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Board of Commissioners

THE PLANNING BOARD OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GA

February 11, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Kimberly Barlett called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Ms. Kimberly Barlett requested nominations from the board. Mr. Jake Patrick made a motion to nominate Mr. Ryan Thompson as chairman for 2025. Mr. Neal Kessler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ID. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Ryan Thompson requested nominations from the board. Ms. Lyndsay Smith made a motion to nominate Mr. Jake Patrick as vice chairman for 2025. Mr. Neal Kessler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. INVOCATION

Mr. Neal Kessler gave the invocation.

V. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Neal Kessler led the pledge.

VI. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chairman Ryan Thompson explained the changes to the agenda. Item 3 has been postponed to the March 11, 2025 meeting. Ms. Kimberly Barlett stated that there were no more changes to the agenda. Mr. Jake Patrick made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Lyndsay Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Members Attending:	Chairman Ryan Thompson, Mr. Jake Patrick, Mr. Walter Boykin, Mr. Neal Kessler, Ms. Lyndsay Smith
Members Absent:	
Staff Present:	Mr. Steve Candler, Director of Development Services; Ms. Chelsie Fernald, Planning Manager; Ms. Kimberly Barlett, Planning Board Clerk; Mr. Joanathan Hulme, County Engineer
Persons Attending:	Ms. Elizabeth Sapp, Ms. Elizabeth Branda, Mr. Allen Branda, Ms. Jami Dupervil, Mr. Peterson Dupervil, Ms. Carol A. Brown, Ms. Maxine Wendelken, Mr. Paul Wendelken, Mr. Dennis Ulmer Sr., Ms. Michelle Browne, Mr. Porter Morgan, Mr. Jimmy Blakey, Ms. Ava Dantis, Mr. Avant Dantis, Ms. Jill Anderson, Ms. Jackie

Way, Ms. Jilliane Barns, Ms. Mary Blue, Mr. Michael Crouder, Ms. Barbara Crouder, Mr. Delens Cadichon, Mr. Neil Mckenzie, Ms. Elizabeth Branda, Ms. Charlita Ablakwa

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Chainnan Ryan Thompson stated all items voted on would be presented at the March 4, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting at 6:00 pm as a public hearing.

Charlita Ablakwa - PUBLIC HEARING (1): requests to **rezone**+/- 6.20 acres from **AR-1** to **AR-2** to allow for pennitted uses in AR-2. Located at 550 Brogden Road. **(Third District) [Map# 319 Parcel# 23]**

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item.

Ms. Charlita Ablakwa explained that they live on the current five acres and are looking to divide the back three into one-acre lots for potential family members.

No one was present in opposition.

Mr. Neal Kessler made a motion for approval with staff recommendations, which Mr. Walter Boykin seconded. Tlte motion carried unanimously.

Peterson Dupervil- PUBLIC HEARING (2): requests to **rezone**+/- 5.00 acres from **AR-1** to **AR-2** to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. It is located at 116 Oak Street. **(Second District) [Map# 450D Parcel** #11]

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item.

Chairman Ryan Thomspon asked if there are adjacent AR-2 zonings.

Mr. Peterson Dupervil stated he wants to divide the land to build a home for his in-laws.

Chainnan Ryan Thompson asked if it was just a two-lot subdivision.

No one was present in opposition.

Mr. Jake Patrick made a motion for approval with staff recommendations, which Mr. Neal Kessler seconded. Tlte motion carried unanimously.

Manning Graham- PUBLIC HEARING (3): requests to **rezone+/-** 33.5 acres from **AR-1 to LI** to allow for industrial uses. Located on Old Augusta Road. **(Fifth District) [Map #476 Parcel# 4E]**

Item Postponed to 3/11/25.

Neil Mckenzie- PUBLIC HEARING (4): requests to **rezone**+/- 221.87 acres from **AR-1 to R-5** to allow for residential development. Located on Goshen Road. **(Second District) [Map #451 Parcel# 41]**

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item.

Mr. Neal McKenzie stated this track of land is bounded on the East and West by two railroad tracks, and there is about a 1000-foot strip of wetlands between the properties that front the main road. The project will be built to the R-5 standards with lots shown as 55 x 120. The total lot count is 377 homes with a gross density of l. 7 per acre and a net of approximately 3.3. He stated they offer 50 feet of buffers when

the minimum is 15 feet. They propose that the buffering would have to be supplemented. They are proposing an amenity package to be dete1mined and an open space that includes the wetlands. They will install stormwater ponds on site and adhere to the county sto,mwater management practices. Flood Zone A is on the property and follows the wetlands, and they said they will not impact the flood zones. The primary access would be 100 feet in frontage on Goshen Road. He stated they have property under contract for the emergency access, 665 Goshen Road. The plan is to use Effingham County utilities, and this site would require a lift station. If approved, they plan about 12 months of engineering and pennitting before any site work in March next year. Then, another six to eight months of site prep before starting the first homes. The first homes to come online would probably be in mid-2027, aligning with the capacity for utilities available in 2027. They expect that the county's traffic improvements will be completed before they start this project.

