

**MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
October 15, 2014
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman John Dame

INVOCATION: Chairman John Dame

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Those who were in attendance were: Chair John Dame, Vice Chair Rick Roach, Board Members Karen Abdul-Hameed, Irving Spokony, Deborah Hoffman, Bette Biggar, Judy Schelfo and Alternate Board Member Joseph Hults. Also in attendance were Community Development Director Valerie Ferrell and Administrative Assistant Mamie Drane.

Board Member Biggar disclosed the Memorandum of Voting Conflict stating the reason for her abstention from the vote on the CRA at the July 16 2014 meeting. Form 8b, Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and other Local Public Officers will be filed with the minutes of said meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Roach made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16th regular Planning Board. The motion was seconded by **Board Member Spokony** and approved by unanimous voice call vote.

PUBLIC HEARING/BUSINESS ITEMS

PUBLIC HEARING: CONSIDER MAKING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION TO AMEND THE CITY OF LAKE ALFRED OFFICIAL ZONING MAP TO ASSIGN THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS (PB) TO APPROXIMATELY 44.47 ACRES AND CONSERVATION (CN) TO APPROXIMATELY 11.0 ACRES. (General location: EAST OF CR 557 BETWEEN CREEK ROAD AND EVENHOUSE ROAD. THE SUBJECT SITE IS PROPOSED TO BE A CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL.)

Community Development Director Ferrell explained the existing land use for the property and the proposed land use / zoning for the property. Using color coded maps; Director Ferrell showed the surrounding areas, their zoning and uses and explained what each of the buildings are associated with the adjacent property. Director Ferrell reviewed the analysis of the subject site, stating that compatibility within the surrounding area and their uses are mixed because of the nature of the area. The future land use of the property is medium density residential which can allow for up to 12 units per acre developed, however no zoning has been assigned to the site. Public buildings and grounds zoning designation is permitted under the Medium Density Residential land use designation. The zoning designation requested is permitted, with the impacts are about the same, medium density with a school would have approximately the same

impact on facilities as the 12 units per acre. The public buildings and grounds zoning, does not demonstrate any negative impact on the City's public facilities including water, wastewater, and recreation. The transportation impact would be evaluated at the site development phase.

Steve Lockhart, Realtor at Lockhart and Associates introduced his associate from Lockhart and Associates, Marty Castro. He also introduced the Executive Director at Discovery Academy, Carol Fulks, and the Vice President of Envisors Engineering Firm, Chris Kaye. He explained that Ms. Fulks went before the City Commissioners in July and received a unanimous vote by the Commission in support of their efforts of locating a charter high school in Lake Alfred. Mr. Lockhart stated that the current owner A & J Land Holdings had intended to build a residential development with up to 12 units per acre, as the land use would allow. Based on this and the total developable acres, this would allow approximately 528 residential units. Preliminary traffic studies from that project projected 13,000 vehicle trips a day. The proposed school would reduce that estimate by 90% to about 1,000 - 1,300 trips a day. Minimal access points on all the roads designed to minimize impact on Creek Road and Evenhouse Road. The buses would load and unload at an on-site area. The lighting and noise will be minimized. Mr. Lockhart went on to say one of the benefits of a charter school over a public school is that charter schools tend to be smaller, have a more defined curriculum and will only have one third of a typical high schools population.

Chair Dame opened the public hearing.

Kirk Conley, 352 Creek Road, expressed concern about the increase in traffic, specifically the number of buses, He thinks the population of the school will be more than what has been projected, which will increase the traffic more.

James Wright, 390 Creek Road, stated he has lived on Creek Road for more than twenty years. He had been told that the surrounding property was zoned rural and that Evenhouse was in the green Swamp and there would be no more development. One of his main concerns is the underground waterway that goes from Lake Alfred under CR557 into the conservation area under Creek Road all the way to Lake Lowery. He said that CR557 is sinking again because of the underground waterway. He also disagrees the traffic projection and lighting nuisance saying he's never seen a sports field use the directional lighting.

Tim McCauley, 408 Creek Road, said he wanted to echo the sentiments from the other speakers. He questioned the proposed number of the buses, the general traffic and the noise. Creek and CR557 already has an issue with the traffic. He urged the Board to vote no.

Board Member Biggar asked if the county had been notified about the road at CR557 and Evenhouse Road. Also, she inquired if the County would fix the road if the school was permitted.

Director Ferrell stated that this has been a topic of discussion with the Polk County Transportation Planning Organization staff. The question is money and what is the best method to solve the problem. She stated any inadequate road infrastructure identified at site

development phase would need identify proposed traffic conditions and if any improvements are needed.

Board Member Biggar said she remembered when this area was zoned for the housing development. The traffic projection for the school is far less than what was projected at that time. She stated that some people will be affected by the development, but as a citizen of Lake Alfred she believes we really need a school to help the other schools, and it's for the kids. She also said she felt it was up to the County and State, and if they wanted to put a school there, they should take care of the people that live on Creek Road.

Chris Kaye, Envisiors stated in regard to the wetland and conservation area is located in the middle of the site. The historic conditions have to be maintained. There are elaborate measures and regional analysis that Southwest Florida Water Management expects Envisiors to do on a site like this to ensure that development does not impact adjacent properties. He went on to explain that the source of the run-off is from the rain fall and the development will not change the amount of rain.

