

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2001

The Spalding County Planning Commission held its regular meeting on November 13, 2001 at 7:00 P.M. in the County Commission Meeting Room #108, Spalding County Courthouse Annex. Members present were: Chairman Karen Mathiak, presiding, Ray Browning, Delores Phillips, John Youmans, Bill Bryant and Frank Harris.

Also, present were Assistant County Manager Michael Sabine, Planner Jennifer Reynolds, and Cindy McDaniel to record the minutes. Zoning Attorney Newton Galloway was not present.

Ms. Mathiak called the meeting to order, introduced the members of the Planning Commission, and gave the procedure for handling the applications.

MINUTES

The minutes of the October 30, 2001 meeting were approved on a motion by Ray Browning and a second by Bill Bryant with Ray Browning, Delores Phillips, Karen Mathiak, John Youmans, Bill Bryant, and Frank Harris voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO #A-01-17: Amendment to residential district dimensional requirements and Planned Development District greenspace requirements.

Mr. Sabine stated the proposal of this text amendment is to adjust some of the requirements for lot sizes and square footages in the residential zoning districts. Mr. Sabine stated that this text amendment would change some the zoning classifications at 1,250 square feet. The intent of these changes are not to eliminate 1,250 square foot zoning, but with the Conservation Subdivisions, to steer the development in the direction that the Board of Commissioners felt was consistent to upgrade areas where upgrades were desirable and to create some different uses, such as loft development and putting residential in certain commercial districts so Spalding County could modernize some of the requirements of the UDO.

The AR-1 district would increase to 1,500 square feet heated area for single family, industrialized, or Class A manufactured homes. Class A manufactured homes still would require Special Exceptional approval. The R-2 district would increase to 1,400 square feet heated area for single family and industrialized homes, if approved. The text amendment would create a new district for R-6, which is currently an unused zoning classification. For all existing lots in the R-2 district, and possible for AR-1, all lots of records could be developed at 1,250 square feet. Mr. Sabine stated he specifically recommended this for the R-2 district, due to the county having so many subdivisions in the R-2 district. Mr. Sabine stated changing the square footage for subdivisions in progress would be unfair. Mr. Sabine stated the county would need to be sure

subdivisions in progress were protected at 1,250 square feet and could be extended to the AR-1 district, as well for existing lots of records.

The R-6 district, as discussed in the Board of Commissioners workshop, would allow condominium dwellings, patio dwellings, townhouse dwellings, certain amenities, and 1,000 square feet minimum heated floor area trying to create a stable form of housing, at the same time the smaller square footage is good entry level housing for public safety employees and people who are just starting out. The R-6 district would also be good for people who would like to down size and not have as much square footage. The R-6 district is an unused district and this should put some activity within this district.

In the AR-1 district, outside Conservation Subdivisions, 3 acres per lot would be required. Conservation Subdivisions density would still be calculated at 2 acres. The idea is to reward people for developing Conservation Subdivisions in the AR-1 district while keeping a more rural density. In the R-1 district, Conservation Subdivisions would be built on a density of 1 lot per acre; and if not in conservation, R-1 district would require 2 acres per lot, once again rewarding people for developing Conservation Subdivisions. However, a traditional subdivision could be developed in the R-1 district by Special Exception approval.

If a traditional 1-acre subdivision is right for the area, and the Board of Commissioners feels comfortable with the subdivision, then the Board of Commissioners still has the means to approve the subdivision. The idea is not to lock out other options. At any time, any division of a small lot into 4 lots or less would still be applied by the 1-acre standard. Development would be as a matter of right and not require a special exception, in those cases.

The final section deals with the Planned Development District and increases the greenspace from 10% to 25%. There are provisions for loft residential developments in commercial districts. The mixed-use concept could add to the county in years to come.

Tom Ross of Ideal Homes of Griffin came forward, gave his name, and his address as 101 Moreland Road, Griffin.

Mr. Ross stated he is not in opposition to the whole text amendment. Mr. Ross stated he is in opposition to the AR-1 as it relates to industrialized and Class A manufactured homes increasing floor size to 1,500 square feet and the acreage to 3 acres per lot. Mr. Ross stated many of the homes he is selling are bigger. Mr. Ross stated when it is affordable, people buy larger square foot homes; when it is not, they buy the 1,250 square foot homes. In spite of the special exception requirement, Mr. Ross stated he is still putting the Class A manufactured home in the county. Many customers would like to upgrade their old singlewide homes with something nicer and bigger. Mr. Ross stated he tries to provide the best affordable square footage homes to meet the minimum requirements and often times have exceeded requirements. Mr. Ross stated if this is the trend, then so be it, let it go, but don't mandate it into a requirement of 3 acres and a

requirement that is 1,500 square feet. There will always be a homeowner who really can't quite meet those needs or qualifications financially.

