

**Rome-Floyd Planning Commission MINUTES**  
**Location:** City Hall Sam King Room and Zoom  
**Date:** Thursday, February 3, 2022  
**Time:** 2:30 PM



**CALL TO ORDER**

Time convened: 2:31 pm by Chair Jones

**Determination of Quorum (6 of 10 needed)**

<b>P – Present A – Absent Z – Zoom</b>	<b><u>MEMBER</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>		<b><u>STAFF</u></b>
P	Tom Bennett		P	Jordan Allen – GIS Technician
P	Logan Boss		P	Frank Beacham - Attorney
A	Frank Brown		P	Bruce Ivy – Spec. Projects Manager
P	Melissa Eldridge		P	Virginia Harman – County Atty
P	Terry Jones	Chair		
P	Charles Love		P	Larry Maxey – County Commission
A	Ivy Lowery	V. Chair	P	Art Newell – Dir Planning Dept
P	Anthony McClain		P	Randy Quick – City Commission
P	Steve Miller		P	Kayla Schaaf – Transportation Planner
A	Ghee Wilson		P	Meredith Ulmer – Asst City Manager

Public (from sign-in sheet):

Jim Givens, Leigh Rush, Thad & Nancy Rush, Sam & Sally Echols, Joe Rush, Lucy Burnes, Tony Burnes, Missy Kendrick, Shelley Womalt, Melody McCoury, Kenny McCoury, Will Burnes, Joe Holmes.

**Welcome and Introduction of Visitors**

Chair Jones welcomed the public to the meeting and requested that all visitors sign in.

**Approval/Modification of Agenda**

The agenda as drafted was approved by common consent.

**Approval of Minutes from January 2022 meeting**

Minutes from January were deferred to the March meeting.

**CITY OF ROME REZONING & SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS:**

**Z22-02-01**

For property at **707 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.**, Floyd County Tax Parcel(s) J14F175, Applicant/Owner: **Buckel Design Group, LLC & Bellsouth Telecommunication, LLC** request(s) rezoning from Community-Commercial to Multifamily-Residential.

Chair Jones opened the public hearing.

Artagus Newell presented the facts and the application to the Commission and the public.

David Buckel (via Zoom) spoke in favor of the request, stating the town houses would replace the existing AT&T building. Mr. Buckel stated, a total of 31 townhomes, 21 which will be rear-loaded, three stories and two-car garages and facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., and 10 front-loaded with two stories and a one car garages. There will be one driveway cut off 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave with a turning lane and emergency access off Park Court. This would serve as infill residential development near the city center. This would decrease pavement and meet stormwater requirements. This development is not as ideal for UMU or CC and is intended to keep townhouses closer to the city center. Also speaking in favor was Joe Holmes, Ledbetter Properties, stating the townhouse ULDC amendment is necessary for this project to happen. Speaking in opposition was Shelly Womack, with concerns/questions of rental or owner-occupied units, and their appearance. Mr. Buckel and Mr. Holmes respectively answered some details are pending, but the units will be market-rate.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Chair Jones closed the public hearing and opened it up for Commission comments.

Commissioner Boss asked the City Staff’s opinion. Newell answered approval, and that residential was previously on the site. Commissioner Miller questioned the approval recommendation when the Comprehensive Plan shows commercial. Newell answered there was previous residential on the property, and the recent rezoning to residential across the street. Mr. Holmes answered more residential is needed.

	<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>MEMBER</u>
	<b>M</b> - Motion		<b>S</b> – Second		<b>AB</b> – Abstained
<b>M</b>	Tom Bennett	<b>Yes</b>	Terry Jones	<b>S</b>	Anthony McClain
<b>Yes</b>	Logan Boss	<b>Yes</b>	Charles Love	<b>No</b>	Steve Miller
<b>Ab</b>	Frank Brown	<b>Ab</b>	Ivy Lowery	<b>Ab</b>	Ghee Wilson
<b>Yes</b>	Melissa Eldridge				

Motion to **APPROVE** – Carried 6-1

## **FLOYD COUNTY REZONING & SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS**

### **Z22-02-02**

For property at **0 Calhoun Highway**, Floyd County Tax Parcel L11Z003, Applicant/Owner **7 Lights Investment LLC/Hermitage Partners LLC** requests rezoning from Heavy-Industrial to Suburban-Residential/Multi-Family Residential.

Chair Jones opened the public hearing.

Artagus Newell presented the facts and the application to the Commission and the public.

Darin Harden, 230 Old Hwy 41, Adairsville, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Harden stated the development was in efforts to find a tract for residential in the Model School District, and this property has utilities already in place, and that this parcel due to its shape would be tough for industrial development and housing is needed to accommodate the industrial growth. The split zoning would have attainable housing with townhouses priced from \$175-260,000 and provide housing closer to employment centers. The property has been marketed for eleven years for industrial with no takers. The sales contract would have buyers' acknowledgment of the industrial uses nearby, as well as the railroad and agricultural operations. Missy Kendrick, Development Authority President spoke in favor of the request, stating this was a tough one for them, as they need industrial property but also need housing for the employees. Ms. Kendrick stated they've looked this property over, to see how it could work for industrial. Ms. Kendrick mentioned while buffers are required for industrial against residential, the reverse is not so, and that buffers might be good, along with the acknowledgement in the sales contract.

