

PICKENS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

of

June 10, 2019

6:30pm

PICKENS COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING Main Conference Room

NOTICE OF MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING: Pursuant to Section 30-4-80 of the S.C. Code of Laws, annual notice of this Commission's meetings was provided by January 1, 2019 via the Pickens County Website and posted next to the Offices of the County Planning Department. In addition, the agenda for this meeting was posted outside the meeting place (Pickens County Administration Building Bulletin Board) and was emailed to all persons, organizations, and news media requesting notice. Notice for the public hearings was published in the *Pickens County Courier*, posted on the properties subject of public hearing(s), and emailed to all persons, organizations, and news media requesting notice pursuant to Section 1205(d)(1) of the Pickens County Unified Development Standards Ordinance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Cato, Chairman
Robert Ballentine
Bob Young
Terry Nation
Moseley Hamilton
Michael Watson

STAFF PRESENT:

Ray Holliday, County Planner
Chris Brink, Community Development Director

Election of Officers

Mr. Brink opened the election of officers portion of the meeting.

Mr. Brink opened the floor to nominations for Chairman.

Mr. Ballentine nominated Mr. Cato as Chairman.

There being no further nominations offered, Mr. Brink closed the nomination period and announced that by acclamation, Mr. Cato was elected as Chairman.

Mr. Brink opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Nation nominated Mr. Ballentine as Vice Chairman.

There being no further nominations offered, Mr. Brink closed the nomination period and announced that by acclamation, Mr. Ballentine was elected Vice Chairman.

Welcome and Call to Order

Mr. Cato, the Presiding Official, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Cato asked those in attendance to join in a moment of silence and for the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Cato asked each of the members to introduce themselves and identify which County Council district they represent.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Cato called for a motion regarding the minutes of the May 13, 2019 meeting. Mr. Ballentine motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Nation seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

No one signed up or wished to speak.

Public Hearings

Mr. Cato reviewed the public hearing procedures that will be followed.

Mr. Cato opened the public hearing portion of the meeting and called for the case to be heard.

- 1. SD-19-0004 Subdivision Land Use request for a proposed 324 lot, Single-Family, Master Planned Residential Development (MPD) located on Midway Road and Old Fox Squirrel Ridge Road, Pickens. The applicant is Family Heritage, LLC. The property owners of record are Family Heritage, LLC and William E. Findley, et al. TMS# 4183-00-70-3074, 4183-00-72-8501**

Mr. William Findley, applicant, part property owner, and managing member of the property owner group, opened the presentation to the Commission and presented his team. Mr. Findley wished to divide discussion of the project into three parts, first being a general overview of the project. Mr. Findley gave a brief overview and highlighted many aspects of the proposed project, including the overall property and project boundary, architectural details, target demographics, and amenities being proposed.

Mr. Ballentine asked what the expected construction time frame was.

Mr. Findley stated that they anticipate development and completion of the project to take 3 to 5 years.

Mr. Findley had Mr. Andy Sherrod, from Site Design, present more detail of the proposed project.

Mr. Sherrod addressed specifics of the proposed development and the requirements placed on the proposed type by county ordinances; that there will be a 50 foot undisturbed vegetative buffer surrounding the entire project; that access will be managed by SCDOT and that currently there are proposed entrances from both Midway Road and on Old Fox Squirrel Ridge Road; that no other road would be accessed; that minimum lot sizes would be in the 11,000 square foot range, with the minimum size according to county standards; that the project would be served by onsite community septic systems where the drain fields would be located in the open space or common areas; that the project would be served by City of Pickens water, which will require additional infrastructure to be constructed by the developer.

Mr. Sherrod also gave an overview of the Traffic Study that is required and the general findings from that study.

Mr. Cato asked how the property would be served for emergency access.

Mr. Sherrod stated that the entire project will be gated and general access would be only from 1 point relative to each project area; that additional entrance points are being planned that would be used as emergency entrances/exits but not used as general access to the interior of the project.

Mr. Ballentine asked Mr. Sherrod about the level of service (LOS) that was mentioned in the traffic study.

Mr. Sherrod stated that at the current state of the road network (without development), Midway Road and the surrounding area is at a service level of B; that that level of service, on a scale of A to F, is generally the target for most development; that at build-out, it is anticipated that the level of service will stay at B, meaning that there is no anticipated impact to the current traffic levels.

