

Planning Commission



Minutes for the Wednesday, September 21, 2022, Regular Meeting

Members of the Planning Commission

Dr. Christine Crawford

Chair

Bob Bigger

Leonard Carter, Jr.

Jesse Elliott

Rett Harbeson

Timothy V. Key, Vice Chair

CITIZEN ASSISTANCE: Individuals requiring special assistance or a sign interpreter to participate in the meeting are asked to please notify the Department of Planning and Development 48 hours prior to the meeting at 803-441-4221.

1. **Call to Order** – 7:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** – Member present were Chairman Dr. Christine Crawford, commissioners Tim Key, Bob Bigger, Jesse Elliott and Rett Harbeson.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – August 17, 2022 Regular Meeting

Minutes were approved unanimously with a correction of an engineering firm name.

4. **Confirmation of Agenda**

No changes to the agenda.

Prior to hearing the applications, Chairman Crawford informed the members and public that JoAnn McKie has resigned from the Commission. She noted Mrs. McKie's dedicated years of service to the Commission and wished her well with her family and future endeavors.

5. **Application PP22-003 Wrenfield at Chanticleer** – Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat – A request by Merit Commercial Holdings for approval of 127 single-family detached homes located on ±66.67 ac zoned R-10, Medium Lot, Single-Family Residential. The property is located at the end of Big Pine Road, TPN 002-12-01-002.

Rett Harbeson recused himself. Mr. Paradise stated this was before the Planning Commission last month but tabled due to the voting. It was decided to continue it to next month. There was a sketch plan done last October. This is about 66.67 acres and zoned R-10. It will be 127 single –family detached homes. The applicate is asking for a waiver for the block length. The block length is maximum 650ft and they want a 1000ft. This is because of environmental issues.

Dan Holloway is managing of the partnership of project. He did not want to rezone property but do what is best for the property.

Alex Reynolds is representing JLA Engineering. Ms. Reynolds discussed the history of the property and that it was meant to be developed years ago. Below was the information she read to the Planning Commission.

- This property was annexed to Chanticleer in 1991. It is evident by the utility stub outs and dead end without a cul-de-sac at Big Pine Road this parcel of land was intended to be developed. This proposed development happens to be 21 years after annexation to Chanticleer, not 2-3 years as is typical.
- Wrenfield will be the first Conservation Subdivision in the City of North Augusta. It was wise of the Planning Commission to include conservation subdivisions as a category in the development code, because otherwise land like the subject parcel, with prohibitive topography and wetlands would almost certainly never be developed. The property will be developed in accordance with North Augusta’s Conservation Subdivision design standards. 81 out of 127 planned homes (or 63% of homes) will abut a conservation area (only 40%, or 51 homes, are required to abut) and 43% of the property is dedicated conservation area or public open space (only 40% is required). The site will not be mass graded from property line to property line as some subdivisions are. The only grading on this site will be for the road right of ways and the lots. Grading will not occur in conservation areas, wetlands, or wetland buffers. Undisturbed natural 30’ buffers surround all wetlands.
- Wrenfield’s proposed density is similar to the adjoining Chanticleer neighborhood. Wrenfield lots are 1/4 acre with an average of 50’ of frontage and 200’ depth. Chanticleer lots average about 1/3 acre with an average of 80-85’ of frontage and 150’ of depth.

