

SUMMARY
MEETING REPORT – Meeting held via Zoom
ROME-FLOYD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
2/4/2021

PRESENT:

Logan Boss, Tom Bennett, Terry Jones, Steve Miller, Charles Love, Lambert, Anthony McClain, Frank Brown, Ghee Wilson

Randy Quick, Ex-Officio, City of Rome
Larry Maxey, Ex-Officio, Floyd County

ABSENT:

Melissa Eldridge

STAFF:

Art Newell, Planning Director
Brice Wood, Senior Planner
Brittany Griffin, Associate Planner
Kayla Schaaf, Associate Planner
Bruce Ivey, County Special Projects Manager
Chris Jackson, County Attorney
Frank Beacham, City Attorney
Gary Burkhalter, Assistant County Manager
Mary Catherine Chewing, Fire Marshal
Sammy Rich, City Manager
Ted Edwards, GIS Administrator
James Martin, Chief Building Official

PUBLIC:

Ron Swinford, Samantha Curtis, Cheryl Finley, Bill Thornton, Wendy Davis, Joe Finger, Nathan Self, Amanda Bohannon, Patsy Tumlin, Chuck Hardin, Olivia Morley

CALL TO ORDER:

Tom Bennett – Chair, called the February 4, 2021 meeting of the Rome-Floyd County Planning Commission to order at 2:32 PM. Staff verified that a quorum was present by conducting a roll call.

Chair Bennett then welcomed visitors and explained the rules of procedure.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Staff requested that the agenda be modified to remove applications SUP21-02-02 and SUP21-01-02. Anthony McClain made a motion to approve the modification to the agenda, which was seconded by Logan Boss. The motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Charles Love made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2021 meeting, which was seconded by Ivy Lowery. The motion was approved 7-0.

FLOYD COUNTY SUP AND REZONING REQUESTS:

SUP21-02-01 – Requests a Special Use Permit for a Farm Retreat at 45 Ellis Road, Rome, GA 30161, Floyd County Tax Parcel K16382. Applicant: Amanda Bohannon, Owner: The Sweet Cocoon Inc.

Chair Bennett presented the case and opened the meeting to the public. Senior Planner Wood presented the application and facts to the commission. Amanda Bohannon was present to speak on behalf of the application. There was no one present to speak in opposition. There was no discussion from commission. Steve Miller made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Charles Loves. Logan Boss requested clarification on the motion, asking whether it included the staff recommended condition and whether the SUP stuck with the land even in the event of change of ownership. Mr. Miller confirmed that he intended for the motion to include the staff recommendation. County Attorney Chris Jackson and City Attorney Frank Beacham confirmed that the staff conditions on the use will stay with the property despite any future ownership changes. The motion passed 7-0.

SUP21-01-04 – Requests a Special Use Permit for a special event venue at 796 Wilkerson Road SW, Rome, GA 30165, Floyd County Tax Parcel H14W041, Applicant/Owner: Doug and Patsy Tumlin

Chair Bennett presented the case and opened the meeting to the public. Senior Planner Wood presented the application and facts to the commission. Patsy Tumlin was present to speak on behalf of the application, stating she and her husband saw the need for a small, inexpensive venue in the area. Tumlin stated that she will still be residing on the property and her brother is the adjacent property owner and resident. Tumlin stated that groups will be around 50 – 75 people. Cheryl Finley, an adjacent property owner expressed concern. Finley stated that these rights are transferable with the life of the property and she worries about the future of her property and how future owners of the event venue will affect her property. Finley stated that she has experienced trespassing on her property from the Tumlin Property. Finley stated that there is no fence between the Tumlin property and her property. Finley's second concern is regarding fire – Finley stated that a fire originated from the Tumlin property. Tumlin rebutted, stating that there is a partial fence dividing the property and that she feels her property is isolated and the events will be inside. Tumlin says she does not see how any problems will arise from the event venue. Director Newell allowed rebuttal to the rebuttal. Chair Bennett closed the public hearing and requested discussion amongst the commissioners. Charles Love stated that he believed the application should be postponed. Love stated he believed the applicant, neighbor, and staff could come to a consensus on the issues present in the neighbor's letter, the Fire Marshall issues, and staffing issue. Steve Miller stated that he believed that the building code issues should not be addressed by the Planning Commission. Miller stated that applicant has met the requirements for a Special Use Permit and that the lot size should not be up for discussion since she meets the minimal lot size. James Martin, Chief Building Official, answered questions regarding the unpermitted structure. Martin stated that a lot will have to be done with the property to ensure safety. Martin stated that additional bathrooms will need to be installed. Frank Brown addressed the Fire Marshal questions. Brown questioned Fire Marshall Chewing regarding what type and when the sprinkler system will be required. Chewing stated that at 100 people a sprinkler system will be required if alcohol is served. Chewing stated that the applicants will have to install an additional ingress and egress door – the bay

doors do not count as ingress and egress. Chewing stated that the applicant is working with the fire department to widen the drive way because the driveway is currently not large enough for fire department vehicles. Terry Jones questioned Tumlin on the cost of the extensive works to the building and property that will be required. Tumlin stated that they are currently working through everything. Ghee Wilson questioned staff regarding surrounding neighbors. Wood stated that he has had calls from neighbors regarding the events and size. Staff has concerns with enforcing the size of the events and attendees. Staff advised that they have no way to control event size for future events or owners. Love questioned if the case could be tabled to give the applicant and staff to work through all the issue presented by staff and in the case file. Love questioned the future use of the property – will future owners need to come before the commission to rezone? Staff stated no. Love made the motion to postpone the application. There was no second and the motion failed to advance. Anthony McClain stated that he believed the location is too close to a subdivision. McClain made a motion to deny, which was seconded by Ghee Wilson. The motion passed 6-2 with Charles Love and Steve Miller being opposed.

