

Planning Commission



Minutes of the Thursday, May 21, 2020 Regular Meeting

Members of the Planning Commission

Briton Williams

Chair

Leonard Carter, Jr.

Timothy V. Key

Larry Watts

Bob Clark

JoAnn McKie

Dr. Christine Crawford

1. **Call to Order**– The regular meeting of May 21, 2020, having been duly publicized, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and conducted via teleconference.
2. **Roll Call**– Members present via teleconference were Chairman Briton Williams, Commissioners Bob Clark, Leonard Carter, Timothy Key, Dr. Christine Crawford, and Larry Watts. Commissioner JoAnn McKie was absent. Also in attendance were Libby Hodges, Director of Planning and Development, Kuleigh Baker, Planner for Planning and Development, Carolyn Baggott, Mark Gilliam, and Philip Green.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – The minutes from the Regular Meeting of April 14, 2020 were approved as written.
4. **Confirmation of Agenda** –There were no changes to the agenda.
5. **Application RZM20-001 Capers Lake Overlook Rezoning** – A request by Metro Homesites, LLC to rezone ±88.2 acres located on Capers Drive and Gregory Lake Road, TPN 106-00-00-022 from R-14, Large Lot, Single-Family Residential to R-7, Small Lot, Single-Family Residential.
 - a. Consideration of the rezoning request by the Commission
 - b. Recommendation

Chairman Williams read the application summary for Application RZM20-001 Capers Lake Overlook Rezoning a request by Metro Homesites, LLC to rezone ±88.2 acres located on Capers Drive and Gregory Lake Road, TPN 106-00-00-022 from R-14, Large Lot, Single-Family

Residential to R-7, Small Lot, Single-Family Residential and asked Mrs. Hodges if she had any information she would like to share.

Mrs. Hodges stated the applicant is requesting to change from R-14 Large Lot, Single-Family Residential which was zoned when it was annexed into the City and that annexation was one that was not reviewed because the determination was made that it did not need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. She said they are requesting to move to R-7 Small Lot, Single Residential Zoning and there are several citizen comments that have been submitted for this application. Mrs. Hodges read the comments to the Commissioners.

Chairman Williams asked for questions from the Planning Commission for Mrs. Hodges. There were none.

Chairman Williams asked if the applicant had any comments.

Mr. Philip Green, project Engineer representing Southern Partners, Inc. spoke on the behalf of Metro Homesites, LLC, and gave a brief description of the rezoning request and the proposed project. He explained the plan is to do something along the line of clustering the development in areas to avoid the environmentally sensitive areas and try to utilize the lake as an amenity, having the property around the lake owned by the Homeowners Association for the benefit of all the residents in this development.

Mr. Mark Gilliam, Manager of Metro Homesites, LLC, stated a large portion of the property will not have any development on it.

Chairman Williams asked for questions from the Planning Commission for the applicant.

Commissioner Crawford questioned how many lots could be placed on the property without the change to R-7. Mr. Green stated he did not have that information available and explained that the R-7 zoning would give the flexibility for different sized lots.

Commissioner Carter questioned if it was strictly a townhouse development or will it be a mixed use with townhouses and single-family homes, and how many acres of the 88-acres are usable. Mr. Green stated that approximately 30-acres of the property is usable with a mixture of lot sizes. Mr. Gilliam stated it could be all townhomes, a mix, or all detached and we will know more once we get into the engineering of it and seeing what we have to do to make this a viable project.

Chairman Williams questioned what the small piece of property south of Capers would be used for. Mr. Gilliam replied there is no planned development at this time. Mr. Williams questioned if the entrance will be Capers Drive. Mr. Green explained that the intent right now is to use Capers Drive and improve it to City standards and move on to the development.

Chairman Williams asked if there were any comments from the public. Mrs. Hodges read comments received via email and these comments are included as an attachment to the minutes.

In response to the public comments Mr. Gilliam referred to the clearing of trees and explained that they have to put a lot of trees back when trees are cleared and the City and the Stormwater Department strictly enforces this. He said no one wants mud holes and in some cases the trees that are replaced are much nicer than the ones that were removed. Mr. Gilliam explained that in terms of knowing that the property was zoned R-14, and as typical in developments, you place these under options that are subject to getting the zoning you need to be economically able to build and develop.

Chairman Williams asked if there were any further questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Key questioned what the preliminary figures are for the number of lots and does this take into consideration any type of mass grading. Mr. Gilliam answered yes it will involve mass grading and we will be replanting trees and will protect those areas next to the lake, and we want to make the property adjoining the lake a part of the Home Owners Association so every resident of that neighborhood can enjoy that water feature. He explained they can provide housing here at a much less price than what is at Hammond's Ferry which is very expensive to be close to water and they would like to be in the \$200 to \$300,000 price range on these homes. Mr. Gilliam stated they may be able to get 2 to 2 ½ homes per acre.

Commissioner Key asked Mrs. Hodges what the grading and permitting would entail should the rezoning be approved. Mrs. Hodges explained the developer would submit a Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat application that would come back to the Planning Commission for approval. Mr. Key questioned the guideline for mass grading. Mrs. Hodges stated there are no restrictions on mass grading but there are requirements for steep slopes and stabilization enforced by the Engineering and Stormwater Departments.

Commissioner Key questioned how the basins would be affected in this area. Mrs. Hodges replied all the stormwater generated by this site should be captured on the site and there should be no impact. Mr. Key questioned that once a certain number of houses were in the area if a deceleration lane would be required. Mrs. Hodges replied that it would be subject to a traffic impact analysis and it would be closely coordinated with SCDOT.

