

City Council of Peachtree City
Minutes of Meeting
August 13, 1998
7:00 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met in a special workshop session Thursday, August 13, 1998, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Council members present were: Mayor Bob Lenox, Carol Fritz, Bob Brooks and Jim Pace. Annie McMenamin was absent due to a family matter.

Mayor Lenox explained that the purpose of the workshop was to discuss the possible development and annexation of land to create the Westside Village and that the workshop would be conducted in an informal matter to allow citizens and council to speak openly about the issue.

Mayor Lenox first asked the Director of Developmental Services, Jim Williams, to give a brief overview of the proposed Westside Village. Williams explained that the property being discussed was located on the west side of Peachtree City and included Planterra Subdivision and property along Line Creek north to the Tyrone city limits. While the proposed village had not yet been named, Williams called the village "McIntosh Village."

Williams said a group of property owners had attempted to develop the area, but that they could not develop a plan everyone could agree on. Williams felt the main issue to consider was not annexation, but how to integrate the existing Wynnmeade Subdivision into Peachtree City so that it was no longer considered an "orphan". He said commercial and apartment developments had already begun in the area but he did not feel those developments would provide a good link for Wynnmeade to the rest of the City.

Williams said density was the main issue on most people's minds but that he would rather discuss what he felt should be the general policy for the proposed development. He felt that a "real" village plan was needed which would be consistent with the other village plans. He said it should include a mix of housing to provide diversity in price and style. He felt it should have well defined open space and green belts and that it should be tied together with a path system. Williams also felt the village should have a school site and a distinctive amenity as all other villages. Williams felt the step down zoning principle should apply with the most dense zoning around the center of the village and eventually grading to the lowest density on each end. He felt the village should have one or more convenience centers, adequate recreation facilities, and a major collector road. He said it would be important to provide an adequate buffer from the rail road tracts and to prohibit septic tanks by providing sewer service to the area.

Lenox opened the floor for public comments or questions. Vic Hardy asked the Council if there would be any more apartments or cluster homes built or zoned in the new village. Lenox said he could not imagine that Council would approve any additional apartments. Hardy said

that there had been zoning mistakes in the past that led to additional apartments in the City. He asked if there were any more potential zoning mistakes that might lead to additional multi family zoning in the City. Lenox said there was no legal force on earth that could make the City annex land and that the only way Council would approve an annexation was if it was preplanned and rezoned. Brooks said not to forget about Edee's property which had already been zoned for apartments for many years. He reminded them that the issue was in litigation and that the court had declared Council's moratorium on apartments invalid. A citizen asked if that decision was being appealed. Brooks said that an appeal had been filed.

One citizen from the audience asked the status of the Highway 54 widening project. Lenox explained that Council unfortunately had a limited amount of control over the widening of Highway 54 because it was a state highway. He said there had been plans in place for several years for the State Department of Transportation to widen the highway and that the current start date was projected to be the year 2001. He felt the total project would take about three years to complete. Basinger added that the project had already started in Coweta County and was headed in Peachtree City's direction.

Jerry Peterson, Pathway Communities, represented one of the twelve owners. He said the total undeveloped acreage being discussed was 1,166 acres with 246 acres located within the city limits and that 920 acres would need to be annexed to complete the development of a total village plan. He said 180 acres (or 15% of the total project) was located in the flood plain and another 10% of the property was located along streams and would be planned as natural greenbelt areas. Peterson projected 1.8 units per gross acre for the entire 1,166 acres. He said this would result in the development of 2,100 residential units and would increase the population by 6,300, to a total city-wide build out population projection of 43,000.

Over the next two hours, several citizens asked questions and stated their opinions. Those that gave their names were: Tim Badshaw, Robert Wren, Jim Ryan, Bill Wheelock, Phyllis Aguayo, Mildred Harris, Charles Lear, Ray Helton, Dan Fields, Jim Steinbach, Walt Mashburn, Orval Barber, and Ray Tole. Many of the following issues and concerns were brought up more than once:

- concern that additional development would increase the current traffic problems for Planterra Subdivision
- concern that additional development would increase current traffic problems on Highway 54
- need to widen Highway 54 before any additional development takes place
- need to develop major collector road to help traffic flow before any additional development takes place
- overall proposed density of village should include areas already developed not just undeveloped areas

- proposed density per acre should not include undevelopable areas - if 25% can not be developed because of wetlands then the proposed density should only apply to the remaining 75% - not the entire 1,166 acres
- need to zone when annexed
- need to approve plan before annexation
- need to enforce plan once it is adopted
- city needs to do better job inspecting and ensuring development plans are upheld
- need to protect water quality
- need to protect trees and natural wooded areas - don't let developers "rape" the land
- industrial park is a safety hazard to residents - need to have adequate evacuation plan
- need to ensure adequate police/fire/ems coverage for village
- need to keep density low - no cluster homes or apartments
- owners have a right to develop land, Peachtree City needs to annex it to control development
- citizens want quality development - need careful planning and execution
- council should not allow higher density to make up for land that can not be developed due to the natural wetlands - keep density to a minimum
- plan should attempt to 'save' natural greenbelt areas
- natural wetlands and streams give land value - no need to crowd houses to make up for undeveloped land - build high quality houses to compensate for it
- careful concern should be given as to the location of proposed cart paths
- concern about total build out population
- reminder to council of their commitment not to increase total build out population if any annexation took place
- concern of exceeding sewer system capacity
- include a glossary of terms in the development plan to eliminate miscommunication in the execution of the plan
- concern that annexing property may speed up population growth - need to plan and time growth

Many of these issues were discussed several times by the residents, particularly the need to address traffic problems and to enforce development plans. Several residents from Planterra Subdivision were extremely unhappy and concerned about traffic problems and the hazards of the industrial park, which was located adjacent to their subdivision when they bought their homes. They also felt the industrial park affected their quality of life because many of the plants were operating 24 hours a day. Some felt that their real estate agents should have been more forthcoming with information concerning those issues and they did not want residents in a new village to be misled.

Bob Brooks was concerned about the at grade crossings over the rail road tracks. He felt it would be important to have a bridge over the rail road tracks to provide better access for public safety equipment and motorists. Brooks felt the city was growing at a slower pace than it had in the mid to late 1980's, when it had its most explosive growth rate. He said most of the

development during that time took place on the south end of Peachtree City, which was down stream and not as visible. He felt the city was currently doing a better job of code enforcement than ever before. He believed some concern from citizens was based on the fact that they believed undeveloped property was green belts, but in fact, it was property planned for development.

Dan Fields of John Wieland Homes said he represented owners of the Katz and Stillwell property. He said the owners have discussed the density for the total project and they wanted to develop a project that they could be proud of. He said one of the properties he represented would include apartments and the Cedarcroft project. He anticipated the overall plan to include a progression of high priced homes as development moved north. He anticipated a density of 2 units per acre for the Katz property and 1 to 1.5 units per acre for the Stillwell property. Fields also felt the proposed collector road and bridge over the railroad tracks would help reduce the need for at grade crossings at the railroad tracks. Fields said he planned on a minimum 100 foot buffer from the railroad tracks for any residential development. Brooks encouraged Fields to give the buffer issue more thought because he felt 100 feet may not be adequate.

Jim Pace reminded citizens that the city had been developed at a far lower density than originally planned. He said the purpose of the meeting that evening was to give citizens the opportunity to speak. He said it was not an effort to convince citizens of predisposed notions of the development, but to understand what the citizens wanted and to communicate with the developers. Jim Pace believed the area was going to be developed regardless of annexation and that there was a strip of land that was currently zoned for industrial use. He felt it would be a good idea to annex the land so that the development could be planned in a consistent manner with Peachtree City. He felt the density in the proposed village should be comparable to other villages. He felt strongly that the "at grade" crossings at the railroad tracks should be removed and a bridge built. He felt a collector road similar to Peachtree Parkway should be constructed before development takes place. He wanted the buffers to be well defined and enforced. He felt a plan was needed to include the Wynnmeade subdivision with the rest of the city. He also felt a school would be needed for the area. Pace said Line Creek was a good, natural boundary, but that it was also one of the most beautiful areas he had ever seen. He said it was important to protect the area as much as possible with buffers and to develop the area along the creek with low density. He felt all development should be connected to the sewer system. Pace said he loved Peachtree City and was appreciative of the planning and foresight of previous developers that made Peachtree City what it was. He felt developers did a marvelous job of providing green belts and buffers. He respected Peachtree City's plan but understood that it was an ongoing process and that much work was needed before the city was built out.

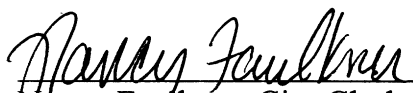
Steve Black, Pathway Communities, thanked Council for setting up the forum and thanked the citizens for their input. He said the developers had already discussed many issues that were

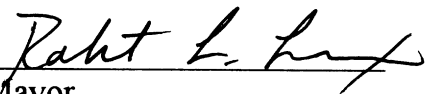
raised that night such as: buffers, density, ingress, egress, and who should pay for infrastructure such as the bridge. He wanted to set the record straight that Peachtree City was a great place to live because of the effort and planning of developers. He said he wanted to do what was right for the city and used The Point as an example, which had been zoned multifamily with 18 units per acre. He said they could have developed the property as it was zoned but felt the high density in that area was not right for Peachtree City. He said they could have made a much higher profit by developing the area as it was zoned, but instead, they developed the area at a much lower density with large expensive homes.

Charles Lear addressed Council with a separate issue. He wanted to thank Peachtree City for the police, fire, and public works departments. He commended them for their outstanding efforts and super service they provided. He felt that the city employee's dedication to provide outstanding service was one of the main things that made Peachtree City a great place to live. He was impressed with the response times of the public safety personnel as well as the public works department. He appreciated how the public works department kept the city looking great by keeping the grass mowed and litter picked up. He was thankful for the fire department and all of their volunteers who responded to emergency calls. Other citizens in the audience also voiced their appreciation for the city's public safety and public works employees.

Lenox summarized that from the comments he heard that night, he felt the citizens wanted to annex the proposed property and they wanted a good plan in place before the annexation took place. He said he also understood that the citizens wanted the City to do a good job of enforcing the plan once it is approved and development takes place.

No action was taken and Mayor Lenox adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.


Nancy Faulkner, City Clerk

Attest: 
Mayor