Mr. Steve Candler asked for clarification on the secondary access easement.

Ms. Lyndsay Smith asked Jonathan Hulme when the infrastructure for that area was completed.

Mr. Jonathan Hulme stated that improvements to Goshen include widening the road with a middle left or right turn lane in the center, which they expect in April 2028. The Effingham Parkway roundabout on Goshen will be completed in September 2025, and the Hodgeville intersection roundabout will be completed in November 2026.

Mr. Jake Patrick asked for clarification on the buffers for the back of the property that backed up to the pasture-use residences and if the applicant would be opposed to a dirt berm.

Mr. Neil McKenzie stated that they are proposing a 50-foot landscape buffer with trees and shrubs and are not opposed to a benn.

Chainnan Ryan Thompson asked for clarification on the buffers for the railroad.

Mr. Neil Mckenzie stated they could do 50 feet of buffer around.

Mr. Steve Candler stated that the subdivision ordinance has additional railroad buffers.

Ms. Lyndsay Smith asked if the applicant is okay with having a longer timeline to align with the 2028 infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Neil Mckenzie stated they would be willing to set a certain amount of homes per year until everything is completed.

Mr. Charles Way stated that he has spoken to the neighboring property owner, who has expressed the desire for a combination of landscaping, berms, and fencing. They agree that there needs to be some combination of berms and plantings. With the first house proposed for mid-2027, he thinks there will not be more than 40 or 50 houses a year.

Several surrounding neighbors came out to speak in opposition to the request, including:

- Concerned with the number of houses
- Rental subdivisions
- Livestock
- Traffic
- Infrastructure
- Overcrowded schools
- Environmental impact of a large high-density subdivision
- Already a large number of residences already approved
- Flood Zone

Wetlands
Country Living
Doesn't fit the area with larger lots
Flooding
Traffic increase
Widening on Goshen Road
Truck Traffic

Mr. Steve Candler explained wetlands and flood zones to the public and how to access them on the GIS map.

Mr. Jonthan Hulme stated that applicants would have to go through the rules and regulations for the local design manual, which includes a downstream analysis to ensure they are not flooding anyone's property and the process for st01mwater management.

Ms. Chelsie Fernald explained the date on the flood map was December 21, 2017.

Mr. Neil Mckenzie stated they are ve1y familiar with the county's regulations for stormwater management. They hope that the improvements to the infrastructure will alleviate some of the traffic. The intention is to serve only emergency vehicles and not provide full access to the emergency access points.

Chairman Ryan Thompson asked if the second access would be open to residents to use in a non-emergency and was concerned about the flooding for the access. He would recommend some substance on the berm and clarify the amenities and usable open space.

Ms. Lyndsay Smith asked what the buffer would be between the development and the flood zone based on future changes with FEMA.

Mr. Neil Mckenzie stated that they wouldn't impact any of the wetlands or Flood Zone as of today. IfFEMA changes before the permitting process, it must abide by the new lines.

Mr. Jake Patrick explained his concerns about having buffers in the neighborhood for the south end and said he would like to see a vegetative benn or a natural buffer to protect the nearby faim. He stated that the infrastructure is under contract and will be coming up soon. The schools have capacity data from Januaiy 14th of this year, and there is room for expansion. He thinks that the roundabouts that are coming will help the traffic.

Chairman Ryan Thompson reiterated the staff recommendations and expressed that the condition of the increased buffer should be added.

Mr. Neal Kessler asked for clarification on water intrusion when something else is built or the water table changes.

Mr. Jonathan Hulme explained that every proposed development goes through the same requirements, and if another development causes an increase in water flow, the next development is responsible for that. The county just changed the stormwater requirements from a 10-year storm event to a 25-year storm event.

Ms. Lyndsay Smith stated that she knows the incredible need for housing and the traffic concerns. She thought that if approved, there needs to be some time frame around the road construction, maybe a phased plan.

Mr. Charles Way suggested maybe a 120-house cap for infrastructure.

Mr. Jake Patrick stated this aligns with the future land use map and the comprehensive plan. There is a need for housing. He would like to see a 120 cap with second access that is already established and purchased. 120 houses with a certificate of occupancy until the completion of Goshen Road construction. A vegetative 50 ft wide buffer and berm on the south side of the property and, with those conditions and staff recommendations, a motion for approval. Mr. Lyndsay Smith seconded. The motion carried 4 to 1. Mr. Neal Kessler voted to deny.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no fu1ther business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

PLANNING BOARD SECRETARY

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