

After Agenda

Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Zoning Public Hearing
Thursday, May 26, 2022
6:00 PM
Room 108, Spalding County Annex Building

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held Zoning Public Hearing on Thursday, May 26, 2022, in Room 108 of the Spalding County Annex Building, beginning at 6:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners Rita Johnson, Ryan Bowlden and Gwen Flowers-Taylor were present for the meeting. Commissioner James Dutton was absent from the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, County Zoning Attorney, Newton Galloway and County Clerk, Kathy Gibson to record the minutes.

A. Opening (Call To Order) by Chairman Clay Davis.

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONES AND ALL OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

B. Invocation

The Invocation was delivered by Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor, District #1.

C. Pledge To Flag

Commissioner Rita Johnson, District #3, led the Pledge to the Flag.

Newton Galloway, County Zoning Attorney advised that we would not be able to conduct the Zoning Public Hearings this evening because the notification required by Zoning procedure states that notification of not less than 15 nor more than 45 days in advance be placed in the legal organ. The notice did not make it into the paper. The applications that are pending on this agenda will automatically be continued onto the June Agenda. We do apologize, but we are required to comply with the law, this was just an error. The items will be published for next month and everything will be back on the agenda for consideration at that time.

Community Development Director, Kellie Littlefield, stated that her comments were not in regard to any of the matters scheduled to be heard this evening. She stated that she wanted to address the Board as a whole on some of the initiatives she would like to look at implementing in Spalding County. She further stated that if the Board has any questions at any time they should feel free to ask them, this is not meant to be formal, but it is an opportunity as part of the Comp Plan process to discuss some things that would be planning initiatives that could possibly respond to some of the needs that have already been identified in the community.

Ms. Littlefield then related a story to the Board that helped to define the role of a planner in a community. She ended with the role of a planner is to take areas that people have identified and turn them into places that people want to be in. She feels that is the best analysis of what a good planner does, they take areas that people identify or associate with a common theme

and they turn them into places that people want to go. With that in mind she wanted to let the Board know just how she approaches planning.

Ms. Littlefield stated that the first thing that she has heard is that the Board wants a housing product that people can actually afford to live in. Young professionals and small families are the population you are looking to attract. The first idea she wanted to approach is owner occupied, income adjusted housing.

The way she would propose to do this is by taking the example the military utilizes. The way she would like to do it is by following the same concept of senior enlisted and junior officers housing. They do it with density. The standard housing product is approximately between 1/3rd to 1 acre. You would maintain that housing product, but to get the income adjusted units you would have a smaller housing footprint. So, if the average housing product is 1,750 sq. ft., allow for 10% of the units to be 1,400 sq. ft. and those houses are adjusted down in price according.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that was a good idea in theory and right now it is just an idea. She does know that people in the South are way over the top in having to have a lot of land. She has lived in a lot of cities overseas where the lots were extremely small. They live like this in places in the northern US and on the west coast, but in the south we have a mindset that you have to have land. She feels what Ms. Littlefield is saying is good, but we don't know how to do that.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she loves the concept, we want folks who graduate from here to come back and have businesses here, work here and have their children go to school here. She feels that the concept is good, but is this something that the community would buy into? She thinks it would be interesting to find out if this is actually what the community wants.

Ms. Littlefield stated that from what she has seen in the Comp Plan process, there is a desire for this type of housing in Spalding County, not just in Griffin. In looking at some of the future land use concepts that we are putting together in the Comp Plan, that feedback is there to have the owner-occupied style of housing. In answer to your question, there are already financial programs available that are mortgage products built for this type of housing and they are income adjusted and income based. There are also some geography restrictions on them as they are primarily out of the USDA programs. The FHA program has a couple of these products which do qualify in Spalding County. These are programs that will not cost the County any money. There are already loan products that are applicable to homeowners.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then stated that there is not an abundance of start-up homes in Spalding County. We simply do not have workforce housing available.

Ms. Littlefield then advised that she wanted to talk with the Board about Historic Housing. She stated that she is excited that Spalding County has mill villages. Mill Villages are a Georgia tradition, they are a hallmark and a theme of Georgia Historic Planning, and she is thrilled to be in a community that has them. They are all in desperate need of some attention. She stated that she is still "flushing out the idea," but this is something that she has worked on in several jurisdictions who have established a façade program to assist the homeowner occupied units to be able to tap into some cash the County would provide.

