

SPALDING COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
February 23, 2016

The Spalding County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on February 23, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in Room 108 of the Spalding County Courthouse Annex. Members present were: John Youmans, Chair, presiding; Bruce Ballard; Walter Cox; Sonny Eubanks and Frank Harris.

Also present were: Chad Jacobs, Community Development Director; Newton Galloway, Zoning Attorney and Yvonne Langford to record the minutes.

Mr. Youmans called the meeting to order and reviewed the rules for conducting the meeting.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Mr. Youmans called for nominations for a chair.

Mr. Eubanks nominated Mr. Youmans for chair. Mr. Harris seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

MOTION

Mr. Eubanks made a motion to close the nominations and declare Mr. Youmans elected by acclamation. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Harris with Mr. Ballard, Mr. Cox, Mr. Eubanks and Mr. Harris voting for the motion and Mr. Youmans abstaining.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Mr. Harris nominated Mr. Ballard for vice-chair. Mr. Youmans seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

MOTION

Mr. Harris made a motion to close the nominations and declare Mr. Ballard elected by acclamation. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Youmans with Mr. Cox, Mr. Eubanks, Mr. Harris and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion and Mr. Ballard abstaining.

Application #16-01Z: James F. Hart, as Receiver for Martha Almond as Trustee for the L. Simpson Charitable Remainder Unitrust, Owner – TPA Group, LLC, Agent – Jackson Road (55.49 acres located in Land Lots 26, 39 and 38 of the 2nd Land District with an address of 445 Wallace Road) – requesting a rezoning from R-2, Single Family Residential and AR-1, Agricultural and Residential, to C-1C, Manufacturing, Light.

Mr. Youmans called on Mr. Jacobs to give an overview of the project.

Mr. Jacobs identified the location of the property off of Jackson Road near the Wallace Road intersection. This is for rezoning approximately 55.5 acres of property on the Butts County line for the construction of a 1,000,000 SF warehouse facility. This project will be split between property in Spalding and Butts Counties. He identified the location of the warehouse and the

parking/driving areas. This project will have approximately 300 trucks per day and will bring 530 new jobs when it is in full operation. The project represents an \$85,000,000 investment. The Butts County portion has already been zoned for the project. Butts County will be providing water and sewer for the project. Spalding and Butts Counties have entered into an intergovernmental agreement. The size and scope of the project requires a Development of Regional Impact study (DRI). At the current time, they are addressing issues that have been raised from the ARC and DOT. Those issues will be resolved. The County cannot finalize the zoning process until the DRI has been complete. The action being taken tonight will not be impacted by this issue.

Mr. Eubanks raised the issue regarding the traffic and how it would impact the neighbors in the area. Mr. Jacobs said he has been in discussions with the sheriff's department regarding that issue and they will be working on resolving the problems.

Joe K. McGorrey – 910 Davis Bend, Alpharetta, Georgia

Mr. McGorrey works for the TPA Group which is a real estate investment group that has been in business for over 50 years. They are well-known for projects of this scale around Atlanta and the Southeast Region. This is a Fortune 500 Company. It is anticipated the project will generate \$1,200,000 in taxes annually. He discussed the entrances to the project and traffic pattern they anticipate. Construction could begin in July of 2016 with a completion date of August 2017. This project will help unlock the potential for Georgia Highway 16 corridor that has been planned for many years. They are serving as the developer of the project and Dollar General does most of the planning themselves as far as the design. Dollar General has 14 other regional distribution centers throughout the United States. This facility will serve most of Georgia.

The issue of truck "stacking" was raised by Mr. Cox. Mr. McGorrey said that should not be an issue. They have planned the facility to have adequate space for the traffic. All the trucks will not be at the site at the same time.

Patrick Jangstetter - 108 Atlanta Street – McDonough, Georgia

Mr. Jangstetter did not speak.

