



JACKSON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION



Minutes

Jackson County Administration Building Auditorium
67 Athens Street
Jefferson, Georgia

December 17, 2020
6:00 P.M.

Members Present

Marty Clark – Chairman
Les Knoblock– Vice-Chairman
Steve Wittry
Nick Bledsoe

Member Absent

Harold Mull

Staff Present

Jamie Dove – Public Development Manager

Marty Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Steve Wittry opened in prayer. Then, Marty Clark led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Les Knoblock made a motion to approve the November 19, 2020 Planning Commission Minutes and was seconded by Steve Wittry. The motion was approved unanimously.

Marty Clark noted that Nick Bledsoe will be leaving the Planning Commission Board after serving 5 years on the board. His service to the board and community is very much appreciated and he will be missed.

Jamie Dove noted there will be a January 28, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting. Furthermore, Jamie Dove read the public hearing procedures and noted they are located on the table by the door.

Old Business –

1. MA-20-0028 – Old Mill Properties, LLC (Adam Ewing), Big Bear Rd./Savage Rd./Hwy. 330, Bogart, GA; approximately 32 acres; change the Character Area Map from “Agricultural” to “Suburban” for a residential subdivision. (Map 045/Parcel 022)

Jamie Dove gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting a change in the Character Area Map from “Agricultural” to “Suburban” in order to develop a 20-lot single-family residential subdivision. The property fronts on both sides of Hwy. 330 and fronts on both sides of Savage Road. Big Bear Road goes through the property and was abandoned approximately 2 to 3 years ago. Jackson County Water is

available to the property, but sewer is not available. Staff has reviewed this application and recommends approval of the map amendment case.

Adam Ewing, of Old Mill Properties LLC, 1010 Old Mill Trace, Monroe, GA was present to represent this map amendment case. He noted that he would like to change the Character Area Map from “Agricultural” to Suburban” so that he can rezone the property for a residential subdivision. He has built houses in Jackson County but has never developed a subdivision from the ground up.

There were a few people present in opposition to this map amendment case. Ginger Morton, Hayley Smith, Tina Tinsley, and David Gladson, who live off of Savage and Big Bear Road, Bogart, GA, are in opposition to this development with the following concerns: moved to this area to get away from the noise and traffic; protect the reservoir (our drinking water) from the groundwater pollution of septic tanks; protect wildlife and nature in this area; request turn lanes into this development for safety concerns; and at least a minimum of 5 acre tracts in this area. Then, there was a rebuttal from Mr. Ewing regarding the above concerns. Mr. Ewing noted that he is the builder/developer of this project and he plans to get started building houses as soon as the development plans are approved by the county and state. He has built approximately 100 houses in the Jackson County area this past year. Also, the proposed development will be similar to the other residential developments in the area such as Riverbend Subdivision and Bear Creek Plantation. He plans to meet all the State and County requirements for the erosion/sediment control issues, as well as the traffic concerns. Also, there is 80% or more of usable soil for septic tanks. Then, there was discussion between the applicant, board, and staff.

Marty Clark closed the discussion for public comments and opened it up to the board for discussion, questions, or a motion.

Nick Bledsoe made a motion to deny the Character Area Map from “Agricultural” to “Suburban” in order to develop a 20-lot single-family residential subdivision. The motion was seconded by Steve Wittry. The map amendment case was denied by Nick Bledsoe, Steve Wittry, and Les Knoblock.

New Business –

1. MA-20-0031 – Donald Trammell, 107 Gilbert Rd., Jefferson, GA; 2.521 acres; change the Character Area Map from “Rural” to “Suburban” in order to divide property into 2 tracts. (Map 093/Parcel 004H)

Jamie Dove gave the staff report. Existing zoning is AR (Agricultural Residential) which requires a minimum lot size of 1.5 acre; the original tract was reportedly 3.0 acres which would have enabled subdividing into two 1.5 acre tracts; however a retracement survey of the lot indicates it is only 2.521 acres and therefore cannot be divided under the existing AR zoning. The applicant is seeking a character area map amendment from “Rural” to “Suburban” so that property can be rezoned to R-1 and then the 2.5+ acre tract can be divided. However, even if suburban character and R-1 zoning were granted, without public water service, the lot minimum lot size for R-1 with a well and septic tank is 1.5 acres. The Jackson County Water & Sewer Authority indicates that there is not public water within 1,500 ft. of the proposed property. Staff has reviewed this application and recommends denial.

Donald Trammell, 342 Nichols Rd., Pendergrass, GA was present to represent this map amendment case. He would like to change the character area map to Suburban in order to rezone and divide the property into 2 tracts. Currently, there is 1 rental house on this property and Mr. Trammell would like to build him a house on the other tract. When the road was paved, they lost about ½ acre of their land.

There was no opposition to this map amendment case.

Marty Clark closed the discussion for public comments and opened it up to the board for discussion, questions, or a motion.

