

SPALDING COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
March 9, 2004

The Spalding County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on March 9, 2004 at 7:00 P.M. in Room 108 of the Spalding County Courthouse Annex. Members present were: Karen Mathiak, Chairman, presiding, Ray Browning, Ronald Green, Delores Phillips, and John Youmans.

Also present were Charles Taylor, Community Development Director, Lee Craig, Senior Planner, Bruce Ballard, Griffin-Spalding County School System, and Yvonne Langford to record the minutes.

Ms. Mathiak 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.

AGENDA

Mr. Browning made a motion to amend the agenda to consider Application #04-02X before considering the Amendments to the UDO. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Youmans with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Application #04-02X: Annexation Request from Breedlove Companies/Southlake Group, LLC, 14.2 acres, more or less, between West Poplar Street and Highway 16 West located in Land Lot 79 of the 2nd Land District.

Mr. Vince Hines – 711 Bieze Street – Griffin, Georgia

Mr. Hines said he was present to represent the City of Griffin and the developer. This project has been approved by the City of Griffin's Planning and Zoning Board. The zoning will be split and the proposal is for 8 one-half acre lots. The houses will be a minimum of 1600 SF with two car garages. The remainder of the property will be zoned PCD – Planned Commercial Development which is compatible with what is across Highway 16 from this property.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not the property is contiguous with present city property. The county confirmed that the property adjoins across Highway 16 to the north.

Mr. Taylor said the county has just rezoned Mr. Gary's property in the area to AR-1 for him to build his home. He was advised, at the time, that property in the area is zoned for commercial use. The residential lots will be smaller than the county would allow. The city staff report states that this application is consistent with the City of Griffin land use plan. He questioned whether the city has a land use plan extending into the county.

Mr. Hines said the city looks at city property closest to the land to determine the projected future use. He said they are trying to accommodate the county when they talk to the developers about annexation. They are advised to maximize the lot size and maximize the square footage if they want county approval. This developer appears to be trying to accommodate that request.

Mr. Taylor said the R-2 zoning is for low density and the staff report identifies this as medium density. Ms. Craig has drawn a plan regarding the water protection ordinance with regard to the commercial tract.

Mr. Hines said there are some issues on the commercial tract. The developer intends to develop the residential tract first and hold the commercial tract for some time. He will be challenged with that tract.

Discussion was held with particular regard to the water issues on the property.

MOTION

Mr. Browning made a motion to approve Application #04-02X. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Green with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO #A-04-02: Lift from the table – Appendix A. Subdivision Ordinance – Section 505:B(6) – amend to only require detention pond fencing for ponds deeper than 5 feet.

MOTION

Mr. Youmans made a motion to lift Application to UDO #A-04-02 from the table. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Browning with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Mr. Taylor said there are options for the Planning Commission to consider with this application. The requirement for fencing for detention ponds can be eliminated all together. If it is not eliminated, then the fencing can be required at a depth of 5', 6', or 8' from a designated place, screening requirements can be required, and type fencing can be designated. The depth can be measured to the invert of the outlet pipe, or from the spillway or overflow of the structure, or it can be the highest point on the dam of the wall. Rather than a fence, a combination of dense landscaping and fencing can be designated. To provide access for maintenance to the detention pond, if there any type barriers, a break needs to be specified. The access needs to be large enough for a truck or bulldozer. There are three potentials for someone to get hurt at a detention pond. One is, when it is dry, someone falling in. When the property is under construction, someone getting in and getting stuck or drowning in the silt that collects at the bottom of ponds and during a rainstorm when the pond fills someone could fall in and get sucked into the outlet pipe or trapped against the outlet structure. These are the situations that need to be considered when deciding the options.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the options offered. It was noted that the fences are unsightly and detract from the property. Safety is the main issue. The type fencing and landscaping was discussed and whether or not it should be left to the developer. The gate width was discussed, and it was noted that less than a 15' gate would be adequate. The attractiveness of the landscaping versus fencing was discussed. The City of Griffin requirement was read and considered along with requirements from surrounding areas.

Taking each option at a time, the Planning Commission decided on the ordinance. It was decided that the measurement would be taken from the spillway or overflow to invert of the main outlet or orifice. The minimum depth would be 5' with a 6' minimum cyclone fence. The gate will be a minimum of 12' in width and will be latched and locked with five or more feet above the grade. The width of easement will be a minimum of 15'.

MOTION

Mr. Green made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO #A-04-02 with the standard to be that the measurement will be from the spillway or overflow to invert of the main outlet or orifice, minimum depth to be 5' for fencing with a 6' minimum cyclone fence, the gate shall be a minimum of 12' in width and shall be latched and locked five or more feet above the grade and the width of easement will be a minimum of 15'. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Youmans with Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion and Mr. Browning voting against.

Amendment to UDO #A-04-04: Appendix G. Standard for Off-street Parking and Service Facilities – Section 105:D – delete minimum setback requirement for any driveway from curb cut requirements.

Ms. Craig said this is for commercial/industrial developments. Presently, there is a requirement for a driveway to be two feet from every property line. That would include the front property line, which would mean the driveway would have to end two feet before it gets to the front property line. This needs to be deleted.

MOTION

Mr. Browning made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO#A-04-04. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Green with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO #A-04-05: Quarterly adoption of official zoning map in revised Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform as applicable to unincorporated Spalding County.

Mr. Taylor said there is a significant difference in this map and the previous map. They included the new draft parcel layer in the map meaning that the new subdivisions that have been added in 2002 have been added to the plat. There was a gap in the parcel layer from 1996 until 2002 and that data has been added.

MOTION

Ms. Phillips made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO #A-04-05. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Browning with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO: #A-04-06: Appendix J. Commercial/Industrial Development Ordinance – Article 3 & 4 – establish minimum threshold for site plan review and change fee structure.

