



Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 19, 2024 6:00 p.m.

Municipal Hall Courtroom

1. Meeting called to order: 6:01 p.m.
2. Approval of September agenda
 - a. Motion to approve made by John Ballard, seconded by Jimmy Thompson, all approved
3. Old Business
 - a. Public Forum (anyone who wants to speak about something OTHER than the applications)- None
4. New Business
 - a. Conditional Use Application- 1509 Level Grove Road- Webster Lake Investments proposing a Conditional Use permit to develop the back portion of the property as a mini storage facility
 - i. Harry Barton and Chris Kidd came to present the application for the Conditional Use permit on the back portion of the property to use for mini storage. The property is zoned HB- Highway Business. There will be an entrance on Level Grove Road under the Georgia Power easement. Jason Lewallen asked if the developers have an agreement with GDOT because they maintain the guardrail bordering the front of the property, as it borders the on ramp at Highway 365 North. John Ballard asked if these would be garage- style mini storage facilities or enclosed, climate- controlled. Mr. Kidd said they were planning to do garage- style storage units and have not had any discussions regarding climate- controlled facilities to date.
 - ii. Having no other questions, Jason Lewallen asked if anyone wanted to speak for or against this application. There was none.
 - iii. John Ballard made a motion to approve the conditional use application with no additional conditions placed on it. Motion was seconded by Jimmy Thompson, all approved
 - b. Annexation and Zoning Application- 1900 Level Grove Road- FROY LLC proposing to annex property into the city limits as R2- Multi-Family Residential for a 212 unit townhome Development.
 - i. Casey Moye and Mike Franklin presented an application and annexation and rezoning. Craig and Mike Ledford will be the developers of the 180 units. They will be 1,800 square foot, 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, garage equipped, fee- simple detached townhomes selling from the high 200's and low 300's.
 - ii. Jason Lewallen asked about the burden on the Board of Education.
 - iii. John Ballard asked about the traffic congestion on that road, as the location is at an arterial road.
 - iv. Mike Franklin said that Clover Leaf Consultants were contracted last week to conduct a traffic study. They already know they will have to put in a decel lane and maybe a couple of other things. He also said that he has spoken with Patrick

Franklin, Assistant Superintendent of Habersham BOE, and he said that because the development is going to be constructed in four different phases, the board of education will be able to handle the volume incrementally, so it wouldn't be as much of a burden as people think. Mike Franklin said that they plan to build 50 units and sell them before they begin the next 50 and sell and repeat that model until the development is complete.

- v. Portia Burns said that she understands the housing market right now, but that our young professionals, who are our target demographic, could not afford even this kind of housing at this price point, so she is concerned that it may not be suitable for Cornelia. Mike Franklin said that he was surprised to find out that 70% of the units sold in Jasper were to adults age 55 and older. Portia said though we do have a good portion of the population who fit that age group who may want to downsize, that is not the demographic in our city that is facing a housing shortage or struggling to find a place to live.
- vi. Hearing no other questions, the floor was opened to public comment for or against the annexation and/or rezoning of the property
 1. Donna Shirley, Level Grove Road, owns the 17 acres surround the property. She has five driveways. She has a hard time pulling out of the driveway already. She wants to know if this development will have a fence surrounding it to protect her property from people who may wander too far. She is not against the development, but she wants to know what is going on with it so that she can prepare for it.
 2. Melanie Herrin, J. Warren Road, this property backs up to hers. She said that though the intersection at J. Warren Road was made a 4-way stop, it does not deter people from driving badly. It is dangerous. She said the school traffic backs up to Forest Lane Pawn Shop and out to the property in question. She said her daughter is autistic and has a lot of animals. She uses the animals for her therapy. She said there is a criminal element added when you put that many people on the property and she is afraid she is losing her ruralness and hometown feel. She said, "I don't want your city in my country."
 3. Kathy Crane, Level Grove Road, is concerned about the sewage. She said there are already runovers at the creek and it already smells bad from the city's wastewater treatment plant. She asked if the city's sewer system can accommodate that many households. She said that Level Grove Elementary School is already full and wants to know if they will build a new school to accommodate the additional students, which she estimated at approximately 400. She said that's a whole new school by itself. She said the traffic already backs up and gets congested. She said that long ago, that property belonged to the Cornelia Church of God and was designated to build a church. She said that when Mike Franklin bought the property, that a church was supposed to be the use for the property. Mike Franklin clarified that he does not own the property, but that Froy LLC owns it.
 4. Having no other parties to speak, public comment was closed. The planning commission then asked Community Development Director Jessie Owensby to clarify how spot zoning works and what the options were. Jessie said that if they zone the property R2- Multi-family

residential, it will be considered “spot zoning,” because all the parcels surrounding it are either R1-Single Family Residential or HB-Highway Business. R1 does not allow for multi-family all. The options are as follows:

- a. Rezone to R1-Single family residential and subdivide the lots according to the city’s minimum development requirements
 - b. Rezone to HB and apply for a Conditional Use permit for multi-family residential
 - c. Rezone to HB and use it for commercial or industrial purposes
 - d. Rezone to a Planned Unit Development when criteria is met
5. John Ballard made the motion to approve the annexation of the property with the zoning of HB-Highway Business and defer to the City Commission for final approval. Motion was seconded by Portia Burns. Jason Lewallen abstained from voting. All others approved.
 5. Next Regular Board Meeting: **October 17, 2024** at the Municipal Complex Courtroom at 6 p.m.
 6. Adjourn- Motion made to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. by John Ballard, seconded by Jimmy Thompson, all approved

Present: Portia Burns, Jimmy Thompson, Melanie Herrin, Kathy Crane, Jeff Crane, Donna Shirley, Kenneth Chastain, Jason Lewallen, Scott Adams, Chastity Adams, Harry Barton, Jerry Neace, John Ballard, Casey Moye, Mike Franklin, Chris Kidd, Jessie Owensby

Absent: Bill Strickland