Mr. Watson asked if utilities are planned for the project.

Mr. Sherrod stated that in addition to power and water, phone, cable, and internet would most definitely be installed if capacity exists; that all utilities would be underground as required by the county.

Mr. Cato asked about buffering of the project from the road and adjacent properties.

Mr. Sherrod stated that the county requires the project to be buffered along all exterior property lines a minimum of 50 feet; that in most cases, utilizing open space, the buffer width would be more in some areas.

Mr. Ballentine asked about planned lighting.

Mr. Sherrod stated that street lights would be installed using standard cut-off types as required by the county.

Mr. Sherrod provided a more in depth presentation of the proposed septic system for the project; that they will install SCDHEC a permitted community septic system with applicable force mains and lift stations; that the open space/grass areas will be utilized for the drain fields; that there will be approximately 10 to 20 homes per individual community septic tank.

There being no additional presentation by the applicant, Mr. Cato opened the floor up for public comments.

(To follow public hearing procedures, proponents have been listed first and then opponents. During the actual public hearing public, citizen comments were taken in the order that they had signed-up to speak; allowances were made for direct follow-up to citizen concerns/questions)

Proponents

Mr. Ken Horbiniski spoke in favor of the request; that the county needed more homes in the real estate inventory; that for the past several years, no one has been developing and building in Pickens County and there was a need for homes in the \$200,000 to \$400,000 range; that housing stock had been depleted.

Opponents

Mr. Tom Bradley stated his concern for the distance the "estate lots" would be to Piper Lane and if those lots would be using this road.

Mr. Findley responded that in addition to the required 50 foot buffer, there is a measurable extra distance, approximately 50 more feet beyond the proposed lots and Piper Lane; that no lots would be allowed to access Piper Lane.

Mr. Bradley also expressed his concerns with the impact this project would have on the wild life in the area.

Ms. Patsy Fields expressed her concerns with pedestrian access across Midway Road to the club House and pool area and that more thought was needed regarding this issue.

Mr. Sherrod stated that at the least, they would be asking SCDOT for crosswalks to be placed across Midway Road.

Mr. William Barber, a member of Cold Springs Baptist Church, stated his concerns with the safety of church members and the future impact and preservation of the existing cemetery.

Mr. Findley stated that no one should be using Cold Springs Church Road for access to the project; that there are no entrances proposed along this road; that a fence would be placed around the property to better define the cemetery from the development.

Mr. James Pitts was also concerned about the cemetery.

Mr. Ken Mosley had several concerns; that this proposed project would negatively impact traffic along Midway Road; that he considered the area country and that he wanted it to stay that way; that 600 plus cars would be added to Midway Road; that there would be negative impacts to the water in the area due to the septic systems.

Mr. Sherrod took some additional time to further explain how a community septic system would function.

Mr. Mosley added an additional concern relative to the impact this project would make to local taxes and property values.

Ms. Elaine Murray spoke to the Commission regarding her concerns for the clientele purchasing the homes; that her business provides loan services to buyers of homes in the \$150k to \$200k range; that Pickens county citizens could not afford to purchase a home in the proposed project; that she felt the developer has not studied the demographics properly in making his business decisions.

Mr. Findley stated that they are currently conducting market studies to get a better handle on the product being offered; that initial studies have indicated there was a need for this type development in the area; that yes, most of the interest in the project, the studies have found, have been from potential new homeowners being from outside Pickens County.

Mr. Mike Murray spoke regarding his fears regarding the septic systems and how they will definitely impact the local water supply; that all water will be flowing to City Lake which is the main source of water for the City of Pickens; that all surface water would also impact Twelve Mile Creek.

Mr. Sherrod addressed both the steps that will be taken to protect water quality and how stormwater management would be addressed.

Mr. Don Underwood expressed his concerns with the proposed turning lane from Hwy 178 onto Midway Road and the impact that would have on his property.

Mr. Sherrod stated that it was merely a suggestion from the traffic study; that SCDOT would make any final determination regarding the need for a turn lane; that any additional lanes would be constructed within existing SCDOT right-of-way that shouldn't impact adjacent property.

Mr. Caleb Green addressed the Commission with his concerns related to future owners in the development and who this project is being built for; that younger, first time home buyers could not afford to purchase in the development; that the developer was missing an opportunity to build a development that the citizens of Pickens County could afford.

