



**FREEPORT PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**
June 1st, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
6:00 pm Freeport Council Chambers

I. Meeting Called to Order at 6:00 by Chairman John Konopacki.

Board members present were Chairman John Konopacki, Kevin Louthain,, Steve Thomas, and Michael Gilley. Member Racyne Digges was not in attendance.

Attending the meeting were Staff to include Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Planning Technician Samantha Graves, Planning Intern Summer Ammirata-Mall, Planning Technician Marge Gay, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, and City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau.

Planning Director Neel led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Meeting Minutes to be approved

a. 5/18/2022 Special Meeting Minutes

Michael Gilley made a motion to approve the minutes and Kevin Louthain seconded. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

III. Walton County School District – Concurrency Presentation

Jill Smith and Michelle Doggett addressed the Board representing the Walton County School District. *(Note: a copy of the presentation slides is available from the Planning and Zoning office upon request).* They reviewed the Vision and Mission of the school district and updated the Board on some of the achievements in the past few years.

The presentation next focused on an update of the facilities and growth in the county and more specifically in the Central Walton/Freeport area. Smith explained the State Department of Education’s COFTE method of growth projections and compared them to the actual increases. The COFTE projections are based on live births and do not accurately reflect reality in areas experiencing rapid in-migration and new residential development. While the COFTE projects a 2% growth rate, the actual rate of growth of student populations in Central Walton from 2016 – 2022 has been 43.1%

Jill compared the school capacities for the Freeport area with the growth projections. The elementary school is at capacity even with the new expansion. The middle school is also approaching capacity, but a new middle school has been approved for construction. The school district is currently seeking a location for a new elementary school.

Next Smith reviewed the interlocal agreement between the school district and the local government entities in Walton County. She explained that the agreement allows local governments to enter into developer’s agreements with local developers to offset the impact



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of increases in student populations caused by new developments with donations of land, construction of new schools, or financial contributions toward new schools.

This concluding the presentation, Michelle Doggett thanked the Board and asked if there were any questions.

Chairman Konopacki asked how the old middle school would be repurposed; Doggett replied that it hasn't been decided yet but several options are being considered, to include a Pre-Kindergarten, ESE, or a Technical school.

There being no further questions from the Board or Public, Chairman Konopacki thanked the School District representatives for coming.

IV. Brannon Acres MU PDP

Director Neel presented the PDP proposal to the Board.

Project Summary:

Parcel Number: 09-1S-19-23000-007-0010
Acreage: 17.93
Location: 95 Brannon Drive
Applicant: Launda Lee Brannon
Project Agent: Scott Jenkins/Jenkins Engineering
Residential Units: 80 single-family residential units
Commercial Square Footage: 21,242sf
Variances/Exceptions Listed for PDP: none

Project Presenter(s): Scott Jenkins/Jenkins Engineering- project engineer.

Correspondence received: letter from John Blackwood, resident in Hammock Bay behind the proposed PDP. Concerned with privacy and noise intrusion; requests a significant buffer.

Public Comment:

Bob Arcand, resident at 120 Whispering Way. Concerned with the potential for increased traffic on Highway 20 from new development.

Bruce Jones, resident at 356 Whispering Way. Concerned with traffic, feels the development should not be allowed to move forward until Highway 20 is widened.



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Michael Topp, resident at 273 Whispering Way. Concerned with removal of old trees and buffering as well as Stormwater management. He has spoken with Scott Jenkins and thinks the planned buffer looks good, just wants to be sure he “keeps it like it looks on paper.”

Ken Ammons, resident at 336 Whispering Way. Wants to be sure there is a big buffer, because the residents of Hammock Bay cannot build walls or tall fences due to HOA prohibitions.

Scott Jenkins responded to the comments. He stated that he feels the densest buffer, a type “D”, would be the best choice for the southern border of the property. Additionally the plans call for putting up a fence to help with the noise mitigation and privacy concerns. Jenkins added that light bleedover is not allowed per the Land Development Code and is reviewed during the Technical Review of the Development.

Board Discussion: John Konopacki said that he is concerned with the traffic on Highway 20 and feels the state is not addressing the situation currently; he asked what measures are being incorporated in this proposal to address it. Jenkins explained that turn lanes will likely be needed, and the development is limiting itself to one access.

Kevin Louthain inquired about the estimated timeline for the development. Scott said that he anticipates it will take 5 – 6 years for build out. Louthain then asked Director Neel if she had any updates on the Highway 20 widening project. Neel replied that prior to Covid the estimate was 2024, but everything has been pushed back.

Steve Thomas said that he feels this is a very generous conceptual plan, very conscientious. Director Hughes-Neel reiterated that the proposal is not asking for maximum densities, ISR, or FARs and has no requests for special entitlements.

Board Action: Steve Thomas motioned to approve the Brannon Acres PDP as presented. Michael Gilley seconded the motion. All ayes; motion carried.

V. Hutchison Variance Request

Attorney Adkinson swore in all those staff and members of the public wishing to address the Board.

Latilda introduced Mr. Hutchinson and reviewed the events that led up to the request for the variance. Mr. Hutchinson is the second owner of the property, which was built 1.5 ft below the required elevation. He purchased the home not realizing it was too low, and it would be a significant after-the-fact hardship to raise it because it is built on a monolithic slab.

Director Neel explained that this case meets all the requirements for a variance.



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Steve Thomas said that he had gone out to look at the property, and it does not appear low. He said it didn't look like a flood zone. It appears to be at the same level of the neighboring houses.

Thomas made a motion to approve the variance. The motion was seconded by Michael Gilley and approved by a unanimous vote.

VI. Short-Term Rental discussion

Latilda turned the meeting over to Attorney Adkinson.

Adkinson told the Board that local law may not prohibit vacation rentals, and there are severe penalties for local governments that pass laws interfering with business income.

He explained that if the Board wishes to solve the problems being caused it should not make it about short-term rentals; instead address the problems they cause i.e. parking, noise, etc. HOA's can ban short-term rentals but cities cannot. The county is pursuing restrictions on short-term rentals.

Steve Thomas asked if the City can require a development to have an HOA; Attorney Adkinson replied that no, they cannot.

Attorney Adkinson added that Freeport's Land Development Code is very proactive, much more so than the County's. The City has frequently updated its code. He advised the Board that if they see issues, they should discuss it and address the problems with parking requirements, buffering requirements, etc. – handle it with a progressive Land Development Code.

Director Neel distributed a copy of the latest draft of the proposed County policy. She asked the members to look through it and email their comments to Attorney Adkinson and herself, so that it can be discussed at a later meeting.

There being no further discussion, Steve Thomas made a motion to adjourn, and Kevin Louthain seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.



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Minutes prepared by Samantha Graves and adopted by the Freeport Planning & Development Review Board on _____.

Chairman Konapacki

Attest:

Kathie Gatewood, City Clerk