David Burck – 6006 Jackson Road

Mr. Burck said he has lived on Jackson Road for 19 years. He is concerned about the blasting. When they installed the water lines in this area, they said there was no rock and they wound up blasting. They blasted right across the street from his house and caused \$40,000 worth of damage. Rocks went through his roof. There are a lot of children that live on this road and currently the school bus has a problem with people not stopping. He is concerned about trucks coming in and out of the road. There will be trucks holding on that road and it will be a hazard. He does not feel the entrance and exit should be on Jackson Road. It should be in another place. This is a residential area. There are seven residential houses on the other side of the road. Rezone all the property commercial so they can all get out and they can put all the warehouses there. When Highway 16 was four laned, he thought that was for all this "stuff". There is nothing on Highway 16. Wal-Mart wanted to put in a Wal-Mart at Exit 205 going north and Butts County refused the request. Why? Now they want to put in this warehouse. Griffin Daily News said this was a "done deal". How could it be a done deal? When you put warehouses in, crime rates go up. That is a fact. You can look into that. In the past ten years, traffic on Jackson Road has tripled. It used to stop at 5:00 p.m. and now it doesn't stop until 10:00 p.m. With those trucks going in and out of there, there is no light on Jackson Road and it is a problem going in and out. There will be thousands of wrecks. Even if the warehouse doesn't go in, they need a

light there. He lives right across the street from where trucks are going to “stack”. He moved here from New Jersey to get away from all of this and now he is going to have 500 trucks going in an out right across the street from his house. Zone the whole thing commercial and let him sell and get out of Griffin.

Tracy Polizzi – 6002 Jackson Road

Mr. Polizzi said he lives right across from the proposed entrance which will be the “stacking area”. 300 trucks a days is one every 4.8 minutes. You are going to tell me with that many trucks coming in there they are all going to be in that “stacking area”. It is not going to happen. They have been through it before with the property across the corner where they tried to do the same thing with a warehouse and distribution. Have you gotten any EPA reports on any water or rock blasting and things like that that are going to go on over there? How is this a “done deal”? This is a monstrosity across the street from his house. He does not want to see that every single day. Have you talked about any noise barriers or anything like that to help the community? Where is the money coming from to fund this project? Does anybody know? Who owns this building? Everybody out there except for one person he can think of is on a well. They have the best water in the county. It is crystal clear. What is going to happen to that when they start blasting? They need to know a lot of things before a decision is made. The solution on your end would be to put in city water and make them drink chlorine. You need to think about the citizens that live in this area. There is not that many houses but they moved out there to be away from all this. They do not want this sitting right in their front yard.

John Wallace – 371 Wallace Road

Mr. Wallace said The Griffin Daily News on February 17, 2016 said in lieu of taxes on the following schedule: years one through five there is no payment of taxes; 5% in year six, increasing 5% each year, with 75% in year 20 and 100% in year 21. You will not get 100% taxes for all of this infrastructure development and it is going to cost the taxpayers of Spalding County. The Spalding County Comprehensive Plan dated 2024 was talking about the mean per capita income. The mean per capita income in Spalding County in 2000 was \$21,676. He does not know what a person would have to earn per hour to earn that but with warehouse jobs he is not sure that would be a living wage. He is not certain the picture being painted is accurate. There will be money coming into the county but there is going to be a tremendous amount of tax payer money going into building this project. Until year 21, you will not get 100% back. You have crime increasing and problems with education. Some of the key findings in the 2024 comprehensive plan had to do with education. Spalding County performed at a lower level than the State in five out of seven educational indicators. Of particular concern should be the rise in dropout rate which at 8.9% is twice as high at the States. He taught in public schools for 28 years, 24 years in Spalding County. This has increased at 37% between 1999 and 2000. What lasting value is this going to provide to for the mean per capita income when you are talking about warehouse jobs? The administrative jobs are going to come in from Dollar General. They are already being paid by someone. They are going to move in from somewhere else. You are not going to have high-paying jobs there. You will have some mid-level supervisors and then a whole lot of people that will be common laborers. There is nothing wrong with that; but as far as impacting the economics of Spalding County, it is not going to be much because when dividing it up more than half of it is going into Butts County. The goal of improving education and increasing the per capita income in his opinion they are being sold a “bill of goods”.