Mr. Ross stated he is opposed to the 1,500 square feet because Spalding County keeps raising the bar and the cost. Mr. Ross stated he wished to express his concern that he has so many customers who could be affected by the passage of this text amendment who may not be able to afford the 3 acres and the 1,500 square foot home. Mr. Ross stated why fix something that isn't broke. Mr. Ross stated by raising requirements, Spalding County keeps pushing residents out to other surrounding counties.

Mr. Ross stated he wished the Planning Commission would think about this text amendment and how it would affect residents in Spalding County.

Mr. Ross stated he would like to see some administrative decision making in the Community Development Department.

Kevin Drury of Buddy's Homes came forward, gave his name, and address as Thomaston, Georgia.

Mr. Drury stated he is not a resident of Spalding County. Mr. Drury stated he has a concern regarding the 1,500 square foot minimum. Mr. Drury stated interest rates are low at this time. Mr. Drury stated people are able to go from 1,400 square feet to 1,700 square feet due to the low interest rates or from 1,250 square feet to 1,500 square feet as being requested. Mr. Drury asked what would happen when the rates go up to more normal rates. People who have 1,500 – 1,700 square foot houses will be unable to sell them. A lot of people would not be able to afford a home. Mr. Drury stated he couldn't say he is against 1,500 square foot houses in the AR-1 part of the county. The reason being people typically looking though out the county that would look for a 1,500 square foot home and can't afford a 1,500 square foot home are going to have to turn to a manufactured home. They may have to wait 60 to 90 days for approval, but if they would like to live in the country in a 1,500 square foot house, dealers of manufactured homes will be doing very well.

Mr. Drury stated regarding 3-acre requirement, if there is a reason regarding density or problems with wells and sewer systems to go to 3 acres, then the issue would definitely need to be addressed and go to the 3-acre requirement. If the 3-acre requirement is just to spread out the density of housing, the requirement makes housing less affordable for people. Mr. Drury stated 3 acres at \$10,000 per acre is \$30,000. Improvements on property can range from bare minimum up to \$15,000. This would put the range of \$125,000 to \$140,000 for a bare minimum home in the county.

Mr. Sabine stated the average 1,700 square footage for construction was through June 9th at the time of the Board of Commissioners workshop. This was the first half of the year before interest rates had dropped quite as much. Certainly rates were low, but not as low as the rates are now. Mr. Sabine stated the per capita income for Spalding County for 2000 indicates that Spalding County has a higher per capita income than either Clayton County or Henry County. This is a very significant development for Spalding County.

Spalding County has had a very strong per capita personal income growth in the last 5 years, about 5% a year. That is projected to still be in the over 4% for the next 5 years. This would be about twice the personal income growth rate projection for Henry County. Spalding County has very strong fundamentals and a higher per capita income than many counties in the metropolitan Atlanta area, such as Clayton County, Henry County, Newton County, Paulding County and Walton County.

Mr. Sabine stated he could not see it advisable in the near future to increase square footage again after this amendment. Mr. Sabine stated he felt this would be the last time to exercise this effectively and by all means, this should be made clear and asks the Board for consideration of this comment. Mr. Sabine stated he didn't think square footages should go up further than this. Given the development trends in the counties around Spalding County, Spalding County can tap into different streams of development. If Spalding County does not have a certain climate of development in this county, Spalding County would not get the quality residential growth. Spalding County is very successful in recruiting industrial development, but the middle managers don't want to live in Spalding County, because the managers are afraid of building in Spalding County. If Spalding County can create greater certainty in development, Spalding County could get more development.

Frank Harris stated Spalding County has an opportunity to decide what we want to be residential. In the past, Spalding County has been very prone to be more concerned where Spalding County is than where Spalding County is going. Mr. Harris stated upgrading districts is a good step. Mr. Harris stated Spalding County can't be everything to everybody. There will always be some people who will not be able to afford to live in one area or another. Griffin will always have people who work here, but do not lives here.

Mr. Youmans asked Mr. Sabine how many lots are on the books that are zoned R-2 at 1,250 square feet. Mr. Sabine stated the number is a guess with the approximately 1,500 to 2,000 lots. There are already several subdivisions approved in the R-2 at 1,250 square feet. Spalding County has had a fair amount of growth and several old lots. There is a significant stock at 1,250 to transition through. R-2A and R-5 would remain at 1,250 square feet, which could be used for site built construction in a conditional way with no problem. There are plenty of opportunities still available for 1,250 square feet homes.

