

Minutes
Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission
City of Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia
May 13, 2021
6:30 pm

Call to Order

Mike Morton, Community Development Director Called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm. Present at the call to order were Patrick Johnson, Jett Hattaway, Doug Cloud, Rodney Peek, & Scott Lightsey. Also present was City Planner Cheryl Brooks.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Morton led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Swearing in of Planning Commission members

Dana Wicher, City Clerk, swore in the new members Doug Cloud, Rodney Peek, & Scott Lightsey.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Morton recommended amending the agenda to add two items: a welcome from Mayor Reed for the new planning commission members to and an item for the election of officers.

Mr. Johnson made the motion to approve the agenda with the amendments as recommended. Mr. Hattaway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Reed Welcome

Mayor Reed welcomed the new members and thanked them for volunteering for the commission. Mayor Reed emphasized the experience and professionalism the new board brings. Mayor Reed spoke about the city's unique zoning focusing on land preservation. Mr. Reed reminded the board they were a recommending body to the City Council and challenged them to look at decisions and how they will affect the city 100 years out. The Mayor then asked the board to introduce themselves and the members introduced themselves.

Election of Officers

Mr. Johnson nominated himself for the Chair. There were no other nominations. Mr. Hathaway seconded. The nomination passed unanimously.

Mr. Johnson nominated Mr. Cloud for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. Mr. Hathaway seconded. The nomination passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of March 11, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the March 11, 2021 minutes. Mr. Hattaway seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearings

Mr. Johnson read the public hearing procedures.

2. Serenbe Meadows

- **Proposed rezoning of 44.8 acres**
- **Proposed Buffer Variance**

The board agreed to combine the rezoning and variance for discussion purposes.

Mr. Johnson opened the Public Hearing.

The following person spoke in support of the items:

Wayne Matthews spoke for the applicant for Serenbe Meadows rezoning and variance.

Mr. Matthews stated there were 44 acres proposing residential homes and stated the area will become mostly open space with gravel roads extending from Prom Field Road up to Selborne Lane. Mr. Matthews stated that they were planning development around the wastewater lines and stated that the proposed rezoning fits Serenbe.

No one spoke in opposition to the items.

Mr. Johnson asked the board if they had any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Cloud asked for clarification that they were not trying to encroach on the drainfield lines. Mr. Matthews stated that they are confirming the limits of the drain field to ensure they are not disturbed.

Mr. Johnson asked if there might be any amendment to the lots based on the field conditions. Mr. Matthews replied that there might be adjustments made based on what they find. He added that the separation required would be similar to the separation required for septic systems.

Mr. Cloud asked how deep the drain lines were. Mr. Matthews replied that they are two to three feet deep.

Mr. Cloud asked whether the stream in the northwest was being affected by the drain field. Mr. Matthews stated that there were no lines near the stream.

Mr. Peek made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Hattaway seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Morton explained that there are two items proposed. One is the rezoning the 44.8 acres from RL to HM-MU. The other is the buffer variance. Mr. Morton explained that

the hamlet district requires a district buffer of 150 feet, with an average of 300 feet. One of the lots on the proposed plan is only 100 feet from the district boundary so the applicant is seeking a variance to reduce the buffer along that lot line from 150 to 100 feet.

Mr. Morton said that staff recommends approval of the proposed rezoning with the attached conditions.

Mr. Morton read the requirements for variance approval. He stated that while staff is in favor of the plan, staff has a difficult time finding that the proposal met the strict variance criteria. Mr. Morton explained that the applicant could build more lots without rezoning than what they presented in the rezoning and variance proposed and that the homes built on those lots could be built closer to the neighboring properties than what is proposed in the variance.

If the City Council chooses to approve the variance, staff recommends including the following conditions: 1. The buffer reduction only applies to the location identified on the site plan and 2. Existing vegetation providing screening of the proposed lots shall remain in place to provide the greatest degree of screening from Selborne Lane.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the rezoning with the conditions proposed. Mr. Peek seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hattaway made a motion to approve the variance as stipulated. Doug Cloud seconded the motion. The board then discussed the item.

Mr. Johnson asked if by approving the variance we were bettering the property and making it less intrusive. Mr. Morton replied that, yes, the proposed project yields a better result than if in RL.