The developers who are coming in and building large subdivisions would pay into this fund that we could turn around and work with our homeowners to get some much-needed repairs. Especially in the historic housing areas. It does a couple of things for us to provide this. The first thing is it helps the residents who may not have the resources to help themselves. These

historical assets are something that actually puts Spalding County on the map or has the potential to do so.

Historic housing has long been a generator for the movie industry, but also preserving the continuity of design within those neighborhoods, that Mill Village style housing is something that represents cultural character across the State of Georgia. Spalding County is no different from the cities of Porterdale, Monroe or even Covington in wanting to preserve their Mill Villages.

These are very simple things and can be set up in a myriad of ways. You can set it up as a match where the homeowner has to do a 1 to 1 match or even a quarter match. But we would be collecting these funds from developers who are not based in Spalding County who are coming here, developing large units on large tracts of land. There would be a fee per unit on the building permit that would go into a fund and then once a year we would do a grant program. She would welcome any feedback on the premise of this and we can tear apart the details once we get them in writing.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that the City of Griffin had received a grant a while back and it was for infrastructure and within the grant there were funds available for homeowners to bring their homes up to standard. However, when she looks at the community involved in that program, it was dotted with so much rental property that it didn't have much effect on the neighborhood as a whole. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor lives in East Griffin and there may be 3 people who own their homes in a two-block radius of her home. It is a mind set and she really does not feel it will help the overall community because it is weighed down with substandard practices. We would have to designate an area that we would want to do something in, and through implementation of stricter requirements for absent landlords, there may be something we can do.

Ms. Littlefield stated that this would be a fund that the County controls, it is not a grant that we are pursuing from anyone else. This would be a fund that the county would set up and once-a-year homeowners in the specified districts that qualify to receive the funds could apply.

Commissioner Johnson then asked how the 1 to 1 match would work.

Ms. Littlefield stated that Americus did a façade program. They only did this for 5 years. They set up the fund, collected the money, and their charges were based on sewer taps. Any time a developer came in to pay for more than 3 sewer taps at a time they had to pay another fee into the façade program that went straight into the Historic Preservation Fund.

The county then identified all of the housing that would qualify for the grant up front, based on the tax digest and the age of the house. The unit had to be owner occupied and the owner had to come up with at least \$5,000 of their own money to put into the house. They could "ask for the moon" as long as it was on the exterior of the house. The only exceptions were for plumbing or electrical. They had to have \$5,000 of their own money to invest. Several of the homeowners were able to get new roofs and much of the housing received the correct windows for their historic homes. Windows are the most expensive piece of a historical house to replace. Many people cannot afford them, and as a result, they rot out and that destroys the house.

Another matching piece that was done in Savannah several years ago was done through sign permitting. There is an abundance of turnover in signage in downtown Savannah. They identified a tract of housing that was in decay and implemented a program that whenever there is a sign permit in the adjacent commercial area there will be an extra fee that goes into

a fund. This is strictly to replace the porches in the designated area. They put a cap on the amount they would allow for each porch. The porch characteristic in the area was identified as a need, and it was a fund that they controlled. If the fund is internal, then you set the criteria.

Ms. Littlefield stated that you would want to set up the criteria for the façade, what you are wanting to do, and the area you are wanting to do it in prior to implementing any type of program.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that you can put whatever you want to on the façade of the house, but that doesn't change what is on the inside of the house. The house still does not have any insulation, it doesn't have air conditioning, it may not have heat. So having a nice looking front when the inside of the house looks like crap seems useless.

Ms. Littlefield advised that in Albany they have done interiors. They are the only ones in the nation as far as a historic designation. Albany does interiors and they have specific sites for that service because of what happened inside the homes. She can take a look at what they are doing as far as any type of investment in that area. However, when we start getting into interiors and that type of rehab that is publicly funded it gets complicated. She stated she has no problem pursuing this, but she tends to advise jurisdictions as both a planner and a consultant to stick to code related issues. Simply because once you get beyond that, you get into personal tastes.

Ms. Littlefield stated that she has heard a lot about sidewalks and that we want to be a pedestrian oriented community. We want to make Spalding County as pedestrian friendly as possible. She has had a number of conversations with Dr. Ledbetter. We are in a County with a lot of floodplains that sits between two of the largest water shed areas in the State. She would like the Board to consider doing a sidewalk fund. There are times in the course of development working with parcels and larger tracts of land that have a floodplain that is not conducive to put in sidewalks. In some cases, it is not environmentally sound nor a best management practice to require sidewalks.

