

SPALDING COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
April 28, 2009

The Spalding County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on April 28, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. in Room 108 of the Spalding County Courthouse Annex. Members present were: Ed Johnson, Chairman, presiding; Walt Glover; David Traer and John Youmans. Janet Bailey was not present.

Also present were: Charles Taylor, Community Development Director; Newton Galloway, Attorney and Yvonne Langford to record the minutes.

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order, introduced the members of the Planning Commission, and invited those present wanting to address the Board regarding any matter to sign in on the appropriate form.

Application #09-01Z: Griffin-Spalding Development Authority, Owner – Paragon Consulting Group, Agent – Arthur K. Bolton Parkway, Rehoboth Road and Wild Plum Road (576.62 acres, more or less, located in Land Lots 211, 237, 238, 243, 244 and 245 of the 2nd Land District) – requesting a rezoning from C-2, Manufacturing, and AR-1, Agricultural and Residential, to PDD, Planned Development District.

Application #09-01AZ: LRTS Properties, LLC, Owner – Paragon Consulting Group, Agent – Arthur K. Bolton Parkway and Rehoboth Road (14.65 acres located in Land Lot 211 of the 2nd Land District) – requesting a rezoning from C-2, Manufacturing, to PDD, Planned Development District.

Mr. Johnson announced that the two applications will be discussed together and voted separately.

Charles Penny – 106 Maplewood Drive

Mr. Penny stated that he was representing the owners of the property. He displayed a proposed site-plan for the project. The plan represents the most current version of the site plan. Some changes were made due to comments made at the last meeting. He reviewed the changes that had been made.

Mr. Taylor said the staff has reviewed the applications for the rezoning of this tract. Because of the size of the project, it was required to go through a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review process through the local RDC. That process was completed and resulted in a favorable recommendation from the RDC. Staff reviewed the application as well and is recommending conditional approval and all conditions are outlined in the staff report.

The conditions are as follows:

- a. The recommendations from the DRI review process have been attached. The County has the option to include these recommendations as part of the zoning conditions.
- b. The County should consider improving road connectivity by extending Boyd's Crossing Road to intersect with the proposed access road at Rehoboth Road.

- c. The County and Development Authority should work together with the Georgia Department of Transportation to effect the alignment of Wild Plum Road on both sides of S.R. 16.
- d. Staff recommends enhancing sustainability and encouraging pedestrian mobility and safety within the Commercial Center and the proposed hotel/conference center tracts. To that end, we recommend that applicant meet with County and Regional Development planning staffs to accomplish a possible redesign of these sites prior to their being developed.
- e. The road frontage along S.R. 16 is very scenic and should be preserved in its current appearance. To that end, a minimum 50-foot buffer should be maintained along S.R. 16 with the exception of the proposed new road alignments and a 300-foot linear section along the S.R. 16 on either side of Rehoboth Road. The buffer should include the protection of the trees and scenic vista.
- f. All site lighting shall be directed so as not to glare on adjacent properties.

Mr. Penny said he would like to go through the recommendations.

The DRI recommended the closing of Barrow Road. That is included in the construction plan. They anticipate having the DOT permit in hand by the end of the week. DOT has given verbal approval.

A comment was made regarding alternate modes of transportation for the development. The Development Authority would like to address this in the future when the individual sites are developed. They are looking at construction of a road and some paths for the industrial sites. The hotel conference center plans and commercial sites are conceptual at the present time and will all have to come back to the Commission for approval. He requested that the alternate modes of transportation be addressed at a future time.

Concern was expressed about the marine life and the lakes. As part of the construction documents, there will be a very detailed erosion and sedimentation plan that should address any concerns regarding the marine life. All measures will be taken to keep the sediment out of the lakes. They will be going "above and beyond" with the water quality measures.

There appears to be some confusion regarding the construction of part of the road. The intent is to build the entire road system.

The landscape ordinance was mentioned with the request that it be strictly enforced. The Development Authority is not requesting any special treatment regarding landscaping. They intend to follow the ordinance with this phase of development and the intent is to follow the ordinance with any future site plans.

There were comments regarding a street concept plan regarding trees, signage and lighting. This can be addressed when the individual site plans are submitted. They are presently trying to focus on constructing the road and getting the industrial site pad built so they will have something to show to prospects.

It was requested that the utilities be underground. This is in harmony with the plans. The industrial sites will have high-voltage three-phase power and there can be no guarantee that it can

be put underground. It may have to be aerial. The other utilities can be installed underground. They would like to leave this open because they do not have any direction on how the supplier of the electricity will install the wires.