Mr. Johnson asked if they could come back later to modify the plan. Mike Morton stated that the applicant is tied to the site plan. After the concept plan is approved, the applicant might propose a preliminary plat that differed from the approved concept plan. That preliminary plat would have to be approved by the Planning Commission. If the Planning Commission thought the differences were major differences, then they could require City Council approval of a new concept plan.

Mr. Johnson asked if approval is not the end of the process. Mr. Morton said that was correct and it still would need a concept plan and preliminary plat approval.

Mr. Johnson stated he did not have an issue with approving this application.

Mr. Hattaway asked if the variance was just connected to the one lot mentioned. Mr. Morton stated yes, only to that one lot.

Mr. Johnson asked if the equestrian area would be abandoned. Mr. Matthews stated he did not know but probably so.

Mr. Lightsey asked if approval would create any precedent. Mr. Johnson stated that it would not. Mr. Cloud agreed, stating the approval is site specific.

Mr. Cloud made a motion to approve the variance with the proposed conditions. Mr. Hattaway seconded. Mr. Cloud amended the motion to include a requirement that the limits of the drain field be indicated on the preliminary plat. Mr. Hattaway seconded the amended motion. The amended motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

None

New Business

3. Brief zoning and Subdivision primer for new members

Mr. Morton gave a brief introduction to the kinds of issues that typically appear on the Planning Commission's agenda. The items covered were the following:

- 1. List of topics the board will deal with relating to zoning and subdivision processes.*
- 2. The vision of Chattahoochee hills and the different zoning districts.*
- 3. RL (Rural) district zoning general information.*

4. Serenbe Meadows

- Proposed Concept Plan**

Mr. Morton stated that he discussed this project earlier regarding the rezoning and the variance. Mr. Morton stated that there were already conditions on the rezoning and variance, but the board could choose to add conditions to the concept plan. Mr. Morton added that staff recommends approval of concept plan contingent on the approval of the zoning and variance by City Council.

Doug Cloud asked about the analysis of what was available in RL.

Mike Morton stated it was difficult to answer both because of the existing drain field and because the subject property includes portions of multiple lots, some of which are already partially zoned HM-MU. The code does not have clear language on how to deal with partial lots.

Mr. Matthews stated the lots were located to avoid the drain fields. The drain fields would be in the pasture areas.

Mr. Cloud asked if there are drainfields were in what is referred to as the wildflower meadow. Wayne Matthews responded that there are and that it is about 60 percent utilized.

Mr. Matthews stated they were trying to find all the pipe they can.

Mr. Johnson amended the motion to revise condition 1 of the rezoning to change 10 units to 44 units with remaining staff conditions made earlier regarding rezoning of Serenbe Meadows. Mr. Peek seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hattaway made a motion to approve the concept plan for Serenbe Meadows as staff stipulated. Mr. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Serenbe Overlook

- **Proposed Concept Plan**
- **Proposed Preliminary Plat**

The planning commission discussed the concept plan and preliminary plat together.

Mrs. Brooks stated the applicant submitted a preliminary plat for review. Staff determined that the preliminary plat did not sufficiently match the previously approved concept plan so they notified the applicant they would need to submit a revised concept plan along with their preliminary plat approval.

Mr. Johnson asked if they were the same applicant.

Mrs. Brooks stated they were the same applicant but that it was listed on the report differently due to how the application came into the office at the time. Ownership changed in the middle of the process.

Mr. Johnson asked why the applicant was increasing density in this area.

Mr. Matthews stated the plan maximizes the lots. There were a lot of versions of the plans and that the concept plan was trying to get more homes in the Coweta County school district. Therefore, most of the development is concentrated south of the Coweta County line. That is why the density has been increased some. The topography also is restrictive, including some large streams in the area and aggressive slopes.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that he had seen several versions of the plans for this area,

including one that included a hotel. He asked Mr. Matthews whether the hotel is anticipated any more.

Mr. Matthews stated he did not know if it was gone but it was just not part of this application.

Mr. Morton stated he had only seen it on the maps posted in Serenbe and that it lies north of this location and south of the other preliminary plat the board is reviewing for the south end of Mado West.

Mr. Cloud asked if the bridge was a part of the concept plan. Mr. Matthews replied that it is a part of the plan and they are doing some surveying on the area and flood study now to determine the best location for the bridge. It might move slightly from the location currently shown.

