staff Present: Brian Williams, Community Development Director; Nancy McMichael, Recording Secretary. Staff Present (via phone): Anna Johnson, Planner.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Britt called the meeting to order.
2. **WELCOME.** Chairman Britt welcomed Gene Weldon, new member, who was appointed to complete the term of Matthew Newberry, who had resigned.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2020, Regular Session was made by Mr. Lintner, seconded by Mr. Irions, and passed unanimously. (No meeting in September.)
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Preliminary Plat: Mulberry Grove, Pods 2A and 2B; 59 Lots, zoned CUPD; Mulberry Grove Development Company, Developer.** Chris Rogers, representing Mulberry Grove Development, appeared before the Commission and said the preliminary plat is for 59 lots of single family homes in Pods 2A and 2B. In response to questions, Mr. Rogers said that there is a 100-foot buffer in this section of the development; that there are multiple locations for access. Charles Ray Sheffield, of Mulberry Grove Development, clarified that there are some areas of the development that do have a 125-foot buffer, particularly where the commercial area backs up to existing homes in Poplar Place Subdivision. There being no further comment or questions, the motion to approve this Preliminary Plat was made by Mr. Lintner, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Final Plat: Abberly Lakes, Phase 7, 18 Lots on 58 acres, zoned R1; south end of Abberly Lane, Ellerslie; Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., Developer.** Brian Williams, Community Development Director, said that the Preliminary Plat showed 19 lots, but the number has been reduced to 18 on the Final Plat. Edgar Hughston, of Edgar Hughston Builder, appeared before the Commission to respond to questions and comments. Discussion included that the road frontage on some of the lots has increased to 60 feet; that there is rolling topography; that lots are well beyond the flood plain; that the topography was not conducive for septic tanks and resulted in a reduction in the number of lots. Following discussion, the motion to approve this Final Plat was made by Mr. Lintner, seconded by Mr. Weldon, and passed with four in favor (Lintner, Weldon, Britt, Dasher) and two opposed (Brent, Irions).
5. **PUBLIC HEARING @ 7:15 PM**
 - A. **Explanation of Public Hearing.** Chairman Britt explained the Public Hearing procedures.
 - B. **Application of Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., to rezone 85.83 acres of property on Map 045, Part of Parcel 014, Land Lots 86 & 115, Land District 19, located 3/10 of mile west of intersection of James Road and Fortson Road, Fortson.** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the specifics of the application. Edgar Hughston, of Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., appeared before the Commission, distributed a map depicting adjacent properties, and said that the surrounding properties are mainly single family homes; that plans are to have lots ranging from 2 acres to 7 acres; probably all but about four or five lots will back up to existing single family homes; that there are no “shotgun” type lots; that most people would turn right on Fortson Road rather than go through Poplar Place. In response to questions, Mr. Hughston said that he will be extending the water lines to provide water to the development; that there will be a culvert to cross the stream on the 76-acre parcel; that until the flood study is

prepared they will not know for certain about buffers; that they are proposing 29 lots, but the exact number is uncertain at this time. Discussion also included that while the length of the cul-de-sac may be long, other developments have been allowed to have cul-de-sacs longer than what is stated in the County regulations.

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

Meghan Guenther, citizen who lives on Barnes Mill Road, appeared before the Commission and said that she moved from the Cataula area because of development such as the one being proposed; that the County is currently working on an update of its land development codes and consideration should be given to allow that process to occur before approving new developments; and that action should be postponed.

Jeff Pritchard, citizen who lives on Fortson Road, appeared before the Commission and said that he's confused as to why someone would purchase property before getting it rezoned; that other developments by the applicant are devoid of trees with homes looking very similar in style and configuration; that he moved from Columbus for the rural atmosphere; that the applicant should consider building one-third the number of homes and that they be higher end homes; that at Fortson Road to the right is a bad curve and left has site distance issues, so regardless of which way, there will be traffic issues; and that the development will put a strain on the infrastructure.

Authur Burgess, citizen who lives on Stoney Creek, appeared before the Commission and said he has lived in the area since 2008 and he did not move here only to have Columbus come to Fortson; that the developer builds houses with vinyl siding; and that traffic in the area will increase and most people will go through Poplar Place to get to the interstate.

Frank Palkoska, citizen who lives on James Road, appeared before the Commission and said that after living in Columbus for 25 years, he moved to Harris County to retire; that due diligence has not been done regarding the impact on law enforcement, emergency, and fire services; that more development results in more people and more crime; that the development will result in an increase in traffic; and that this development should be put on hold until studies are done.

Jimmy Hart, citizen who lives on Fortson Road, appeared before the Commission, distributed information and reviewed the document outlining other developments by Edgar Hughston Builder and the number of lots within and remaining in each; and said that he and Matt Hanner own the acreage on the east side of the proposed development; that the west side is Stoney Creek; that he watched traffic this morning and counted 824 cars from 7:25 AM to 8:20 AM; that in developments by the applicant, there are many vacant lots, about 174, on which he can still build; that traffic will only increase with the development; that there is a small stream on the property; and that an environmental study should be performed regarding the streams, lakes, and Standing Boy Creek.

Luther Miller, citizen who lives on Westwood Way, appeared before the Commission and said that he lives in the last house in Stoney Creek and has water pressure of 40 psi; that the addition of more homes will affect his water pressure; that one of the lakes has never been muddy, but has been stained from time to time; that bulldozer work is happening on James Road; that his neighbor has been told to move his camper from his front yard because of two lots going in across the road; that the lakes are muddied; and that there are underground springs on the property.

Tyler Pritchard, who lives in Columbus but is the son of Jeff Pritchard and grandson of Jimmy Hart, appeared before the Commission and said that while he doesn't live in the County, he stands to inherit property; that he is concerned about how the development will look in 15 or so years from now; that it will look good for 2-3 years, but will the homes hold their value for 20 years; that he

is concerned with water runoff into the lakes and Standing Boy Creek; and that consideration should be taken regarding quality as well as quantity.

There being no further comments, Chairman Britt asked Mr. Hughston for rebuttal.

Mr. Hughston, in rebuttal, said that regarding the water pressure, he will meet with the Water Works Director to make sure there isn't a problem; that when developing around lakes, such has to be monitored and for every 1/2 inch of rainfall a check is done to make sure the development is in compliance and not causing erosion issues; that in Hart Preserve there is a 100-acre buffer set aside as permanent easement, which means there will be no development on that property; that Columbus is moving north and has started moving up the interstate just as it occurs in other cities and counties; that Highway 315 has been designated as a development corridor in the land use plans; that while there are no lots left in Oak Hill, there are a few in Hudson Meadows; that there will not be 65 lots on James Road, but will probably be closer to 28; that the average house price is \$330,000; that he builds what people want since they get to choose the design, color, etc.; that he does not use vinyl siding, but builds with concrete board which will last just as long as brick and can be painted; that as long as there is a demand, he will keep trying to build houses; and that the rezoning meets all the requirements currently in place.

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

The motion to recommend disapproval of this Rezoning Application was made by Mr. Irions. The motion died for lack of a second. The motion to recommend approval of this Rezoning was made by Mr. Lintner, who commented that it meets the current zoning requirements, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed with five in favor (Lintner, Brent, Britt, Dasher, Weldon) and one opposed (Irions).

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

John Britt, Chairman

Nancy McMichael, Recording Secretary