Effingham County Georgia
Board of Commissioners

THE PLANNING BOARD OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GA
November 12, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dave Burns called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

II. INVOCATION

Alan Zipperer gave the invocation.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Alan Zipperer led the pledge.

IV. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chairman Dave Burns asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Ms. Kimberly Barlett stated that there were changes to the agenda. Item 4 has been withdrawn, and Item 5 and Item 7 have been postponed to the January 14th meeting. Mr. Alan Zipperer made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Ryan Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Dave Burns asked if there were any corrections or additions to the October 8, 2024, minutes. Mr. Peter Higgins made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Brad Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Members Attending:	**Mr. Ryan Thompson, Chairman Dave Burns, Mr. Peter Higgins, Mr. Brad Smith, Mr. Alan Zipperer**
Members Absent:	
Staff Present:	**Mr. Steve Candler, Director of Development Services; Ms. Chelsie Fernald, Senior Planner; Ms. Kimberly Barlett, Planning Board Clerk; Mr. Joanathan Hulme, County Engineer**
Persons Attending:	**Mr. Billy Hill, Ms. Lynn Grimes, Mr. Neil Mckenzie, Ms. Kindall Harville, Ms. Annette Youmans, Ms. Rhonda Key, Ms. Emily Smith, Ms. Acacia Cooper, Ms. Bonnie Meeks-McIver, Mr. Brian Pepe, Mr. Larry Billeiter, Mr. Jamie Rahn, Mr. Chris DuPree, Mr. Richard Turner, Ms. Bridget Pepe, Ms. Colleen Bowerman, Ms. Renee T. Blissett, Mr. Josh Yellin, Mr. William Horton, Ms. Heidi Curtis, Ms. Haley Harper, Mr. John Wineman, Mr. Woody Bagley, Mr. James Wilson, Ms. Michelle Browne, Ms. Dennis Ulmer, Mr. Murray Marshall, Mr. Bart Bennett, Mr. Joe Marshall, Ms. Maxine Wendelken, GaryoPam More, Mr. Paul**

Wendelken, Mr. Jeremy Hill, Mr. Bobby Gatch, Ms. LuAnn Gatch, Mr. Will Floyd, Ms. Tracey Durham, Ms. Peggy Smith, Mr. Danny cooper, Mr. Scott Hall, Ms. Samantha Easton, Ms. Elizabeth Sapp

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Burns stated all items voted on would be presented at the December 3, 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting at 6:00 pm as a public hearing.

Billy Hill as agent for Danny Smith – PUBLIC HEARING (1): requests to **rezone** +/- 3.83 acres from **AR-1** to **AR-2** to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. Located at 1347 Old Tusculum Road. **(Third District) [Map # 318 Parcel # 34]**

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item, and if approved, this will comply with ordinance criteria.

Mr. Ryan Thompson asked what the adjacent zoning is and if there are any AR-2s.

Ms. Chelsie Fernald explained that there were none, but it was a non-conforming AR-1 parcel.

Chairman Dave Burns asked for clarification on the subdivision of the property.

Mr. Billy Hill stated that everything around this property is AR-1, but 14 properties within a half mile don't meet the AR-1 requirements. None of them have ever been changed to AR-2. They range from .81 of an acre to two acres.

Mr. Alan Zipperer made a motion for approval with staff recommendations, which Mr. Brad Snith seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Lynn Grimes- PUBLIC HEARING (2): requests to **rezone** +/- 3.21 acres from **AR-1** to **AR-2** to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. It is located at 1411 Goshen Road. **(Second District) [Map # 451 Parcel # 24]**

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item, which, if approved, will comply with ordinance criteria by explaining items 2 and 3.

Mr. Alan Zipperer asked for clarification on how the back parcel will get access.

Ms. Chelsie Fernald explained there would be access from Goshen.

Mr. Ryan Thompson asked for clarification of the acreage going to AR-1.

Ms. Lynn Grimes stated she is just swapping the properties and not adding extra buildings, and a road accesses the back of the property.

Mr. Alan Zipperer made a motion for approval with staff recommendations, which Mr. Peter Higgins seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Lynn Grimes- PUBLIC HEARING (3): requests to **rezone** +/- 6.22 acres from **AR-2 to AR-1** to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. Located at 1415 Goshen Road. **(Second District) [Map #451 Parcel # 24A]**

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item and explained that the rezoning would only affect 2.33 acres combined, for a total of 6.22 acres.

The board discussed the change to the acreage.