Chairman Williams questioned if there should be issues with the applicant meeting the code requirements enforced by the City's Stormwater Management Department what would be the next step. Mrs. Hodges explained that the stormwater rules are set by the State and we are a designated reviewer and there would be very few rules that would return to us for

waiver or variance related to that. She said it would come back to the Planning Commission for approval of the Preliminary Plat and it would be reviewed under the same criteria any other subdivision is reviewed by.

Commissioner Watts made comments regarding incompatibility with the surrounding zoning and topographical issues that will cause problems with stormwater.

Mark Gilliam made comments regarding the economic feasibility of infrastructure improvements in the requested zoning.

The Commissioners discussed the claim that this would provide an affordable housing option.

Commissioner Key requested additional information regarding the proposed design of the subdivision.

Commissioner Clark said the impacts of mass grading would be the same regardless of the density.

There being no further questions Chairman Williams asked the Commissioners for any further comments.

Commissioner Williams motioned to recommend that the City Council approve Application RZM20-001 Capers Lake Overlook Rezoning a request by Metro Homesites, LLC to rezone ±88.2 acres located on Capers Drive and Gregory Lake Road, TPN 106-00-00-022 from R-14, Large Lot, Single-Family Residential to R-7, Small Lot, Single-Family Residential. Commissioner Clark offered a second and the motion was failed by a 4 to 2 vote with Commissioner Key abstaining, Commissioner Clark voted to approve, Commissioner Watts, Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Crawford, and Chairman Williams voted in opposition.

6. Staff Report

Mrs. Hodges presented the April Performance Report.

Mrs. Hodges provided a brief update on the West Martintown Road Corridor and the Development Code Rewrite projects.

7. Adjourn

With no objection, Chairman Williams adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Libby Hodges, AICP, Director
Department of Planning and Development
Secretary to the Planning Commission

Attachment of Public Comments

Voicemail From: Mr. Porter Vaughn
To: Planning & Development Department
Date Received: May 12, 2020
RE: Public Zoning Notification for Gregory Lake Rd.

Mr. Vaughn stated he saw the Public Zoning Notification for Gregory Lake Rd. about rezoning a large lot, family residence to small lots. He said he is totally against it stating we have too much of this going on in this vicinity and he lives in Country Subdivision.

He shared his contact phone number of (803)215-8688.

Mr. Vaughn stated he thinks it's a disgrace that both the properties on Frontage Rd. from Hwy. 25 on the east side of NHC has been totally cleared and scrapped, devoid of all vegetation, and the property immediately west, past the other subdivision between Coventry and the Frontage Rd. has been scrapped and cleared, it is red clay, it's hard as brick when it is dry, and if we get any rain it will be a mud hole.

He said he disagrees with the practices North Augusta is allowing to happen and this is not what he came here for. Mr. Vaughn stated he is against the project being rezoned on Gregory Lake Rd. to smaller lots. He asked to please vote no.

He is against the rezoning and wants more greenspace maintained. Does not want us to become Washington Rd. or Columbia County. Likes for trees to be maintained like on his property. Thinks the City of North Augusta is trying to increase the tax base. Does not want to be incorporated into the City or have to pay our taxes or be surrounded by the trap of progress. North Augusta is a peaceful, bedroom community. Does not believe that renters care about property.

From: North Augusta, SC [mailto:webmaster@northaugusta.net] **Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 1:11 PM
To: Hodges, Libby <LHodges@northaugusta.net> **Subject:** rezoning of 88.2 acres of land off of Capers Dr
Tax # 106-00-00-022

Message submitted from the <North Augusta, SC> website. **Site Visitor Name:** Thomas and Linda
Momeier **Site Visitor Email:** tlmomeier@comcast.net

We received the rezoning notification for the above mentioned property. We live on Hickory Hill Dr. which is adjacent to the proposed rezoning parcel. We think that rezoning from large lot - single family to small lot single family will have a detrimental affect on our property and its value. We urge the commission to deny this request.

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Voicemail From: Ms. Sheila Sanborn
To: Planning & Development Department
Date Received: May 21, 2020
RE: Public Zoning Notification for Gregory Lake Rd.

Ms. Sanborn stated she wanted to express her thoughts on the Gregory Lake Rd. subdivision and she is against it.

She said the road cannot handle another subdivision because it is dangerous now. Ms. Sanborn stated it is a safety issue and feels the schools in the area cannot handle it.

Ms. Sanborn said she lives in the area and she these are her concerns. She stated she votes no.

She shared her contact phone number of (517)673-4875.

From: Kevin Heckendorn [mailto:khecken1@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 4:55 PM
To: Hodges, Libby <LHodges@northaugusta.net>
Subject: application RZM 20-001 - Rezoning

In reference to the rezoning meeting this evening I doubt anyone's comments will matter but one must try.

The developers knew the zoning when they purchased the land so if they did not want R14 large lot property why did they purchase? It's not like this was hidden from them. We are talking about 88 acres here being accessed from a blind corner when traveling east on Gregory Lake road.

The people like myself that have lived in this neighborhood for many years decided to do so because of the the large lots already in the neighborhood and the zoning restrictions that would preserve that as development progressed. That understanding was already violated with Gregory Landing but it is a smaller community and most of us have welcomed new neighbors but 88 acres is another story. At the same time as Gregory Landing was happening we have had to endure the Bergen West expansion with it's relentless sounds of destruction as every tree, every bush and every blade of grass was purged from the landscape. Heavy equipment sounding like they were coming through the trees and into your back yard cutting, grinding, bulldozing and grading for 9 or 10 hours a day 6 days a week for months on end..... and during a pandemic when anxieties are already running high. When do we get a break? When does quality of life supersede money? When do our concerns matter?

Thank you,

Kevin Heckendorn