Mr. Hattaway asked if there were concerns about traffic congestion and access to this area. Mr. Matthews stated she had not heard of any and added that Serenbe is exploring routing construction traffic to the south through the Coweta County property.

Mr. Johnson asked if right now the traffic would come through Mado properties. Mr. Matthews said they were looking at temporary military type bridges to go through the Coweta property.

Mr. Cloud asked if they anticipated any wetland issues. Mr. Mathews stated they did not because the way they were planning to build the bridge would not cause any issues.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to recommend approval the concept plan to City Council. Mr. Cloud Seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Brooks stated the next item is the preliminary plat which lines up with the concept plan just discussed. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plat contingent on approval of the concept plan by City Council.

Mr. Johnson Made a motion to approve the preliminary plat on the condition that City Council approves the Concept Plan. Mr. Cloud seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Mado West Unit 8

- **Proposed Preliminary Plat**

Mrs. Brooks went over the proposed preliminary plat for Mado West Unit 8 stating the concept plan was approved in 2016. Mrs. Brooks notated that the original concept plan showed six lots in this location and this plat is for 11 lots. Mrs. Brooks mentioned the lots were still within the existing footprint and the 6 original lots were cut in half to make the additional lots. Mrs. Brooks stated there did not need to be a concept plan update because the new lots were within the same infrastructure.

Mr. Cloud inquired whether the northern two lots were in the same location as on the conceptual plan.

Mr. Morton stated he unsure of the answer but Mado west was developed based on the current concept and stated staff saw the answer as being yes conceptually, did not know if it was literally the same spot on the ground.

Mr. Cloud asked how the determination was made that the new lots would not have any residents that would be impacted by the change.

Mrs. Brooks stated that she had heard from one property owner, however, the number of homes would be within the same footprint and there was anticipated development in the area already.

Mr. Morton added that for the current residents of Mado, the visual impact would be the side of the two closest lots. This does not change if there are eleven lots. Additionally, the plan shows some gap between the last intersection in the existing phase and the first lot line of the new lots, offering an opportunity for some buffering.

Mr. Johnson asked if there was going to be a continuance of shared driveways. Mr. Matthews said yes, there will be shared driveways except for lot 707 which will have its own driveway. Mr. Matthews also noted that there are shared driveways in Selborne and Mado. He added that they were anticipating garages on the lower level.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the preliminary plat. Mr. Peek seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports

Mr. Morton briefed the board on the following:

- 1. Building permits- Mr. Morton provided an update on building permit activity.*
- 2. Foxhall- An application was submitted for annexation of 1,100 acres into the city. The City gave notice to Douglas County, as required by state law. Douglas County requested a meeting and both parties have agreed to 90 days to discuss the proposal which would end on July 30, 2021. The city does not know the County's position on the annexation currently.*

These minutes are provided as a convenience and service to the public, media, and staff. It is not the intent to transcribe proceedings verbatim. Any reproduction of this summary must include this notice. Public comments are noted and heard by the Commission, but not quoted. This is an official record of the City of Chattahoochee Hills Planning Commission Meeting proceedings.

3. An application for rezoning will be coming soon for a previous subdivision on Wilkerson Mill Road that went bust in the recession. Staff has spoken with the applicant and is expecting an application for a mixed-use hamlet.

4. Zoning Revision- Staff has hard copies of the draft for the Commission members and there are plans to go over some policy questions with city council members soon. Mr. Morton mentioned the zoning was turned into a UDC (Unified Development Code) and that there would be a meeting with City Council on May 27th. Mr. Morton stated the board could talk to him or a TSW representative if there were any questions.

Mr. Johnson requested a pdf version of the revision.

Mr. Hattaway asked if there were anything that came from Campbellton.

Mike Morton replied he talked to ARC regarding follow-up grants and reached out to the City of South Fulton. Mr. Morton stated he also is working to set up a meeting with ARC to talk further about the project.

Mayor Reed added that he spoke with Mayor Edwards of South Fulton and he stated he looked forward to moving forward.

Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Cloud made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lightsey seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 8:08 pm.

Approved this 10th day of June, 2021.

Patrick Johnson, Chairman

Attest:

Dana Wicher, City Clerk