Mr. Taylor said this was discussed at the last workshop meeting. This sets a threshold for expansions whereby, if you are adding less than 500 SF of impervious area or less than 500 SF of building area, you don't have to submit a construction plan. If the impervious surface total added is more than 500 SF, which is the limit of the threshold for the smaller type review, the review fee will be \$750 rather than the \$1500. There is the possibility that someone could add 500 SF to a facility and it might not meet some requirements until there is a site visit. It might take up some required parking. This could happen if site plans are not required.

Mr. Browning said there is a need for review, but they can be done without engineering drawings. At the present time, an engineered drawing is required when a simple basic drawn site plan would suffice. An engineered drawing creates an additional expense sometimes causing an expense greater than the cost of the project. He questioned the need for engineered drawings on even larger structures particularly those that are office space that is similar to house construction. There are sufficient inspections so as not to require an engineer to draw a plan.

Mr. Taylor said what they are checking for is zoning compliance, making certain that water drains properly, making sure that parking is provided, etc. Construction plans are required on commercial structures. That is important to keep. If you go to Section 405 and cross out engineer and replace it with person, then as long as they meet the requirements anyone can draw up the site plans.

Mr. Browning questioned the \$750 review fee. He said it would only take two minutes to review a site plan if everything is as it should be.

Ms. Craig said the greatest expense is for the consulting engineer to review the hydrology. For these plans, no hydrology is required. This fee covers, not only the review, but also the staff time to make the inspections to make sure they have met the standards. The water authority, public works, and fire marshal also have to review. Additionally, the Natural Resource Conservation Service has to review the soil erosion and sedimentation control portion of the site plan. A land-disturbing permit cannot be issued without their approval. Everyone except the engineer will have to review these plans.

Mr. Browning said he still disagrees. This is like a commission. If there are 10 applications in one week and Mr. Garner looks at all of them, does he get any less or any

more compensation than he does the next month when he does not review any of these? At some point in time, you are “over killing” in fees. This man gets the same paycheck whether he reviews them or not. This is causing undue expense by re-inspecting. If he has to work beyond his normal work hours or you have to put on another staff member, then that would be fine. If the county has to pay a fee to have someone review, unless we are impacting beyond their capabilities, it is a commission just like a real estate agent gets a commission. He disagrees with this fee.

MOTION

Mr. Youmans made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO #A-04-06 with the word engineer replaced with the word person as discussed. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Green with Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion and Mr. Browning and Ms. Phillips voting against.

Amendment to UDO #A-04-07: Article 4. General Procedures – Section 408:A(2) amend “Building Permit Required” information.

Mr. Taylor said there was a conflict in the ordinance that was confusing a lot of people. He wrote this to attempt to eliminate the conflict. The ordinance says that anytime you build a new building no matter how expensive you have to get a building permit. There is an ordinance when making adjustments to a structure already in place if the improvements are \$1000 or less no permit is required. However, there is no such limit on new structures. This amendment is to add the \$1000 threshold on moving a structure or building a new structure.

MOTION

Mr. Browning made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve Amendment to UDO #A-04-07. The motion passed with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO #A-04-08: Appendix K. Landscape and Tree Preservation Ordinance – delete and replace with new Ordinance.

Mr. Taylor said he had made corrections since he had received a list from Mr. Youmans. He added some from the list also. He advised Mr. Youmans that if there are some he would like to see added as a landscape tree to submit them and they will look at it. This is a combination tree protection and landscaping that gives the opportunity to create better spaces. The current ordinance has a lot of requirements that are not adding anything to the beauty of the structures. Whatever the outcome is, having landscaping that is required not only focusing on trees but on some design specifications for the location of the trees and parking lots in form of landscape islands and requiring them to be specimen is going to have an enormous impact. Basing it on the amount of impervious surface that you add or create on the site is a good way to strike a balance between the landscaping you have to do and the amount of building and pavement that you add to the site. This will be an improvement over the current ordinance.

Mr. Browning said the staff at the Experiment Station has a lot of expertise in this area and he would like to table this amendment to have them review this ordinance.

Mr. Youmans said he had mentioned this to Mr. Walker and he agreed to look over the ordinance. He feels that there are others at the University of Georgia, Griffin Campus that would be willing to go over it also.

MOTION

Mr. Browning made a motion to table Amendment to UDO #A-04-08 until no later than May 2004. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Youmans with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO #A-04-09: Appendix A. Subdivision Ordinance – Section 502:E’ – amend Acceleration/Deceleration Lane requirements.

Mr. Taylor said currently the requirement for accel/decel lanes rests solely on the discretion of the public works director. The problem is that there are no good criteria for making the decision. This amendment is to tighten this ordinance to require accel/decel lanes with all new development on county roads. Those roads on the state highways will be permitted by the DOT.

Mr. Browning said he did not feel an accel/decel lane is necessary in all cases. If there is a safety issue, then they should be required.

Mr. Taylor said this is something that has come up because some accel/decel lanes were omitted that should have been required such as on Vineyard Road.

Discussion was held and it was noted that sight distance, speed, and traffic are the conditions to be considered when deciding whether an accel/decel lane is needed.

MOTION

Mr. Browning made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, that accel/decel lanes will be required where new construction will intersect existing streets or roads with the criteria of the following safety issues being reviewed by the public works director: speed, sight distance or traffic volume. The motion passed with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

MINUTES

Mr. Green made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2004 meeting. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Youmans with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips, and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

MOTION

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Browning and a second by Ms. Phillips with Mr. Browning, Mr. Green, Ms. Mathiak, Ms. Phillips, and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

Karen Mathiak – Chairman

Yvonne M. Langford - Recorder