Speaking in opposition was Lucy Burns, MLK Blvd. Mrs. Burns's family owns the adjacent property which is an active farming operation, and she is concerned about any new neighbors complaining about not only their operations but the industrial uses (Ball, Steel plant, etc.) There are 10-12 trains daily passing by, and she can't imagine that new neighbors will want to tolerate these and other noises, etc., even if they acknowledge their existence in sales contracts. Mrs. Burns feels the existing industrial zoning is more compatible with the heavy farming operations her family has, that the project is not conducive to the rural area, and incompatible with the Comprehensive Plan which shows the property as industrial. Thad Rush, Calhoun Rd. spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Rush stated the project is entirely different from the Comprehensive Plan, that the creek should not be a problem for industrial development anymore than it would be for residential, and that the 25' setback is not enough for buffer protection. Mr. Rush is concerned that kids or others would get into the creek and onto his property and also concerned about his liability. Mr. Rush stated this is spot-zoning, that the houses would be fewer than 100' from the railroad, and that no sales contract will stop people from ultimately complaining about the existing agricultural and industrial uses.

Mr. Harden gave a rebuttal stating the traffic shouldn't be an issue.

Staff Recommendation: Newell presented the request which is rezone a portion to S-R and a portion to M-R for a mix of single-family homes and townhomes. The property is zoned Heavy Industrial and slated for industrial on the Future Land Use Map. Newell mentioned, that do to the shape of the parcel and the required setbacks, industrial could be tough, and showed a map with setbacks outlined for illustrative purposes.

Commissioner Miller stated this is essentially a Mill Village, however, is concerned about spot zoning and not meeting the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Love stated the railroad line in North Rome and the train traffic makes it hard to sleep, and that the same issue would occur here. Commissioner Love stated the residents wouldn't necessarily work at the adjacent plants.

Chair Jones asked Mrs. Burns to elaborate on the railroad traffic. Mr. Rush stated it's a Norfolk Southern mainline and always active. Commissioner Love stated it's the same line in North Rome. Commissioner Jones asked if the train sometimes stops, and Mr. Rush said sometimes. Commissioner McClain said he understands Mr. Rush has an established use, and that the applicant is trying to solve the use of the space, but that heavy industrial to residential is huge jump. Commissioner McClain acknowledged that we need more affordable housing, but that this was an unsuitable area.

Commissioner Love stated people would be buying with a full awareness of the existing and possible other uses and that Rome has to grow.

Commissioner Bennett stated that he hates to give up industrial land but that this is infill in the County.

Commissioner Eldridge asked about the phasing. Mr. Harden; the townhomes would be first, followed by the detached homes.

Commissioner Boss stated he felt the proposal is a bad idea.

Commissioner McClain stated the Planning Commission's job is to have a positive impact on the community and we need housing in this price range but is skeptical of the success of this project.

Chair Jones closed the public hearing and opened it up for commission comments.

	<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>MEMBER</u>
	<b>M - Motion</b>		<b>S – Second</b>		<b>AB – Abstained</b>
<b>NO</b>	Tom Bennett	<b>YES</b>	Terry Jones	<b>M</b>	Anthony McClain
<b>S</b>	Logan Boss	<b>NO</b>	Charles Love	<b>YES</b>	Steve Miller
<b>AB</b>	Frank Brown	-	Ivy Lowery	-	Ghee Wilson
<b>NO</b>	Melissa Eldridge				

Motion to **Deny** by McClain; Seconded by Boss; carried 4-3

**Z22-02-03**

For the property at **0 Rockmart Hwy**, Floyd County Tax Parcels K17085, K17086 and K17087, Applicant/Owner: **Jim Givens/Ashley Evans Development, LLC**, requests rezoning from Suburban Residential to Community Commercial.

Chair Jones opened the public hearing.

Artagus Newell presented the facts and the application to the Commission and the public.

Staff Recommendation: Denial

In Favor: Jim Givens, consultant for Gary and Lamar Evans spoke in favor of the request, stating the proposal would be for a national discount retailer. Mr. Givens stated the CC zoning would allow for this development, and that the nearest other location was eleven miles away, and the convenience stores had become mini casinos. There are 8,000 vehicles daily along Rockmart Highway, and this property would not have a curb cut along Hwy 101.

Dennis Young, Old Rockmart Rd., spoke in opposition to the request stating he’s concerned about water runoff contaminating his pond. There are also concerns about homeless people staying on the property in an abandoned structure, traffic concerns, and accessibility of commercial businesses along Old Rockmart Rd. There is retail in Lindale, about 5-7 miles away, and concerns over property values if the store is built.

Melanie McCurry, Rockmart Hwy, is concerned for property values and the number of traffic accidents in the area.

Chair Jones closed the public hearing and opened it up for Commission comments.

Commissioner Miller feels the property is not zoned correctly and not sure what else could go there.

	<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>MEMBER</u>
	<b>M</b> - Motion		<b>S</b> – Second		<b>AB</b> – Abstained
<b>Yes</b>	Tom Bennett	<b>No</b>	Terry Jones	<b>Yes</b>	Anthony McClain
<b>No</b>	Logan Boss	<b>Yes</b>	Charles Love	<b>Yes</b>	Steve Miller
<b>AB</b>	Frank Brown	-	Ivy Lowery	-	Ghee Wilson
<b>Yes</b>	Melissa Eldridge				

Motion to **APPROVE** by Miller, seconded by Love – **Carried** 5-2

**STAFF REPORTS & UPDATES:**

Application Results

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The next meeting is a scheduled meeting which will be **March 3, 2022**, at 2:30 PM, in Sam King Room.

Time adjourned: 4:13 p.m. by Chair Jones.