

MACON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

October 19, 2005

A meeting of the Macon County Planning Board was held on October 19, 2005 at the Macon County Environmental Resource Center. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Board members present were Ronnie Beale, Lamar Sprinkle, Susan Ervin, Mark West, Evelyn Southard, Larry Stenger, Jimmy Goodman, Mike Decker, Eric Pierson, Alan Marsh, Evelyn Owens, County Planner Stacy Guffey and Planning Assistant Gregory Hunt, Michael Lewis – The Franklin Press, Chad Dorsett – WFSC/WNCC radio station.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes were read by each individual member with Alan Marsh making a motion to accept the minutes as read, Larry Stenger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No unfinished business

PUBLIC SESSION:

No member of the general public present.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Ronnie Beale opened the meeting with the introduction of newly appointed member to the board, Evelyn Owens. The board members and clerk to the board were introduced to Ms. Owens. Chairman Ronnie Beale then proceeded to bring Evelyn Owens up to date on past projects.

Ronnie Beale shared with the Planning Board the request relayed to him concerning Planning Board members who travel approximately 44 miles round trip from Highlands to attend Planning Board meetings. The request consisted of mileage reimbursement for those members. Chairman Ronnie Beale asked the board members their opinions and all members were in support of the reimbursement. Jimmy Goodman then made a motion for the County Planner, Stacy Guffey, to development a process for handling the travel reimbursement, Eric Pierson seconded the motion and were in favor of it.

Chairman Ronnie Beale then recapped the list of 5 projects delivered to the Board of Commissioners for the Planning Board to begin work on. The Board of Commissioners returned with Corridor Protection as the next project. The Commissioners thought that maybe since the Town of Franklin was already working on a similar plan, maybe the town and county could work together under the same umbrella. Mike Decker, Town of Franklin Manager, talked about the town's Zoning Ordinance and its being studied and revised. A unified development ordinance would bring land use and other ordinances under a unified code. Professional Planning agencies are being sought for a cost of performing this study. Chairman Ronnie Beale suggested that maybe; if at all possible, the county and town should or could be working on this project together. Chairman Ronnie Beale asked the members of the board is they felt any other area or item could be included in a joint ordinance with corridor protection. Susan Ervin mentioned commercial development, Mike Decker brought up water and sewer, Larry Stenger introduced junkyards and auto graveyards, Jimmy Goodman suggested roads as an issue that would need to be addressed. Mark West questioned the ability to keep each item or area separate in its own right and will they all connect and remain under one objective. Susan Ervin mentioned a plan that had been done on corridor studies by the DCA as a possible reference for this new project. Stacy Guffey, County Planner, recommended the Planning Board ask for a letter from the Board of Commissioners outlining exactly what it was they wanted to see in a corridor protection plan. Mike Decker made a motion to proceed with this request to the Board of Commissioners and Alan Marsh seconded it with all in favor.

At this point in the meeting the question came back up as to exactly what is Corridor Protection? Jimmy Goodman thought it meant service roads, easier access, offering a break on water and sewer if developers would stick to a set design guideline laid out by the county. Stacy Guffey, County Planner, shared with the board his conversation with Geoffrey Willette, Division of Community Assistance regarding corridor protection planning. The points discussed between Stacy Guffey and Geoffrey Willette was that corridor protection is generally done through zoning powers; however it can be done through the police power provision. Under the police power provision there can only be one district (or one set of rules). Generally corridor protection involves multiple districts with more density and more infrastructures located near town centers and the district would have to cover at least 640 acres, which the Georgia

Road alone would probably cover. Stacy Guffey also stated that there is currently no court precedent for using the police power provision to accomplish corridor protection. Several board members felt that development would follow water and sewer, thus corridor protection would be regulated in this manner. Mike Decker stated that the Town of Franklin is at 65% to 70% of capacity on waster treatment release.

Chairman Ronnie Beale read a letter he proposed to send to the Board of Commissioners regarding projects for the Planning Board to consider and what should be the long term goals. Having a comprehensive plan laid out to set a debate on specific items seemed to be the consensus of the board. Chairman Ronnie Beale then opened the discussion on what or how to proceed on corridor protection. The board suggested Stacy Guffey, County Planner, put together examples of other counties and their method of corridor protection. Upon gathering this information, Stacy Guffey would then present it to the board. Chairman Ronnie Beale talked about ordinances that are currently on the books and the effectiveness of being enforced. The goal is to not have a stack of ordinances and different people enforcing individual ordinances. Gregory Hunt, County Sign Enforcement Officer, shared with the board the reception the Sign Control Ordinance has gotten in the now full time enforcement process. The perception is that the majority of the public is in favor of the ordinance, so long as it's being enforced fairly, according to the written ordinance and across the board. Stacy Guffey, County Planner, asked the board if comprehensive plans for other areas could be looked at as corridor protection is being studied.

Chairman Ronnie Beale then reminded board members of the Board of Realtors Breakfast to be held at the Macon Bank Corporation Center on Thursday, October 20, 2005 at 7:45 am. The planning board will be presenting the program to share the impact of the High Impact Land Use Ordinance on Macon County and the real estate community. Chairman Ronnie Beale suggested future meetings should be constructive and productive with all members contributing valuably to the meetings.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.