They would like to have the comments regarding the bus stops and other transportation issues dealt with in the future because there is no bus system. If something comes up and it becomes feasible, they could incorporate that into the plan as buildings are constructed and it is needed.

Bike paths were mentioned in the DRI comments. This is not practical for industrial areas. There was some mention of having a combination walking trail/bike path for the walking trail around the lakes. In researching the suggestion, they found that the trail is not satisfactory for a bike trail. A portion will go over a very steep dam. The bike trail would not be good for that particular area.

The suggestion was made to have better connectivity between the uses. They would like to have future developers look at this concept when their plans are submitted. This needs to be an option for industries. A lot of industries do not like to have a trail connected to their property. Frequently security and safety issues are top priorities on industrial sites. A lot of industries do not want their sites to have public access. They do not want this approval to be conditioned on a requirement regarding connectivity. A proposed walking trail accessible to the entire project should be left to the industries that locate in the park and not a requirement for zoning. Sidewalks were suggested for the entire road. The cost is estimated at between \$250,000 and \$300,000. This would be very expensive. The buildings will be spaced out, and they do not feel sidewalks would be used that much in an industrial area. The feeling is that those funds would be better spent in another area. They request sidewalks not be a condition at the present time.

There was a comment that the developers need to follow the ordinance. The Development Authority is not asking for any special treatment related to the ordinance. They request the rezoning without any conditions. They do not want any encumbrances for any industries interested.

There was a comment regarding improving Boyd's Crossing by connecting it with Rehoboth Road. This is something that Spalding County's transportation planning for the future could consider. This is going to be very expensive because property would have to be acquired from private sources and the Authority would not want that expense tied to this rezoning.

There was a comment made regarding the alignment with Wild Plum Road on both sides of Highway 16. Presently, the plan is for a realignment of a very short section of Wild Plum Road that will run perpendicular into the connector road. They had to discuss this with DOT and have had no discussion with them regarding the other side of Highway 16.

The buffer along Highway 16 is in the overlay district, and there is a 50' undisturbed buffer and it will be maintained. They are keeping the grading out of the buffer. Much of the strip is open now. There is a wooded area that will not be disturbed. They are abiding by the overlay district plan.

They would like to have the site lighting considered on an individual site basis.

The last comment was regarding general connectivity and industry does not like public access to their property. If the individual industry wants that, they will be able to consider it at the time

they develop the property. Connectivity in the residential area can be considered when a developer is identified to develop that portion of the project.

David Brock – 923 Mockingbird Lane

Mr. Brock said he is representing the Griffin-Spalding County Chamber of Commerce. A portion of the mission statement of the Chamber focuses on “enhancement of the quality of life in our community”. He feels the plan the Development Authority has submitted is in harmony with the mission statement, and he feels it will be good for the citizens of Griffin and Spalding County. The conceptual plan for The Lakes at Green Valley will enhance the quality of life for the citizens through its multi-purpose aspects. The incorporation of retail shopping, hotel/conference center, future residential potential and recreation facilities into the project make it a true live, work and play environment. The project will serve as a tremendous gateway to our community through its compliance with the Arthur Bolton Parkway Overlay restrictions keeping all development away from the immediate right-of-way. The project uses a number of natural buffers to shield it from general view and the incorporation of the existing lakes and topography of the land into the plan make it a very attractive piece of property. He expressed his appreciation to the Commission for making this project a reality for the citizens.

Daa’ood Amin – 133 North Hill Street

Mr. Amin spoke on behalf of the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority Long-Range Planning Committee regarding The Lakes at Green Valley. He said this is a unique opportunity that this 570 acres represents for the citizens of Spalding County. The ability to incorporate recreational uses into this development through the establishment of the Big Shanty Nature Center and the lakeside walking trail will allow the citizens to not only see up close their tax dollars at work in creating jobs, but it will also allow them to enjoy the beauty of this property. All of the industrial parks represent an investment by the voters in the community. This will be one of the first they can truly touch, see and feel through active use. With this comes the potential to lose site of the primary objective of this development which is to create an attractive industrial site that will attract and create jobs for the area. The recreational aspect of the development will be of great value to the community but should not be designed to be a deterrent to the marketability of the industrial park. Connectivity has been given great consideration in the planning but we must respect the security and privacy needs of the potential industrial residents. A critical aspect of any plan which is to be implemented is sufficient flexibility to adapt to that plan to changing market conditions or demand. This plan has done that by loosely identifying areas within the development for the highest and best uses. However, market changes will dictate modifications over time. To overly restrict the plan, at this time, beyond the conceptual master plan could prove problematic in the future. He expressed appreciation for consideration by the Commission.