Mr. Ryan Thompson recommended approval to rezone 2.33 acres from AR-2 to AR-1 to allow permitted uses in AR-1, which Mr. Peter Higgins seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Stephen Schuman- PUBLIC HEARING (4): requests to **rezone** +/- 10 acres from **AR-1 to AR-2** to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. Located at 2599 Courthouse Road. **(Fourth District) [Map #348 Parcel # 36]**

Item Withdrawn.

Manning Graham- PUBLIC HEARING (5): requests to **rezone** +/- 33.5 acres from **AR-1 to HI** to allow for industrial uses. It is located in Old Augusta. **(Fifth District) [Map # 476 Parcel # 4E]**

Item Postponed to 1/14/25.

Hunter Maclean c/o Josh Yellin as agent for Cassie Hinely- PUBLIC HEARING (6): requests to **rezone** +/- 247.2 acres from **AR-1 to PD-R** to allow for residential development. Located on Sand Hill Road. **(First District) [Map # 298 Parcel # 9]**

Mr. Ryan Thompson moved to recuse Chairman Dave Burns from item 6, and Mr. Alan Zipperer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item; if approved, this will comply with ordinance criteria and conditions.

Mr. Josh Yellin stated that this site is next to the borough pits and some property that has been intensified in recent years. They fully agree with the conditions recommended by the staff. He states that this project will be exclusively single detached family homes with a lower density than permitted in the R-5 district. They have proposed an upward amount of greenspace of 35.3%, which doesn't include 44 ½ acres of wetlands that are not allowed to count towards greenspace requirements. They are proposing a 50 ft landscape buffer along the length of the property at Sand Hill and an included wetlands natural buffer adjacent to the other properties. This property will have significant amenities like playgrounds, pocket parks, dog parks, walking trails, fields, pools, and clubhouses. The developer has already obtained a wetlands delineation, and there is minimal impact on the wetlands and more uplands than previously seen on the maps. They have spoken with the school system, and Sand Hill Elementary School is one of the few schools in the district where there is a need for additional students, with a current need of 203 students and extra capacity at South Effingham Middle and High School. There are plans for significant traffic improvements already in this area. This area was targeted as an area for future growth within the county.

Mr. Neil McKenzie stated that the site has two entrances, and the TIA is completed. There is a 30-foot undisturbed buffer around the perimeter and a 50-foot landscaped buffer along Sand Hill. They are proposing two different lot styles—a traditional 55-foot-wide product and a reduced cottage style. On the traditional lots, they are proposing three spaces- two in the driveway and one in the garage, and then the cottage lots would be an extra wide driveway to potentially fit two cars in the driveway. The paving width would be 28 feet wide to keep from having the roads blocked and overflow parallel parking around the neighborhood. These are proposed to be community water and community wastewater. The Flood Zone A would only affect about 25 lots. They are proposing additional detention ponds to ease flooding concerns. The TIA did not recommend offsite improvements other than the two-lane entrances.

Mr. Steve Candler asked how many trips per day were generated.

Mr. Neil McKenzie stated that the trips for 504 homes are 4,468 daily trips, with 2234 in and 2234 out. At the AM peak hour, you'd have 325 trips, with 81 entering and 244 exiting, and during the PM peak hour, you'd have 455 trips, with 286 entering and 169 exiting.

Mr. Steve Candler asked about stacking and the decel and accel lanes.

Mr. Neil Mckenzie stated they are recommended at full GDOT width.

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

- The density doesn't fit this area
- The concern with water because it is in a red zone
- Concerned with the wastewater
- Overcrowded schools
- Widening on US Hwy 80
- Traffic increase
- Dangerous intersections
- Flooding – significant creeks flow through this property
- Effect of drainage and wetlands
- Lot sizes are too small
- Doesn't fit rural areas
- Needs improved infrastructure
- Widening roads and taking property from people
- Landfill capacity issues
- Light pollution
- County disaster response
- Overall quality of life
- Truck traffic
- No rentals
- Safety of the citizens
- Increase in trash

Mr. Neil McKenzie stated they would spend all of 2025 permitting this project before they even started site preparation work. Then, after another year of preparation and home construction, they are looking at 2027 before the first phase is done. He stated that the roundabout will be completed in 2027 at around the same time. The water and wastewater will be privately operated and maintained. The operator would have to be preapproved by the state of Georgia to withdraw from the red zone, which would be aquifer water. This would have to be approved by EPD before construction; they are estimating 151,000 GPD.