SUP21-02-03 – Requests a Special Use Permit for miniature warehouses for the property located at 5850 Calhoun Highway, Rome, GA 30161, zoned Community Commercial, Floyd County Tax Parcel M10Y131. Applicant/Owner: Bhamani Properties, LLC

Chair Bennett presented the case and opened the meeting to the public. Senior Planner Wood presented the application and facts to the commission. Chuck Hardin, engineer, spoke on behalf of the application. Hardin stated that mini warehouses are currently in high demand. Hardin stated that he had a discussion with the staff regarding staff concerns. Hardin stated that currently the property is zoned community commercial; therefore open to many uses on the property by right. Hardin stated that he and the applicant feel that mini warehouses are less intensive than the other uses allowed by right in community commercial. Hardin stated that security will not be an issue. The property owner owns the adjacent gas station; therefore, there will always be staff in the immediate area. Hardin stated that the development will be gated; lighting will all be on the building and will not extend past the eaves of the building. The property owner plans to install fencing and landscaping. Hardin stated that the property owner would be open to conditions placed on this development. Chair Bennett closed the public hearing. Logan Boss requested staff to summarize why they recommended denial. Wood stated that in the past staff has recommended rezoning for a development of this size. Wood clarified that he is not requesting the applicant to rezone. Wood stated that staff believes that this is not the best use of the property. Anthony McClain questioned if staff was against the placement of storage units in the county. Wood stated no, staff is open to storage units but believes there is a better location for the use within the county, explaining that many storage unit developments are on property with no access to sewer, which greatly limits the potential use of the property. That is not an issue for this property. Logan Boss made a motion to deny, which was seconded by Ghee Wilson. The motion passed 7-2, with Terry Jones and Steve Miller being the dissenting votes.

A21-02-01 – Requests annexation for the property located at 22 Norwood Street, Rome, GA 30161, zoned High Density Traditional Residential, Floyd County Tax Parcel J12Z104. Applicant/Owner: Wendy Davis

Chair Bennett presented the case and opened the meeting to the public. Senior Planner Wood presented the application and facts to the commission. Wood stated that this application only applies

to 22 Norwood Street, not the entire neighborhood. Wendy Davis, the property owner, was present to speak on behalf of the application. Davis purchased the property as a rental property. She has a friend moving into the property. Davis wants to get city services to her property. Davis stated that her property being annexed into the city would not affect neighbors and their children's school district. Ron Swinford, a neighbor but not an adjacent property owner was the first to speak in opposition. Swinford stated that the community is tired of the city annexing their community into the city. Swinford stated that every house you annex will open more houses into the city. Joe Finger, a neighbor, was also opposed to the annexation. Chair Bennett then closed the public hearing. Bennett addressed Mr. Cruz – a public member who was trying to speak in opposition out of turn. Cruz stated that he is against the annexation. Terry Jones addressed staff regarding planning commission staff in the annexation process. Director Newell stated that staff looks at eligibility of an annexation – if it is eligible for annexation then staff typically recommends approval. Jones stated that planning commission is a pass through to city commission. Newell confirmed Jones's comment. Jones stated that while he understands the neighbor's complaint the issue comes down to the homeowner's request. Planning commission does not have the power to address annexation stated Jones. Boss stated that normally he would vote to protect the integrity of a neighborhood, but he believes it is not the planning commissions responsibility to approve annexations. Terry Jones made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Charles Love. The motion failed by a vote of 4 – 5, with Bennett, Lowery, McClain, Miller and Wilson voting in opposition.

Z21-02-01 – Requests rezoning from Office Institutional to Urban Mixed Use for the properties located at 607, 609, 0, 0, 615 East 3rd Street and 0, 112 East 8th Avenue, Rome, GA 30161, Floyd County Tax Parcels J14C007, J14C008, J14C009, J14C010, J14C011, J14C012, J14C013. Applicant/Owner: JFB Development

Chair Bennett presented the case and opened the meeting to the public. Senior Planner Wood presented the application and facts to the commission. Chuck Hardin, engineer and agenda on behalf of the applicant and property owner, spoke in favor of the application. There was no one in opposition. Steve Miller question Hardin regarding the street in front of the development, askif if the street in front of the development will be obtained by the development and be made private. Hardin stated that the street will remain public. Terry Jones asked if any homes will be demolished. Staff stated that there are no homes on any of the parcels. Logan Boss asked if this application would have to go before the Historic Preservation Commission. Wood stated that it would not have to go in front of the Historic Preservation Commission as it is outside of the district; however, Brittany Griffin, the Historic Preservation Planner, stated that they were in favor of the development and just requested that the developer respect the district. Charles Love made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ivy Lowery. The motion passed 9-0.

STAFF REPORTS & UPDATES:

Director Newell discussed the status of the ULDC Hobby Farms Ordinance Amendment.
Director Newell discussed the status of the ULDC RFP.
Director Newell discussed the previously held Planning Commission Training.
Brice Wood gave an update on the previous months' applications.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before this body, the February 4, 2021, meeting of the Planning Commission was adjourned by Tom Bennett, Chair, at approximately 4:30 PM.

Tom Bennett, Chair

Staff Reports:

- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1629/SUP21-02-02---BDS-Landscaping-County>
- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1630/SUP21-02-03---Bhamani-Properties-County>
- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1631/Z21-02-01---JFB-Development-City>
- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1632/A21-02-1---Davis-City>
- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1633/SUP21-01-01---Sweet-Cocoon-County>
- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1634/SUP21-01-02---Chateau-Dr-City>
- <https://ga-rome.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1635/SUP21-01-03---Wilkerson-Road-County>
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