Mr. Youmans asked how many lots are on the books that are zoned AR-1 at 1,250 square feet. Mr. Sabine stated not nearly as many, because there are no recent subdivisions. There may be approximately 100 to 200 2-acre lots in Spalding County.

Mr. Browning stated Spalding County has provided enough for the blue-collar people and provided for additional capacity if the growth takes place in that area. Mr. Browning stated Spalding County should let the market tell us what Spalding County is doing. Spalding County is moving up.

Mr. Browning stated he would like the Board of Commissioners to initiate a compatibility review process/study that would allow for our permitting and zoning office to address some questions that are very commonsensible and would keep away from the Board of Appeals and Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Browning stated most of the permits bought for the R-2 district today is 1,250 square feet and above.

Mr. Browning had a question on why the R-6 was requiring a 100-foot minimum front-yard setback from county arterial and collector right(s)-of-way. Mr. Sabine stated this would be from the main arterial. Mr. Browning stated a collector right(s)-of-way could be any street that is a through street. Mr. Sabine stated about 66% of the street in the county are minor or local and 34% are arterial. Mr. Sabine stated the minimum front-yard setback could be changed to 70 feet. The idea of having a 100-foot minimum front-yard setback was not to have the houses quiet so close to the main arterials.

Mr. Browning stated another concern was having a minimum of 200 continuous feet of road frontage. Mr. Browning stated even in a Conservation Subdivision the entrance is reduced down to 20 feet. Mr. Sabine stated a normal street would have a 60-foot right-of-way and 20 feet on each side. Mr. Sabine stated the road frontage could be changed to 100-feet leaving just enough for the street with entrance signage.

Mr. Bryant suggested striking the paragraph, which would require 200 continuous feet of road frontage on a county, state, or federal road in the R-6 district. Mr. Sabine stated the Board may be better off striking this paragraph, and would not be putting in a guarantee minimal. Mr. Sabine stated he could delete that paragraph if the Board wished.

Mr. Sabine stated in the early workshop, the Board of Commissioners asked that zero lot line dwelling be deleted from the R-6. Mr. Sabine stated he wished to honor their instructions. Mr. Sabine stated he didn't want to do this without instruction from the Planning Commission. Mr. Sabine stated zero lot line dwelling was referenced only in Section 17 in the R-6.

MOTION

John Youmans made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO #A-01-17 with deleting zero lot line dwellings from Section 17 and minimum frontage width in Section 30(b). The motion passed on a second by Delores Phillips with Ray Browning, Delores Phillips, Karen Mathiak, John Youmans, and Frank Harris voting for the motion.

Amendment to UDO #A-01-18: Amendment to General Definitions and AR-1, AR-2, R-1, R-2, & R-4 zoning districts – add Conservation Subdivisions.

Amendment to UDO #A-01-19: Appendix A. Subdivision Ordinance – add Article 8. Legal Status Provisions.

Mr. Sabine stated Text Amendment #A-01-18 and #A-01-19 are enabling legislation for Conservation Subdivisions. This would put Conservation Subdivisions into effect and allow Spalding County to start pursuing Conservation Subdivisions. Text Amendment #A-01-18 applies Conservation Subdivisions to actual zoning districts. Text Amendment #A-01-19 will move Legal Status Provision to Article 8 since Conservation Subdivisions were inserted in Article 7.

Mr. Sabine stated in Text Amendment #A-01-18 under the uses for AR-1, AR-2, R-1, R-2, and R-4, Mr. Galloway listed Conservation Subdivision as Subdivision, Conservation. Mr. Sabine stated it would be best to list as Conservation Subdivision.

MOTION

Ray Browning made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO #A-01-18 with change from Subdivision, Conservation to Conservation Subdivision. The motion passed on a second by Bill Bryant with Ray Browning, Delores Phillips, Karen Mathiak, John Youmans, and Frank Harris voting for the motion.

MOTION

Bill Bryant made a motion to approve Amendment to UDO #A-01-19. The motion passed on a second by John Youmans with Ray Browning, Delores Phillips, Karen Mathiak, John Youmans, and Frank Harris voting for the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Ray Browning made a motion, seconded by Delores Phillips, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with Ray Browning, Delores Phillips, Karen Mathiak, John Youmans, Bill Bryant and Frank Harris voting for the motion.

Karen Mathiak – Chairman

Cindy McDaniel - Recorder