Mr. Ryan Thompson asked for clarification on the fact that the county is not expected to provide the water system. He wondered if they would be willing to increase the buffers and add no lots to back up to the buffer. Are there any controls on the percentage of smaller lots in the text? Mr. McKenzie stated points at about 250 for each lot size, but they are willing to set a limit to the cottage-style lots.

Mr. Ryan Thompson will recommend approval with additional conditions to add specific standards for the buffer along Sand Hill: 50 feet is the absolute minimum, no lots backing up to the Sand Hill buffer, and a maximum of 50 percent of the total lot account of smaller lots. Mr. Alan Zipperer seconded. The motion carried unanimously 4 to 0.

Mr. Brad Smith moved for Chairman Dave Burns to return to the board, and Mr. Alan Zipperer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Neil McKenzie as agent for Nick Finland- PUBLIC HEARING (7): 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]**

Item Postponed to 1/14/25.

Kevin Forbes as agent for Kimberly and Rebecca Rahn- PUBLIC HEARING (8): requests to **rezone** +/- 425 acres from **AR-1 to LI** to allow for light industrial development. Located on Rahn Station Road. **(Fourth District) [Map #412 Parcel # 3 & 3A]**

Mr. Alan Zipperer made a motion to recuse Mr. Ryan Thompson from item 8, and Mr. Peter Higgins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Chelsie Fernald presented this item, and if approved, this will comply with ordinance criteria.

Mr. Murray Marshall stated that he had extensive sound evaluations and determined that a 15-foot berm and 150-foot buffer gave much better sound attenuation to the adjourning properties. They have taken aerial photography to show there are between 500 and 2000 feet of buffers from the neighbors. They have not done a traffic study, but Rahn Station has some development. Rhan Station has already been approved for a traffic-carrying road. Based on the economic data, he states the tax revenue to the county over a 10-year build-out of this project would generate 4.25 million per year that could fund a bond for the county to spend on whatever it wants instead of bringing new people into the community they plan to provide jobs to fill the houses that are already underway. Growth is coming, and this area will become less agricultural.

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

- Too many vacant warehouses
- Affects their property value
- No infrastructure
- Increased crimes
- Curvy road is dangerous
- Overcrowded schools
- Threat to the character, safety, and environmental health of this community
- Incompatible with surrounding properties
- Noise, air, and light pollution
- Increased traffic
- Roads cant withstand heavy truck traffic
- Contamination of Wetlands
- Inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- 845 community members have signed a petition on change.org
- The county needs to remain rural
- Can't ride horses on the road anymore
- Animals
- Not consistent with the DRI

Dr. Michale Toma presented some economic impacts of the development to the county.

Mr. Murray Marshall stated that this development would use county water and sewers, with negotiations from the county. They will abide by the stringent progress in place for stormwater. He asked for clarification on why the staff report says that a temporary concrete plant would not be permitted. He feels that a batch plant should be a site plan approval. He is also concerned about the time required for concrete pouring, which is better to pour at night. He would ask that those two conditions not be imposed.

Ms. Chelsie Fernald stated the reason for the condition of the concrete plant is only permitted in heavy industrial and not light industrial.

Mr. Peter Higgins asked for clarification on another entrance to the concept plan.

Mr. Jamie Rahn stated that this land has been in his family for many years, and he feels something has to happen to it. He is in favor of the rezoning.

Mr. Alan Zipperer asked what improvements will be made to Rahn Station Road.

Mr. Johnathan Hulme stated that Rahn Station will be designated as a freight route by beefing up the pavement section and increasing the road width to make it safer. That would be selected because there is the industrial HUB in Springfield, and truck traffic is already heading through as a bypass to 21 and the parkway coming. It will be a 24-foot paved section with 4 feet of paved shoulders and an additional six feet of earth and shoulders on each side.

Chairman Dave Burns asked for clarification because he thought 150-foot buffers required a berm. Ms. Fernald explained that it was optional. He explained that he is in favor of warehouses if they are buffered and bermed correctly, but when it comes to zoning, he doesn't think this fits that area. He is concerned about opening this area to industrial use.

Mr. Peter Higgins stated there would be more traffic if it became residential.

Mr. Peter Higgins made a motion for denial. Mr. Alan Zipperer seconded the motion. The motion carried 3 to 1. Mr. Brad Smith opposed it.

Mr. Alan Zipperer moved for Mr. Ryan Thompson to return to the board, and Mr. Peter Higgins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

L. J. Bollett

PLANNING BOARD SECRETARY

1/29/25

DATE