

Macon County Planning Board Minutes

October 21, 2010

Call to Order: Chairman Lewis Penland called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

Members: Lewis Penland, Mike Grubermann, Mark West, Alan Marsh, Karl Gillespie, Jimmy Tate, Larry Stenger, Al, Slagle, Susan Ervin

Staff: Derek Roland, Matt Mason

Media: Highlander, Highlands Newspaper

Approval of Minutes: Alan Marsh made motion to approve 9/16/2010 minutes, Jimmy Tate seconded this motion

Liaison Reports:

MCWC- Has not yet met for the month of October

Transportation Steering Committee- Mark West commented that this committee was making excellent progress.

Educational Segment- The purpose of this presentation was to give the audience in attendance the history of how the discussion concerning slope development in Macon County began, what has been accomplished until now and where the board plans to head in the future. Roland re-assured the audience that the Macon County Planning Board had not yet began to write an ordinance and was still in the fact gathering stage. He reminded everyone that we must work together and find out what is best for the citizens of Macon County.

Matt Mason provided the audience in attendance with photos of well known, recognizable slopes within Macon County. The percentage slope of each photographed area was attached to each of the photos, in order to give citizens a better understanding of what slopes the proposed ordinance will regulate. Mason then went on to show the board drawings that illustrated the cut slopes and amounts of backfill present for homes placed on 25%, 33% and 40% slopes

New Business:

Review of Diamond Falls Preliminary Plat

Steve Gravett, as manager of Diamond Falls Estates, has added 9 additional lots to the subdivision, and made revisions to a number of the existing lots, following the conditional approval of the preliminary plat for this subdivision by the planning board at the August 2010 meeting. In light of these changes, the conditional approval by the planning board at the August meeting becomes null.

Mr. Ben West, Professional Land Surveyor, brought forth the new maps, which contained the additions and revisions to Diamond Falls, requesting preliminary approval for this subdivision. At the August meeting the board voted to approve the first preliminary plat of Diamond Falls Estates under the following conditions:

1. Well locations and water lines must be shown for phases 2A-2F
2. Culvert Drainage facilities must be shown for phases 2A-2F
3. The 155 acres that was noted as “proposed conservation” on the plat must be changed to “future development”.
4. A review fee of \$290 must be paid to the Macon County Planning Department.

Following the August meeting, Diamond Falls Estates met each of the aforementioned conditions, gaining preliminary approval. With the new additions however, a phase 2G has been added to the subdivision. Mark West made a motion that the planning board approve the new preliminary plat for Diamond Falls Estates under the following conditions:

1. Well locations and water lines must be shown for phases 2A-2G
2. Culvert Drainage facilities must be shown for phases 2A-2G
3. A review fee of \$90 must be paid to the Macon County Planning Department (9 additional lots).

Karl Gillespie second, motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

Next Steps for students proposed to serve as non-voting planning board members.

Derek Roland to write a letter to the county commission, notifying them of the nominees and requesting the commission send them official letters of appointment.

Next meeting date for Comprehensive Plan Review

November 9, 2010 at the Environmental Resources Center, meeting will begin at 5:00 pm.

Public Session:

Many questions and comments were posed by the citizens in attendance regarding possible slope development in Macon County. Listed below are the questions and comments.

David Culpepper- asked that planning board and members of the slope development workgroup take into consideration that the slope maps produced by the NCGS aren't always right.

- Al Slagle addressed this comment by saying these maps serve as a general planning tool and are accurate to the point of "throwing up a red flag" for county personnel who would be assessing the site in the 30%-40% range.

David Culpepper- questioned the number of people the proposed slope recommendations would add to county staff.

- Slagle responded saying that due to the economic downturn, slopes in the 30%-40% range would be handled using the current staff. Initially the slope workgroup had recommended an engineer. Eventually Slagle felt there would need to be some level of engineering involved.

Dennis DeWolf- Complimented the cross section of individuals on the slope development committee. DeWolf went on to ask if density of development on slopes had been considered and if suggestions of proposed cut and fill slope heights had been consistent with soil classifications.

- Slagle responded saying that other ordinances from surrounding counties had included density of development in their regulations. While this topic was a basis for discussion among slope committee members, density requirements were not included in the recommendations. Concerning proposed cut and fill slope heights being consistent with soil classifications, Slagle commented that a "middle of the road" soil classification combined with a 1.5:1 cut slope and 2:1 fill slope would be stable. Susan Ervin added to the discussion by saying that the NCGS had taken into consideration soil type classification on their maps.

David Culpepper- How did the 30% threshold come about?

- Susan Ervin commented that various studies done on landslides throughout this region have indicated that a threshold of 30% and above has accounted for most slide activity in this region.

John Dobson- Indicated that according to data ½ of debris flows seem to be acts of God over which we have no control.

- Slagle commented that we are in a position to minimize loss of life from these acts by instituting requirements such as setbacks from streams.

Jason Shope- Questioned if 56% of landslides started as a result of slopes being modified.

- According to NCGS data, the answer is yes

Robert Smith- Thought the process of public input was terrific. 1 occurrence of damage someone's property is enough. If builders choose to locate in higher risk areas, more extraordinary measures are needed to ensure safety.

Ben West- Ask if a property lies in a landslide hazard area does it automatically go to an engineer.

- Under the current recommendations the answer is yes.

Ronnie Dilbeck- a geologist said that a figure of \$25,000 for a geotechnical site assessment is ridiculous. Most estimates usually come in well below \$8,000.

David Culpepper- Cautioned the board to be more cautious when they made property owners jump through hoops.

Next Meeting Date: Nov. 18 TBD.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Alan Marsh, Mark West second. Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.