Ms. Diane Mitchell spoke in opposition to the proposed development; that she had moved from West Virginia to come to an area like Pickens County; that she questions who would want to move into a development like that being proposed where you can reach out and touch your neighbor; that such a large development seemed like an invasion to the area; that studies should be needed for fire and emergency services.

Ms. Mitchell also asked who would be developing the project and then building the homes.

Mr. Sherrod explained the development and permitting process

Mr. Findley stated that his family would most likely be the project developer however home construction may be a mix of speculation homes and contract builds. All homes will only be allowed to be built by a select number of approved builders.

Mr. Joe Wilson stated that he doesn't live directly adjacent to the project but had concerns regarding traffic and infrastructure along secondary roads.

Mr. Sherrod addressed the traffic study relative to secondary road impacts and stated that there would most definitely be some measure of impact, however, as traffic moves away from the project the traffic gets dispersed and diluted so that any impact would be minimal. Regarding infrastructure like broadband and telephone, Mr. Sherrod stated that that type of infrastructure investment and construction would be as demand increases and companies would use their business models to expand if they see a return on their potential investment in putting that infrastructure in the ground.

Mr. Tim Anderson stated his concerns with the impact 324 homes will have on the community.

Mr. Don Anderson stated his agreement with his son.

Mr. Bart Turner addressed his concerns with traffic along HWY 178; that he lives on HWY 178 and knows first-hand how bad traffic is now and could only imagine the impact additional development will have; that it is difficult sometimes to get out of his driveway; that speeds on HWY 178 need to be addressed.

Mr. Cato called for any additional comments. There being none, Mr. Cato stated his appreciation to all who spoke and provided comments.

Mr. Cato closed the public hearing and called for a motion or additional questions from the Commission.

Mr. Watson stated his concerns with the potential increase in traffic in the area and that the pedestrian access to the club house area needs to be addressed.

Mr. Findley stated that yes, traffic will increase somewhat in the area due to the project, however, the traffic study, required by both the county and SCDOT indicated that the existing level of service would not be impacted; that all traffic issues will be addressed by SCDOT; that they will look into options for access to the club house; that there is a very large culvert under Midway Road that was once used as a cattle crossing that may be repurposed for pedestrian and golf cart access.

Mr. Ballentine further addressed concerns with traffic; that the traffic study actually shows a historical decrease in traffic counts in the area.

There being no additional questions, Mr. Cato called for a motion.

Mr. Ballentine motioned that the land use request be approved, with conditions. The conditions being:

1. *Project shall be approved as a Master Planned Development as presented on the concept plan and associated project materials included in the application being considered, to include:*
 - a. *Minimum lot sizes of 10,890 square feet*
 - b. *Number of lots set at a maximum of 324*
 - c. *Project density set at a maximum of 1.125 units per acre*
 - d. *General lay out of the project*
 - e. *Amount of provided open space must be no less than 38% of the total project area or 114 acres.*
 - f. *Amenity package to include, at a minimum, tennis courts, community swimming pool, community club house, and trail network. All of which must be constructed during the 1st phase of project development. Buffering of these amenities from adjacent, internal land uses shall be as presented on the concept plan.*
 - g. *Common architectural theme*
 - h. *Use of SCDHEC approved community septic systems. Such use shall be restricted to no less than 20 lots connected to such system.*
2. *Access to the Club House/pool/amenity area must be redesigned in a manner that provides for safer pedestrian access; that avoids at-grade crossings across Midway Road.*

Mr. Hamilton seconded the motion to conditionally approve. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cato called for a short recess.

After approximately 5 minutes, Mr. Cato called the meeting back to order.

Commissioners and Staff Discussion

Mr. Brink reminded everyone of the upcoming continuing education opportunity being hosted by Anderson County at the Anderson Civic Center on June 14th at 8:15pm; that he would send out an email reminder as well, along with directions to the Civic Center.

Mr. Brink also stated that a consultant had been selected for the Comprehensive Plan and that it was his hope to have them present for the July 8th meeting.

Adjourn


There being no additional matters to be taken up by the Commission, Mr. Cato motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ballentine. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Submitted by:


Secretary

7/8/19
Date

Approved by:


Chairman

07/08/2019
Date