Sandra Wright, 390 Creek Road stated she is concerned about the number of buses and how fast they drive down Creed Road. She said that her family moved to Creek Road to be away from everything, and asked if anyone would want a school on top of their house. She questioned the noise saying she could already hear the noise from the Discovery Middle School.

Anita McCauley, 408 Creek Road stated she thought it would be a great impact on the area. She doesn't want the school there and urged the planning Board to vote no.

Sherry Holbrook Director of Polk Training Center, stated she runs a regulated nursery and training center. Being directly involved with the schools, she knows Polk County is one of the least educated systems in FL. She agrees with Board Member Biggar and that we need to look at the opportunity for Lake Alfred as a whole. She went on to say that having all the education in that one area is much better than have another housing development with 500 more houses. She does not want another housing development to move in. With the school there the County could be held accountable to make sure that the lake area and the run off is taken care of properly. She is for the school and thinks it would be great for the community.

Alicia Tate, 307 Creek Road, stated she is a renter but her biggest concern is with the conservation of the land. There are many animals out there that are on the protected and endangered species list. She also said she has seen flooding out there for quite some time.

Seth Holbrook Lakeland, Works at Polk Training Center stated that as a young person he sees the school as an investment in the future.

Chair Dame closed the Public Hearing

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Biggar addressed the noise issue, saying her mother's nursing home was next to a high schools soccer field in Winter Haven and the noise was negligible. She also said that she thought if the right-of-way needed widening that the additional property should be taken from the school side not the residents side. She thought that would be beneficial to everyone on Creek Road, Evenhouse Road and the School.

Board Member Abdul-Hameed asked about the criteria the board should use to evaluate to change zoning. What is the time vacant analysis and what is the effect on property value analysis?

Director Ferrell stated the criteria for evaluation is a guide to the Planning Board to weigh all aspects of the zoning change. Time vacant is an issue of how long the property has been vacant since annexed in to the city and how useful the zoning has been to this property. Is the zoning that would fall under medium density residential really benefiting the highest and best use of this property? Would the proposed assignment be a better use of this property than staying Medium density residential? Property value analysis is another consideration, if the development of a residential project or a school would be the highest and best use of the property.

Vice Chair Roach stated he knows it is an impact for any property to be developed anywhere and environmental studies will need to be done. Schools are needed where students are and where we have the ability to provide the incentive of greater education. He stated he is in favor of the school. It's something Polk County needs to create more job opportunities for a positive future in Lake Alfred, Polk County and the State of Florida. He looks to the members of the board to do their due diligent on the documents that will come before the board for site development, planning, water runoff and the impacts and how it will affect the wetlands. In summary, the impacts of the two types of projects have to be weighed: a proposed charter school with 600 students and 100 staff to a proposed medium density residential development with 528 units and approximately 1500 people that could move into that area at some point in time.

Board Member Schelfo stated that Lake Alfred Elementary is located in a very dense existing residential neighborhood and residents have become accustomed to the school and it is not a great intrusion. She asked if the initial plan from the advisor had gone through any of the approval process. When you start pulling permits there are so many hoops and the concerns and issues will be address at that point. If the problems are not addressed the site will not get the approved.

Board Member Spokony stated that he had heard the School Board had denied the application for the charter school and would vote no on the proposed zoning.

Board Member Hoffman stated she was for education but she has had experience with development coming in next to her property. She stated land now gets flooded it has caused a lot of problems. She also stated no one maintains the retention pond or wants to take responsibility.

Alternate Board Member Joe Hults stated this is a question of zoning, and we are far from how the property is developed. He said there are plenty of organizations that will be overseeing this to make sure everything is done right. There will be more building out there. Now there's a potential to be a school that's closed on the weekend and the trade-off for car traffic versus bus traffic he felt the bus traffic would be the better deal.

After some discussion, **Board Member Abdul-Hameed** made a motion to proceed to a vote of the zoning request; seconded by **Board Member Biggar** and approved by majority roll call vote:

CHAIR DAME		NAY
VICE CHAIR ROACH	AYE	
BOARD MEMBER BIGGAR	AYE	
BOARD MEMBER HOFFMAN		NAY
BOARD MEMBER SPOKONY		NAY
BOARD MEMBER ABDUL-HAMEED	AYE	
BOARD MEMBER SCHELFO	AYE	
ALTERNATE MEMBER HULTS	AYE	

Vice Chair Roach recommend approval of the zoning assignment of Public Buildings and Grounds to the property owned by A&J Lake Alfred Holdings; seconded by **Board Member Biggar** and approved by majority roll call vote:

CHAIR DAME		NAY
VICE CHAIR ROACH	AYE	
BOARD MEMBER BIGGAR	AYE	
BOARD MEMBER HOFFMAN		NAY
BOARD MEMBER SPOKONY		NAY
BOARD MEMBER ABDUL-HAMEED	AYE	
BOARD MEMBER SCHELFO	AYE	
ALTERNATE MEMBER HULTS	AYE	

Chair Dame declared the meeting adjourned at 8:58pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



MAMIE DRANE
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT