

Planning Commission



Minutes for the Wednesday, February 21, 2024, Regular Meeting

Members of the Planning Commission

Dr. Christine Crawford

Chair

Bob Bigger, *Vice Chair*

Chelsea Waddell

Jesse Elliott

Rett Harbeson

Lisa Christie

Erin Slade

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** – All members except for Dr. Christine Crawford were in attendance.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – January 17, 2024 Regular Meeting

Rett Harbeson made the first motion to approve the minutes. Jesse Elliot made the second motion. It was approved unanimously.

4. **Confirmation of Agenda**

Tommy Paradise asked the members for confirmation that they received the email that was addressed to the Planning Commission members. Paradise stated that the email was not addressing any particular application. Chairman Bob Bigger confirmed that all members received the email. No changes were made to the agenda.

5. **Application PP23-004 Alidade Section 1A**– Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat – A request by NAHH, LLC for approval of ±219.5-acre multi-phase residential development

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in the Alidade Planned Development located off Belvedere-Clearwater and Old Sudlow Lake Road, TPN 022-17-01-001.

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

Tommy Paradise stated that the proposal is the development of the first 219.5 acres (Phase 1A) of part of the Alidade Planned Development (formerly Highland Springs, formerly Blanchard Track) which is a 1,368-acre tract. Its General Development Plan was approved by Council on August 1st 2022.

The application is for a preliminary plat approval for a total of 554 homes, 230 single-family detached lots and 324 townhome or single-family attached lots located in Tract C & D of the GDP. Tract C will have a density of 2.04 dwelling units per acre and 15 dua is allowed. Tract D will have a density of 5.24 dua and 8 dua is allowed.

Access to this phase will be by two access points Buchanan Parkway at Belvedere Clearwater Road and Himalaya Crossing and Old Sudlow Lake Road. The Alidade Section 1A traffic study conducted by Kimley Horn recommends the following improvements:

- A full-movement traffic signal should be designed and installed upon completion of Section 1 at Belvedere Clearwater Road and Buchanan Parkway (staff recommends requiring this as a condition of final plat approval of Phase 4B, 5A, and 5B of Section 1A after 400 lots)
- Construct a 250 ft southbound right-turn lane with taper at Belvedere Clearwater and Old Sudlow Lake Road will be installed with Tract 2
- Create a southbound left turn lane into the Himalaya Crossing site access from Old Sudlow Lake Road will be done with Phase 1-B
- Construct a northbound right turn lane at the Buchanan Parkway school campus entrance currently being done.

The applicant has proposed the road names Apex Trail, Backpacking Bend, Cowboy Camp Circle, Denali Drive, Everest Drive, Fuji Loop, Glacier Court, Himalaya Crossing, Matterhorn Run, Overhang Bend, Sheer Drop Circle, Steep Gorge Court, and Table Rock Run. Aiken County E911 Addressing has reserved the names for one year. Final approval of the proposed road names is subject to Planning Commission approval of this application.

Applicant request a block length waiver from the required 500 feet for the following streets:

- Apex Trail (road length=660')

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- Glacier Court (road length=930')
- Cowboy Camp Circle (road length=1650')
- Backpacking Bend (Road Length=1730'; future extension to be made)
- Everest Drive (Road Length=1525')
- Table Rock Run/Fuji Loop (Block Width=1020')

Also requested is a block length waiver from the connective requirement of 1.4 for the following:

- Pod 1 (connectivity ratio=2.00)
- Pod 2 (connectivity ratio=2.00)
- Pod 3 (connectivity ratio=3.00)

A waiver from the horizontal curve radius of 500 feet for collector road is requested for Himalaya Crossing for 3 curves (C5 (400'), C6 (300'), and C7 (225')) as shown in Exhibit B.)

Jesse Elliott questioned the reasonings behind limiting a block to a certain length.

Paradise gave an example of an ambulance or fire truck accidentally passing the home of the citizen they are needing to service and the distance they would have to drive in order to turnaround safely.

Chelsea Waddell asked if there was any input from Emergency Services about the proposed waiver and the block lengths.

Paradise stated that when staff receives Preliminary Plats, information to given to all of the departments including Public Safety and Public Service. He stated that Public Safety nor Public Service came back with any comments or concerns.

Applicant Bert Fine with Cranston Engineering, 1432 Heath Street Augusta GA, presented a slideshow slide on the projector screen for the members and the public to view. He reiterated the measurements and proposed waivers that Paradise mention previously. He stated that Buchanan Parkway will be the main road for the development and will have some connectivity and future planning. The development will provide multiple access points. He spoke about the roadway geometry and how adding a curve on the roadway allowed the development to cross the easement as perpendicular as possible and stay above the wetlands. He spoke about the road signage and rumble strips being a necessity for public safety. His company has provided a study by the Federal Highway Administration to staff for review on crash analysis. He also stated that the developer is proposing a 3-way stop at the intersection to allow traffic for Old Sudlow Lake Rd to have the right of way.

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Rett Harbeson expressed his likeness of the road curvature and believes that it has the ability to slow traffic through the neighborhood. He questioned if the townhome pod would be mass graded and if there are still topography issues.

Bert Fine replied "Yes" and continued to state that the townhomes are being built in the less dense area of terrain.

Rett Harbeson emphasized track 4A and the possibility of splitting the track down the middle to support connectivity in the city.

Bert Fine stated that there is potential to split track 4A but there is a community center amenity that is planned for the development in that area.

Rett Harbeson asked the applicant about connecting Cowboy Camp Road and Everest Drive.

Bert Fine stated the wetlands near Everest Drive and the desire to separate the larger lots on Cowboy Camp Rd from the smaller lots is the reason the connection between Cowboy Camp Rd and Everest Drive was not made.

Chelsea Waddell asked if the green and red roads marked on the slideshow would eventually have their own exit points.

Bert Fine replied that the red road shown would connect to Buchanan Parkway and due to the commercial aspect on the property, the developer desires to have limited access to Buchanan Parkway to eliminate the residents from entering a high traffic roadway in the future.

Erin Slate expressed concerns about children walking to and from school and the potential hazard of children being injured at the curvatures. She asked if there were any plans to install guard rails or limiting the speed limit in the area.

Bert Fine stated the he was unsure if the guard rails would be necessary being that the walkways are offset 6ft from the roadway and that there is an 8ft asphalt multiuse path and a 5ft sidewalk with tree buffering the sidewalk.

Paradise repeated the dimensions of the multiuse path and the sidewalk for clarity.

Lisa Christie questioned if the traffic light would be installed before the development is fully completed and expressed concerns about the pre-existing dense traffic in the area.

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Bert Fine stated the signal warrant analysis was conducted on the area and it determines when a signal is needed for every 100 lots coming online at a time, He continued to state that when the development reaches 500 lots then a signal is warranted. He stated that the development is planning to hold platting that sections exceed that amount of lots.

Paradise stated that the Planning Staff conferred with the Engineering Staff and generated the same information as the developer. He continued by stating that the signal light is at the discretion of SCDOT.

Waddell asked if the traffic study analysis takes in account for future development and if other projects would need to have traffic studies redone.

Paradise stated that the current traffic counts are only for the proposed project and does not include possible developments. He continued by stating that no other project should have to redo their traffic study but upcoming projects would have to include 2022 to current traffic studies.

Erin Slate asked if the future school and future commercial development was included in the traffic study report as well.

Paradise stated that there are two traffic studies, residential and global. Commission is only focusing on the residential which is presented today. Paradise stated that the global traffic study is being composed but is more difficult to generate due to the unknown commercial business that is to come to the area.

Bert Fine stated a Master Analysis was done for the amendment of the Planned Development and is used so that SCDOT can see what is going to happen in the foreseeable future in the area.

Lisa Christie asked what the price listing for the townhome properties would be and if they would be purchased or rentals.

Bert Fine answered that he believed the properties will be sold and the intent for the development is to meet the homebuilder's quota for lots produced per year and to get a majority of their product lines on the market at once. Fine continued to say that there is a large variety of price points that will be proposed.

There were no public comments.

There were no additional comments from commissioners.

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Jesse Elliot made the first motion to approve the waivers and preliminary plat for PP23-004, with the following conditions;

1. A full movement traffic signal should be designed and installed upon completion of section one at Belvedere Clearwater Rd and Buchanan Parkway with a condition of approval that this be required as a condition of the final plot approval of phase 4B, 5A AND 5B of section 1A and
2. Construct a 250ft southbound right turn lane would taper at Belvedere Clearwater and Old Sudlow Lake Road would be installed along with track 2.
3. Create a southbound left turn lane into Himalaya Crossing site access from Old Sudlow Lake Road with Phase 1B.
4. Construct a north bound right turn lane at Buchanan Parkway at the school campus.

Erin Slate made the 2nd motion, it was approved unanimously.

Bob Bigger made a motion to amend the previous motion with the addition of the street names as noted. It was approved unanimously.

6. **Application SP23-002 Oakhaven Apartments** – Major Site Plan – A request by Oakhaven Apartments, LLC for approval of a 306-unit apartment complex on approximately 15.8 ac located at 980 Edgefield Road TPN 011-06-01-001.

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

Paradise stated that the Proposed 15.8-acre apartment complex behind QT will have 306 units with 180 1 bedroom or studio 125 2-bedroom apartments) Access will be provided by Modern Market Drive which has a traffic signal at Hwy 25. There will also be access by Frontage Road (Mighty Oak Trail)

Approval of the Major Site Plan application includes the street names Mighty Oak Trail to replace the name for Road #1 Frontage Road, Road #2 was previously approved by the Planning Commission as Modern Market Drive, Road #3 was previously Zippy Run, proposed to be named Sapling Row, Road #4 previously Bravo Pass proposed to be Rustling Branch and Road #5 previously Home at Oakhaven Drive proposed to be Canopy Drive for the internal drives. The road names have been reserved by Aiken County Addressing for one year.

Staff recommendations:

- 1) This approval includes certification of the use of the road names Mighty Oak Trail, Sapling Row, Road, Rustling Branch and Canopy Drive.

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- 2) Traffic improvements recommended by the Traffic Impact Analysis and approved by SCDOT will be installed on a schedule acceptable to SCDOT.
- 3) Any outstanding comments will be addressed to the satisfaction of City staff.

Applicant Bert Fine, Cranston Engineering representing ATC Development at 1432 Heath Street Augusta Ga approached the podium. He stated he wanted to address the traffic concerns and the traffic study projecting a need for some improvements. He stated that the developer has already began full road improvements, adjustments to the signal light and additional turn lanes into and out of the development. He stated that the developer has submitted an application to SCDOT for an encroachment permit off of Frontage Rd and they are still awaiting sewer permit approval from the PSA.

Lisa Christie asked what the price point of the homes in the development would be approximately.

Bert Fine stated that the homes will be rental properties at various price points and that there is an amenity center that would be offered to the residents as well.

There were no public comments.

Rett Harbeson asked Tommy Paradise if there will be an impact fee associated with this project being that the development is located within the water basin which already has poor water quality.

Paradise stated that an impact fee could help improve the storm water and the need that comes from new construction, but impact fees have not yet been approved by council.

Rett Harbeson made the 1st motion to approve CONPL24-001 including the road names approval and staff recommendations. Jesse Elliott made the 2nd motion. It was approved unanimously.

7. **Application CONPL24-001 Kellogg Tract** – Sketch Plan – A request by D. R. Horton for a concept plan review of a proposed Planned Development located off Edgefield Road and Belvedere-Clearwater Road, TPNs 011-19-01-001 and 012-08-01-001.

Paradise stated that it is a site of 466.42 acres for a Planned Development with 882 single-family detached lots, 44 townhouses, an amenity area, apartments, and a commercial area. The property is partially in the city and the remainder will need to be annexed. Before

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proceeding further, the applicants wished to discuss the project with the Planning Commission and obtain comments/suggestions on the development.

Lauren Alexander with Cranston Engineering at 452 Ellis Street Augusta Ga approached the podium. She stated that the developers wanted to make commission aware of the project. She continued by stating that the project is adjacent from the Alidade development and has similar conditions including wetlands and steep topography. She stated that the main idea of the layout is to have two spine roads that would resemble the letter "T" and would only serve as vehicle circulation and there would be no homes located on either road. The concept shows a roughly 10-acre commercial area directly off of Belvedere Clearwater Rd and an area for apartments adjacent to the commercial area, which would be 44 townhomes units. The remainder of the development would be single-family lots. Alexander said that the developer is considering having connectivity to the Palmetto Parkway Trail that goes along Interstate 520 but is unsure at the time where that access point would be located. She stated that the Wetland Delineation for the project is still in progress and is not reflected on the plan presented to commission today. Alexander stated the developer had a preliminary review with the Planning Department and they brought notice to the area being significantly dense and not following the 640ft block length requirement.

Bob Bigger asked where would the access point to Edgefield Rd. be located and if there is an existing road there.

Alexander stated that there is not an existing road.

Lisa Christie stated that the access is located near Celeste Ave.

Erin Slate stated the Palmetto Parkway Trail is underused in the community and the development would be a huge boom to the neighborhood.

Chelsea Waddell stated that pedestrian walkways would be strongly recommended.

Lisa Christie stated that she believes the City of North Augusta needs affordable housing for young couples and single citizens.

Tommy Paradise stated that staff recommends the multi-use path on one side and the 5ft sidewalk on the other side for pedestrians.

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Rett Harbeson asked if there was a number of apartment units planned would be for the development. He also encouraged steering away from apartment units due to the density of the area.

Alexander stated that there is nothing being proposed at the moment.

Chelsea Waddell suggested placing a traffic circle in the development instead of the two spine roads.

Tommy Paradise questioned a particular area in the development that is undeveloped and questioned if it is undeveloped due to topography.

Alexander concurred and also stated that the development would consider Alidade in any traffic study performed regardless of where they are in their development.

There were no public comments.

There was no additional comment from commissioners.

8. Business Meeting

a. Meeting Time Change

Rett Harbeson made the 1st motion to move the meeting to 6:00pm on Wednesdays. Jesse Elliott made the 2nd motion. It was approved unanimously.

9. Staff Report

a. January Performance Report

10. Adjourn 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas L. Paradise, Director

Department of Planning and Development