Bill Bryant – 282 North Rover Road

Mr. Bryant said he supports the rezoning application for The Lakes of Green Valley as proposed by the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority. They have done a superb job since the 1960’s to retain existing industry and attract new manufacturing companies to Spalding County. There is a legacy in getting the job done effectively and efficiently. The Lakes at Green Valley continues the strategic, forward-thinking process. This quality-growth development will position Spalding County extremely well as the economy recovers. Some additional reasons for support of this rezoning request are that The Lakes of Green Valley is along Georgia 16, a major transportation corridor to I-75, the existing future land-use plan does reflect industrial uses for this area, in fact this development is adjacent to the successful Green Valley Industrial Park and this development incorporates many principles of quality growth projects, collaboration with the community and stake holder groups. It will be a distinctive, attractive business development community in South Metro Atlanta. It contains a mix of land uses; commercial, industrial and

residential. It preserves open space, natural beauty and environmental areas. Many months ago Mr. Bryant voted to support the Development Authority when he voted to obtain SPLOST funds. Now he is requesting approval of the rezoning request to support the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority with this concept for the future.

Chuck Copeland – 136 Four Oaks Drive

Mr. Copeland expressed appreciation for time to consider his comments. He was present as the appointed volunteer Chairman of the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority. He feels the Development Authority has presented for consideration an extremely well thought out plan. It has been affirmed by the voters of Spalding County to meet the Authority's number one objective of job creation in the community. The planners have gone to great lengths to maximize the highest and best uses of each of the property areas to create a true, mixed-use, economic development park which is much more than your average industrial development. However, we cannot lose site of the fact that our number one priority is to maximize the property's potential to create jobs. To this end, the plan allows for the creation of roughly 2.3 million square feet of industrial building space. Using the job number actually created within the Green Valley Industrial Park, we anticipate that The Lakes at Green Valley has the potential to attract between 2,500 and 3,000 new light manufacturing, industrial and distribution jobs. This does not include the numbers of jobs anticipated in the retail, hotel and non-industrial areas of the development. Recognizing that we can only control what takes place within the property boundaries, the plan presented minimizes its impact on existing transportation corridors by using a system of internal and frontage roads from which to move traffic within the development. Ingress and egress to Arthur K. Bolton Parkway is of paramount importance as is the internal connectivity to the workforce that will enter and exit the park daily. He expressed appreciation for a favorable review of the project and helping to bring 3,000 new jobs to the community. Mr. Penny has pointed out that the majority of the DRI and Staff conditions pertain to the conceptual areas of the development. He requested that the Commission recommend the project to the County Commission without the conditions.

Mr. Taylor said zoning requests are reviewed in comparison with the established policies of the County. The policies of connectivity, pedestrian uses, alternative transportation uses, traffic safety improvements and all the things associated with it are things that are in the policy. Reviewing the plans generates those recommendations. They are loosely written into the staff report. They are just recommendations based on County policy. The Planning Commission has the ability to move this forward without any conditions whatsoever.

Mr. Glover said his concern is that there is an industrial park trying to attract industry for jobs and yet it seems that some of the items are turning it into a recreational area. He does not understand the need for sidewalks.

Mr. Youmans said the area around the conference center/hotel would lend itself to having sidewalks. He does agree to sidewalks in the larger industrial parcels. The language in the recommendation says that prior to any development they sit down with the County developers and iron out any details that might come up along that line. If the recommendation is made with the suggested conditions, they will have to sit down and re-discuss all the issues when there is someone willing to locate in Spalding County.

Mr. Taylor said the conditions are loosely bound and are tied to discussion at the development phase rather than the zoning phase. It is the intent to have the discussion prior to the actual development of the site. There are no real hard and fast conditions that have to be addressed at this point. The wording of the conditions has left a lot of room for discussion.

MOTION

Mr. Youmans made a motion to approve Application #09-01Z with the conditions as recommended by staff. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Traer with Mr. Glover, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Traer and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

MOTION

Mr. Youmans made a motion to approve Application #09-01AZ with the conditions as recommended by staff. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Traer with Mr. Glover, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Traer and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

MINUTES

Mr. Glover made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2009 meeting. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Johnson with Mr. Glover and Mr. Johnson voting for the motion Mr. Traer and Mr. Youmans abstaining because they were not present.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Youmans and a second by Mr. Traer with Mr. Glover, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Traer and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Ed Johnson – Chairman

Yvonne M. Langford - Recorder