There are certain areas in Spalding County that simply are not conducive to sidewalks, and they are not sustainable. She doesn't feel it is responsible in her personal or professional opinion to require sidewalks in these areas and she would ask that the Board consider the potential of opening a sidewalk fund that would allow developers in lieu of the requirement for them to install sidewalks an option based on a predetermined linear formula. The idea being that we find some formula that works for developers to pay into that fund so that we have a maintenance program to start maintaining our sidewalks as a whole.

Ms. Littlefield stated that the fee would be implemented if there is no way to install sidewalks, so instead of paving, the developer would cut Spalding County a check in lieu of the requirement for the agreed amount based on the formula. They don't have to pave that area and cause an impact to the environment. Spalding County then has a fund set up for future maintenance of sidewalks or future paving. In cases where you have a subdivision is far out on a county road and people are more than likely never going to use the sidewalk there is a justification that can be made, they pay in a cost of the sidewalk so that at a future time should additional development take place in the area the money is already set up to put in the sidewalk or maintain the sidewalk.

Newton Galloway, County Zoning Attorney, stated that next month the Board will have the full North Expressway Ordinance which includes townhome condominiums. He wanted the Board to know that the problem in the only R-6 zoning we currently have in the county is not the text in the ordinance, it is the problem of the respect of the developers and the owners to

comply with the ordinance and our ability to enforce the ordinance. He asked that the Board keep that in mind as we go forward.

The standards for condominiums along the North Expressway will be the same as the standards that we currently have for R-6 because it includes all of the things the Board stated they want to see. We have to make certain that when people come here to develop these properties, they will be willing to build and maintain to the standard that you are setting. The ordinance will be on your agenda for the meeting in June.

D. New Business

1. Application 22-03S: LGI Homes- Georgia, LLC, Owner- 39 Smoak Road (Approximately 279.69 acres located in Land Lot 219 of the 3rd Land District)- Requesting a Special Exception to allow a Conservation Subdivision with 247 Single- Family lots.
2. Application 22-04S: Olin D Hunter, Sr, Owner- Big Peach Properties, LLC, Agent- 1710 Zebulon Road (Approximately 2. 14 acres located in Land Lot 120 of the 2nd Land District)- Requesting a Special Exception to build and operate a Car Wash within the Tri- County Overlay District.
3. Application 22-05S: John Henderson, Owner- 123 Sandy Lane (Approximately 3.03 acres located on Land Lot 45 of the 1st Land District)- Requesting a Special Exception to place a new 2022 manufactured home on the subject property.
4. Application 22-06S: L&C Partnership, LLP, Owner- Taylor English Duma, LLP, Agent- Parcel 210 01008 (Approximately 54.94 acres located in Land Lot 80 of the 2nd Land District)- Requesting a Special Exception to allow for a Country Club themed subdivision with 39 buildable lots.
5. Application 22-07S: Twin Valley LLC, Owner- 525 Bethany Road (Approximately 202.55 acres located in Land Lot 10 of the 1st Land District)- Requesting a Special Exception convert existing barn to a Barndominium.
6. Application 22-08S: Spalding Vineyard 120, LLC, Owner- 1143 Vineyard Rd (Approximately 120.88 acres located in Land Lot 38 of the 3rd District)- Requesting a Special Exception to allow a Conservation Subdivision with 48 Single- Family lots.
7. Application 22-04Z: L&C Partnership, LLP, Owner- Taylor English Duma, LLP, Agent- Parcel 210 01008 (Approximately 54.94 acres located in Land Lot 80 of the 2nd Land District)- Requesting a modification of zoning conditions imposed on application #04-22Z
8. Application 22-07Z: Spalding Vineyard 120, LLC, Owner- 1143 Vineyard Road (Approximately 120.88 acres located in Land Lot 38 of the 3rd District)- Requesting a rezoning from R-2/AR-1 to R- 2 zoning.
9. SD # 22-02: The applicant is requesting preliminary plat approval of an 18-lot subdivision to be developed from a 114.142 acre parent tract.
10. Application 22-12S: Felix Jones, Owner- 158 Grizzley Lane (Approximately 2.48 acres located in Land Lot 12 of the 3rd Land District)- Requesting a Special

Exception to place a new manufactured home on property within the AR-1 district.

E. Other Business:

F. Closed Meeting

G. Adjournment

Motion/Second by Johnson/Flowers-Taylor to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by all.