David Hinton 182 Wallace Road

Mr. Hinton said he is an over 50 year resident in Spalding County. He has heard Dollar General mentioned twice. They are talking 300 trucks. On an average, those trucks haul 85,000 pounds

loaded. You are looking at over 3,000,000 pounds of weight transferring through there. He appreciates the ambition of this project but you are missing the mark. This is too small for ambition for Spalding County. The beneficiary is definitely Butts County. There is a store across the interstate that has been sitting empty for years, because they do not have water or a way to deal with the sewage. Right up the road in Henry County is Tanger Outlet. They were going to put it on the west side of the highway but they could not because of the rock. This will not work because the ambition is too small. The whole area all the way back to the interstate needs to be set up to allow something this size. This is too small. They lured Caterpillar up here. They had a five year moratorium on taxes and when it ended the tax was so high they said, "We will leave this county." I have lived here more than 50 years. The watershed alone is atrocious. They were going to put a rock quarry there. The developer told him they could dig rock here for 325 years and they won't get 10% of what is in this ground. It is just not going to work, there is not enough room. They have been dredging the Panama Canal for a long time. They are now dredging in Savannah. They are spending billions of dollars on development because the super carriers from China are going to start coming through the canal and start landing here for the southeastern United States distribution all the way to New York. This warehouse won't stay like this. People know what's coming. For the County, this is too short an ambition. In the long term, there is more possibility to consider a larger development than this. The way this is cut out this is not going to be sustainable with that much weight and that much load. You do not even know how much this is going to cost. You would never go in and say you are going to do this and you do not have a total cost estimate per square foot for the building, for the parking lot, for all the pools you have to catch run-off and all the drainage and tying into Butts County which they don't have now. How do you know the cost of this and then five years of no tax? Twenty acres in Spalding County is over \$2,500 in tax. Meriwether County is \$211 on thirty acres. This doesn't look good. To say this is a "done deal" is amazing. You are going to use tax payer money for that. That is irresponsible. He has not even heard a dollar figure. How in the world can you say you are going to do this and not get a cost on what it is going to cost? This is too small. Historically, the economy of the world is looking at a 20-year lag. Any developer will tell you the chief place development is going to happen is right off of an interstate. Why would you settle for that? You take this whole plan to Spalding County and get a bigger drawing with something different than this and make a proposal right out in the open where everybody knows about it and make it something bigger. This won't stay Dollar General.

John Woodward – 462 Whitlock – Marietta, Georgia

Mr. Woodward said he needed to understand this project a little bit better. He was advised that the total project was divided between Butts and Spalding Counties with 55 acres in Spalding County and that portion is the land that is being discussed. He also wanted to know where Wallace Road was and also location of the church in the area and where it was in relation to this site. This information was provided him.

Kim Garlin – 6006 Jackson Road

Ms. Garlin said she was the daughter of Mr. Burck who had spoken earlier. Her concerns were regarding the blasting that had been done 12 years ago. A gentleman came to her door and advised her they were going to be doing some blasting in the area. She did not know what an experience it was going to be to have blasting. She had a brand new baby that was asleep and he woke up screaming. She had people banging at her door wanting to know whether or not she was all right. She did not know what had happened. She walked out of her house. She had windows blown out of her car and a truck. There were holes in the roof of her house and rocks in her attic. The fear of blasting again scares her to death. They bought this land thinking they were going to retire to a nice country town. There is also the issue of the children having to wait

to get on and off the school bus because of the traffic. She requested the Board consider the inconvenience they are going to cause the families that live in the area. They love Griffin and love living in the country.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Jacobs said this is a zoning request from AR-1 and R-2 to C-1C which is a light manufacturing zoning district. The property is for 1,000,000 feet of building space and associated parking. There will be approximately 1,800 total spaces involving trucks and employee parking. The total investment will be \$85,000,000. Operations will involve two shifts per day with 530 employees and 300 shipping trucks. This development will straddle the Spalding and Butts County municipal lines. The request, as submitted, is consistent with the Spalding County Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map which designates this property as industrial land use for the future. The site will be serviced with water and sewer by Butts County. The DRI is in process. They are in contact with RDC regarding when that will be resolved. The staff recommendation is for conditional approval. The conditions are as follows:

1. Property shall be subdivided prior to construction along proposed zoning lines as submitted with application.
2. Spalding County entrance shall be studied to consider all possible “right in/right out” only.
3. Site lighting to be designed so as to not glare in adjacent residential area or onto public streets,

Mr. Jacobs discussed the second condition regarding the entrance noting that this condition might change before final approval due to additional information they have regarding the traffic studies and conversations with the Sheriff’s Department.

The members of the Planning Commission discussed questions and concerns they had regarding this application.

Mr. Eubanks said he felt this type development should go in an industrial development zone and not on a two lane road with no plans to widen it. Widening it would bring the building closer to the highway. He is familiar with the rock out there. He does not feel this is the proper location for this type development.

Mr. Jacobs said intersection improvements and best course of action are being discussed with DOT for Highway 16 and Jackson Road. There will be engineering studies required regarding the impact the construction will have on the area.

Mr. Cox discussed the concerns the citizens had regarding tax payer money being spent on development. He and Mr. Jacobs advised those in attendance that no taxpayer monies would be spent on the development. The Planning Commission is only being asked to consider the zoning of the property. The County Commissioners will have the final approval for the project. The comprehensive plan has this property designated as industrial use and has been designated for that use for over 10 years.

Mr. Harris said if you talk to someone that lost their job when Springs was sold, 5500 jobs gone. Someone like that would welcome a warehouse job. What the Planning Commission is being asked to do is make a recommendation to the County Commissioners. The Georgia Department of Transportation is working on the DRI and most of the transportation issues will be addressed

by them. The ultimate decision on this is going to be made by the County Commissioners after they have received the information that will generated by this Board and the DRI. Just because you read something in the newspaper does not mean it is true. No one on this Board would have presumed or told anyone that any rezoning that comes before this Board is a “done deal”.

Mr. Ballard raised the issue regarding the zoning for the property that is in Butts County. Mr. Jacobs advised he did not know what their zoning classifications are but the property in Butts County has already by zoned for industrial use. Mr. Ballard said he can appreciate Mr. Eubanks comments and he understands the concerns of the citizens present. The way this is laid out the majority of the traffic is going to be going on the Butts County side of this property. It is going to increase the traffic from Highway 16 down to the end of the property but the majority is on the Butts County side. Spalding County is getting benefit from the development without having to put in much infrastructure which is a benefit to Spalding County. The zoning is laid out in the Future Land Use Plan and that is what the Planning Commission can act on, what has been planned for the future. The Planning Commission is to make recommendations to the County Commission and as far as taxes and all the other issues that is up to the County Commission. This recommendation will be forwarded to the County Commission and the other issues can be discussed with them.

Mr. Youmans said it is always a difficult decision that the Board has to make. This is only a recommending board and the final decision is with the County Commissioners.

MOTION

Mr. Ballard made a motion to recommend conditional approval based on staff’s recommendation for Application #16-01Z. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Harris with Mr. Ballard, Mr. Cox, Mr. Harris and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion and Mr. Eubanks voting against.

MINUTES

Mr. Eubanks made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2015 meeting. The motion passed on a second by Mr. Cox with Mr. Ballard, Mr. Cox, Mr. Eubanks, Mr. Harris and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Ballard and a second by Mr. Eubanks with Mr. Ballard, Mr. Cox, Mr. Eubanks, Mr. Harris and Mr. Youmans voting for the motion.

John Youmans – Chair

Yvonne M. Langford - Recorder