Furthermore, Steve Wittry made a motion to deny the change of the Character Area Map from “Rural” to “Suburban” in order to divide the property into 2 tracts. The motion was seconded by Les Knoblock. The map amendment case was denied by Steve Wittry, Les Knoblock, and Nick Bledsoe.

2. RZ-20-0048 – Garrett Land Surveying, LLC (Zachary Garrett), 2567 Brock Rd., Athens, GA; 8.02 acres; rezone from A-2 to CRC for commercial use. (Map 043/parcel 019)

Jamie Dove gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting a rezoning to CRC to allow for a commercial development. Also, the property lies within the East Jackson Overlay District. The subject property gains access from Brock Rd. and Hwy. 129. The proposed property has access to public water provided by the Jackson County Water & Sewer Authority. No public sewer is available in the area. Staff has reviewed this application and recommends approval with 1 condition: 1) All requirements of the East Jackson Overlay District must be met.

The Applicant, Zach Garrett, 604 Warren Way, Winder, GA along with the owners John Cowan and Dr. Mark Mazzawi who were present to represent this rezone case. The owners have been looking for land for a food and groceries store close by and found this property for sale. They contacted the owner of Stripling’s to see if they were interested in this location and they were. Stripling’s started down in Cordele and Perry. They first started as a sausage and butcher store. Also, they sell spices/jellies/jams that are made in the community. The Striplings in Oconee County brings in ½ million dollars in tax revenue for Oconee County and jobs to the area. Not only is it a country store, but they serve hot breakfast, lunch, and dinner too. They plan to put picnic tables around the building for people to use. Also, a soil test has been done and the soils are good for a septic system. The concept plan shows 3 separate tracts. Striplings will be on one tract and the other tracts may be used for dental or medical offices. They plan to meet all the requirements for the overlay district as outlined in the Unified Development Code. Toni Harvey noted in the staff report that the access street would need to be designed as a roadway rather than a driveway if there are multiple tracts in this development. Also, there were others in the community present in favor of this development. Charles Russel, Billy Healan, and Robert Bowman were among the ones that spoke in favor of the development. Also, they presented staff with a 1,000 signatures in favor of this development; email copies from two Oconee County Commissioners speaking on the benefits of Striplings in their county; note from Henry Puckett, one of the largest farm owners that touches the proposed property in favor of this zoning and store; and other emails in favor of the development.

There were some people present in opposition to this development. Gina McKinney and Babs McDonald, who live in the South Jackson area, were present to speak in opposition of this development and to represent the Citizens for South Jackson (CSJ). This past summer, the CSJ worked with the Planning Staff to develop a vision for smart growth on Hwy. 129. The proposed development could be aligned with that vision, but only if it is proposed for one of the 4 commercial nodes identified for Hwy. 129 in the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Board of Commissioners approved the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update that confines only 4 commercial nodes along Hwy. 129 corridor. Thus, the proposed site is outside of these nodes and not compatible with the goals, objectives, and intent of the new comprehensive plan. The proposed 8 acre tract is no longer identified as commercial future land use. Also, there has been no growth on Hwy. 129 except in 2016 when a Dollar General was built. One unwanted development doesn’t constitute a development trend. The proposed use will adversely affect nearby and adjacent

residences regarding traffic and safety problems, property values, and their rural way of life. If the boards feel like they must recommend approval, the CSJ ask for the following conditions in addition to the condition recommended by Planning Staff. These conditions are: 1) Establish safe ingress and egress on Hwy. 129 by enlarging the “driveway” on Hwy. 129. 2) Eliminate the entrance/exit on Brock Road and work with GA DOT to create a cut-through across from the entrance/exit. (Entering and exiting on Brock Rd. will create traffic and safety problems for adjacent and nearby residences.) 3) Require that at least 40% of paving surfaces be permeable to reduce runoff. 4) Create visual and acoustic barriers where the proposed commercial area abuts private residences, including across and on Brock Rd. 5) Require that night lighting be environmentally friendly and does not pollute dark sky views. 6) Place parking lots away from Hwy. 129 and provide adequate visual screening from the roadways, including shrubs and trees. 7) Allocate a portion of the land to the north of the building as public greenspace with trees, two picnic tables and a 4-car parking area. Also, there are 60 citizens who have signed a letter in opposition to the rezoning request.

Then, there was a rebuttal by the applicant. He noted that they are for smart growth and don’t want to see this area like a Fulton County or Gwinnett County. This development will positively affect this area with 75 jobs, tax revenue, and an upgraded country store where the citizens in this rural community can congregate with one another. As far as the applicant and owners are concerned, there is no problem in the traffic layout into this development. Then, there was discussion between the applicant, board, and staff.

Furthermore, Steve Wittry made a motion to approve the rezone from A-2 to CRC for commercial use with 1 condition: 1) All requirements of the East Jackson Overlay District must be met. The motion was seconded by Les Knoblock. The rezone case was approved by Steve Wittry, Les Knoblock, and Nick Bledsoe.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Marty Clark, Chairman

Date