- There are 57 existing homes and 3 vacant parcels in Chanticleer, and Wrenfield will add 127 homes. This means there will be 184 households that will use the intersection of Southwood Road and Martintown Road. While this will affect traffic at the intersection, a Traffic Study has deemed that a traffic light is not warranted. The traffic engineer who performed the study is present tonight and can speak to this later if needed. In comparison, the nearby Rapids development has 286 households that enter Martintown Road from a single access point without a stop light at River Bluff Drive, which is 102 households more, than what is proposed at the Southwood and Martintown intersection.
- Due to topography the layout shown minimizes grading, wetland disturbance, and stream intrusion. The existing stream crossing on the property is planned to be improved. No additional stream crossings are proposed. A connection to Shawnee Drive was studied but deemed unsuitable. Making this connection would necessitate another stream crossing, which brings more environmental issues to be mitigated, and that is trying to be avoided. A crossing at Shawnee Drive would result in a maximum longitudinal grade of greater than 25% with poor vertical geometry in order to make the crossing work. Per North Augusta Development Code Table 14-3 of Article 14 ~~“Streets”~~, the maximum longitudinal grade is 15% for Local Streets maintained by SCDOT per Table 14-2, and 12% for Local Streets maintained by North Augusta. As such, North Augusta’s engineers would not deem the crossing suitable since it would fall outside of what is allowed by design standards. A variance for road steepness would need to be sought to build this crossing. The owner does not wish to have this stream crossing or pursue a variance for it. Additionally, Conservation Subdivisions aim to protect natural areas on a property, and adding a crossing to Shawnee Drive is not in line with this principle. Will Buchanan is the engineer who conducted the stream crossing study. He is present tonight and can speak to this further if needed.
- Per City of North Augusta Engineering Department request, 5.55 acres of conservation area are being offered to the City for a future regional detention pond, to improve the water quality of the area. To be clear, this is a City of North Augusta request and any future project and permitting required on the 5.55 acres will be handled exclusively by the City.
- Pursuing a Conservation Subdivision does relax certain development requirements. The only development requirement that this layout does not meet is the connectivity ratio, shown on C-100. (1.8 connectivity ratio is required and 0.67 is provided) Per ordinance, connectivity ratio does not apply for Conservation Subdivisions. As such, a connection to Shawnee Drive is not required. Apart from the waiver request to lengthen the two cul-de-sacs to the maximum length allowed by the North Augusta Development Code (the standard 650’ block length to 1,000’) because of existing site topography, all other development requirements of R-10 zoning have been adhered to.

- Lastly, this Conservation Subdivision neighborhood is planned to be built on land already zoned for the purpose of a single-family neighborhood, and it is one of the last large parcels within City limits zoned for this purpose. The land currently has access to utilities, is close to established churches, schools, and businesses, and will provide homes to 127 families who wish to call North Augusta home. For all the reasons I have named over the past few minutes I respectfully ask that the Planning Commission approve this Conservation Subdivision plan. Thank you for your time. I can answer any questions that the Commission may have.
- Mr. Elliott asked about trees and they will be keeping up to maybe 70% of trees. The land will not be clear-cut. Steve Castle is the traffic engineer to go over the traffic study. He states about 90 more cars for this neighborhood during the peak hour of traffic. They look at am and pm rush hour. The traffic signal is not warranted at this time. There could be a time when they do need one but not at this time. The entrance will only have one lane in and out. Will Buchanan with the engineering firm spoke about the Shawnee Dr. and if it was extended.

Denise Willis lives in neighborhood. She is concerned about the traffic study and the improvements at Martintown Rd. Have they made plans for amenities or an HOA and will the existing neighborhood be able to be a part of that. What is the setback and who is the builders? She is interested in the homes square foot and price of homes.

Eddie Hysps lives in the neighborhood. We have no sidewalks and we have residence that walk and run the streets and is concerned about their safety. He shows a picture of the streets and that they are not wide enough for two cars. He thinks that the traffic will be a big problem and that he wants be able to get out of his driveway. They do not have school buses because there are known at this time in chanticleer.

Gary Malott is questioning that if an archeological study will this be done. He is also concerned about traffic.

Wade Whitaker lives on Big Pine Rd. He thought that last month this project was denied. He is not sure about what conservation approach, which he says it is misleading. He is also concerned about the traffic.

Ms. Newton states the neighborhood was feels safe. She moved there because it was quiet and had trees. She is stating the traffic is a big problem. Also states they will lose the wildlife. She also states that they need another entrance and exit.

John Sanders lives in Chanticleer. He walks in the neighborhood and feels safe there. He also likes the wildlife there. He knows this will disturb their habit. The traffic is also his issue with the development.

Zachary Llewellyn lives in the neighborhood. He is concerned with the width of the road because he thinks it is too narrow.

Maria Ditty lives on Big Pine Rd. Her father was the developer for this subdivision. The neighborhood never was completed because of her father's death. The whole area was zoned and meant to be a neighborhood. If they were developers, this would have been completed a long time ago. It was meant to be a bigger neighborhood.

Judy Berry lives in the neighborhood. She is also concerned with the traffic.

Danielle Hurt lives on Greenwood Dr. She talks about her house sinking and has a sinkhole in her yard. The traffic is her concern as well. She thinks the traffic study should be redone.

