



McDuffie County Planning Commission

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 Minutes

210 Railroad Street
Thomson, Georgia 30824

Board Members Present: Commissioner Paul Coughlan, Chairman
Commissioner Georgia Hobbs
Commissioner Bill Hopkins
Commissioner Penny Lowe
Commissioner Bud Lunceford
Commissioner Matt Milburn

County Representatives

Present: Jason Smith, Community Development Director
Craig Wildi, Zoning Official

Visitors Present: See sign-in sheet in file.

Call to Order Chairman Coughlan (6:30 p.m.)

Invocation Commissioner Hopkins

Determination of Quorum: 6 of 6 in attendance

Approval of Minutes May 7, 2024

Motion: Commissioner Hobbs; second: Commissioner Lunceford; vote:
6-0

Information & Announcements

None

Appointment/Reappointment

None

Old Business:

None

New Business:

- 1) Application for special exceptions for 108.9 acres at the intersection of the Thomson Bypass and Dallas Drive for residential and commercial uses associated with a Planned Unit Development for the property; Parcel number 00400016.**

Chairman Coughlan recognized applicant George Fuller, who plans to develop the 108.9 acres in four tracts – one commercial, two as either commercial or high-density residential and one as high-density residential. Mr. Fuller explained he hoped to attract a national retailer such as a grocery store to the main commercial parcel (labeled as Parcel A on the map submitted with the application (attached)), but plans to develop the residential sections first. The developer explained he was waiting on the formal route of a planned frontage road and access to water and sewer.

Commissioner Hobbs made a motion to approve the variance requests for R-3 use on the parcels labeled B, C and D on the map submitted with the application. Per her motion: The variance would take effect when the individual plats are surveyed and filed as development of the entire tract progresses. Any fluctuation of the filed plat size of less than 20% can be approved by Planning and Zoning staff. If the developer plans any other use than residential for the approved parcels, they must go back to the planning commission for approval. All plans must be submitted to Planning and Zoning staff for approval, and commercial developments would have to meet design standards to include brick, stone, stucco or hardiboard facades, and any residential developments would have to meet design standards, including brick, stone or hardiboard facades, and inclusion of greenspace, walking trails and a dog park. In addition, the developer has three years to begin work on the project, with two additional years at the discretion of Planning and Zoning staff. Commissioner Lowe seconded the motion. The motion to approve the request carried 6-0.

2) Application to rezone 207.9 acres on Sturkey Lane and Wellmaker Road to allow for a special exemption for a solar operation; Parcel numbers 00640051G00, 00640051A00, 00640051C00, 00640051E00, 00710001F00.

Chairman Coughlan recognized Telemachos Manos, a Senior Project Developer for EDF, the company planning the nearly 3,000-acre solar farm north of Dearing. The project was initially approved in January 2023, and Mr. Manos explained this application covered removing 210 acres and adding five parcels totaling 207 acres. Mr. Manos said the parcels being removed were at the request of local officials and a property owner. He said the proposed additional parcels would be home to panels and all buffer and setback requirements would be met. He also gave an update on the status of the overall project, adding that they expect to use about 1,800 total acres for their footprint.

Chairman Coughlan asked for public participation, and several residents from the Sturkey Lane and Howard Road area voiced their strong opposition to the request in their area (parcel 00710001F00). Speakers included: Johnny Neal, Johnny Lowe, Jim Rodgers, Frankie McCauley, Josh Simmons, Chemaine Simmons and William Wade. Their opposition was based on several factors ranging from diminished property values to negative environmental impacts to increased runoff in the area.

Commissioner Hopkins made a motion to approve the special exemption for parcels 00640051G00, 00640051A00, 00640051C00, 00640051E00, and deny the special exemption for parcel 00710001F00. Commissioner Lunceford seconded the motion, and it subsequently passed 6-0.

3) Application to rezone 3.37 acres on Augusta Highway from R-2 (Medium Density Residential District) to C-2 (General Commercial District); Parcel number 00730098001.

Chairman Coughlan recognized applicant Anuj Patel, who said he plans to develop the 3.37 acres for use as a convenience store, with the possibility of adding gas in the future. Mr. Patel said he was aware he would have to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation to build safe access for drivers, as well as install a septic system for the store. Chairman Coughlan expressed concerns about the use of the property as it is surrounded by residential property on most sides and the increased traffic that would occur in the area. Resident Tom Black expressed concerns about runoff from the site affecting his pond, which is downstream south of the proposed location. Commissioner Milburn made a motion to deny the rezoning request. Commissioner Lowe seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-1, with Commissioner Hopkins voting against it.

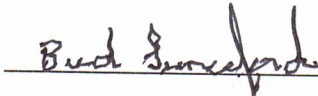
Adjournment:

Motion: Commissioner Lunceford; second: Commissioner Milburn; vote: 6-0 | Time: 8:24 p.m.

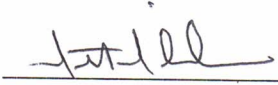


Paul Coughlan, Chairman

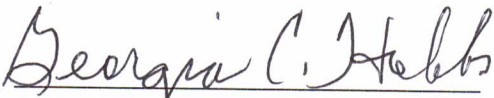
Bill Hopkins, Vice Chairman



Bud Lunceford, Commissioner



Matt Milburn, Commissioner



Georgia Hobbs, Commissioner

Jeanette Lowe, Commissioner