Whitney Shaffer lives on Greenwood Dr. She is concerned about schools getting too crowded and the traffic.

Steve Castle speaking on the traffic study. It was done in March of this year. The study was done during the peak hour. He thinks it does not need traffic light but that is up to SCDOT.

Dan Holloway spoke again. He spoke about the amenities. The houses will be 2000 to 3000 sq. ft. The homes will have vinyl siding. They do not have an HOA but would like to have one. The neighborhood would have sidewalks and it is required by the city. They own some property at Martintown Rd. They could clean up and make a better sideline. He could suggest that they add right turn lane. They had someone come out and define the wetlands. They could consider talking about walking trails. They want to keep the water where it is. It will increase the property value to the already Chanticleer homes. To help with wildlife is to create green space. If they find any archeological findings they will be handled properly.

Mr. Paradise added that the TIA is online if anyone wants to see it. The minimum setback for zoned R-10 is 15ft and maximum for 35ft. The meeting last month had to table the application until this month due to the vote. The Rapids has never been a part of this plan.

- a. Consideration of the Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat application by the Planning Commission

Mr. Key made the first motion to approve it with the condition that there will be a dual lanes exiting the subdivision and Mr. Bigger made the second motion. It was approved unanimously.

6. **Application SP22-002 River Falls Apartments, Ph 2** – Major Site Plan – A request by Parker Augusta, LLC for approval of 132 apartment units in Phase 2 of the River Falls development located on ±8.71 ac zoned R-5, Mixed Residential. The property is located off Compassion Way (FKA the Frontage Road) and West Martintown Road, TPN 001-20-02-006.

Mr. Paradise stated this is for site plan approval for River Falls Apartments off Compassion Way. It is 132 apartments in Phase II. They are requesting a waiver from the open space requirements. This project has a series of problems. However, the applicator here is not been part of that. In October of 2020, Phase I had an application but contractor exceeded the clearing limits, so Phase II was cleared to. They cleared 4 acres more than supposed to and a stop work order was put on the property. Then on April 2021 a major modification was issued. The project was stopped for 6 months. There is now a new owner as of April 2022 and he has had some problems with site work. He is working with the City to fix them. There was a traffic study done. However, we would recommend that there is a right out only intersection modification made at Compassion Way and Martintown Rd. In addition, the developer install a portion for a traffic light at Knobcone and Martintown Rd. This will force the traffic coming out to make a right turn onto Martintown Rd coming into town. When they get to Knobcone they can make a u-turn. The theory is that the red light would protect them making an u-turn. There is a lot of play in that intersection.

Bill Schoettelkoite the applicator came forward to speak. He stated that he purchased the property in January of 2022. He stated that he has been working with the city to get back on track and did another traffic study. He thinks that maybe the other development might share in cost of traffic light. Lance Cheely is there representing the applicator on this project. The open space waiver. His involvement is been with the landscape on Phase II. The site problems were inherited. They want to come to an agreement with this waiver. Why did they end up with so much open space? It started with phase I on this project but more land was cleared during the start of the project than should have. Which made them have more green space then they were supposed to have. So now, the question is how to fix the problem that would best work for the City and the Applicant. The code states that for green space the area cannot be altered.

The waiver would be granting about 40000sq ft. of open space that should be there but do not have. Because the site has been cleared a lot and the new applicate has inherited this as it sits now. So phase me versus phase II. Therefore, with phase I you have 3000 ft. of green space that was awarded by a waiver. Therefore, if you accept the 90000 sq. ft. that does qualify based on the planning commission you will have 30 times more than what was approved in phase I. If you give us 7 years then you will have what was previous there, which will make the open space that is required.

a. Consideration of the Major Site Plan application by the Planning Commission

Mr. Key made the motion for approval with the conditions that the applicant provide the traffic improvements required including a traffic light at Martintown and Knobcone. Mr. Elliott made the second motion. It was approved unanimously with conditions.

7. Staff Report

a. August Performance Report

Mr. Paradise stated they are still working on the new Development Code and had provided the steering committee a draft that they are reviewing. The Georgia Ave. traffic study is ongoing.

8. Adjourn 9:30 pm

As Approved September 21, 2022

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas L. Paradise, Director
Department of Planning and Development
Secretary to the Planning Commission