

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

There was a meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) on Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM in the Commission Chambers of the County Administration Building, 1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may view a video of the meeting and/or review the meeting agenda, backup material and minutes on the Indian River County website www.ircgov.com/Boards/PZC/2022.

Present were the following members: **Chairman Dr. Jonathan Day**, District 4 Appointee; **Mr. Mark Mucher**, District 5 Appointee; **Ms. Beth Mitchell**, District 1 Appointee; **Mr. Jordan Stewart**, Member-at-Large; **Mr. Todd Brognano**, Member-at-Large; **Mr. Chip Landers**, Alternate Member; and **Ms. Teri Barenborg**, non-voting School Board Liaison were present.

Mr. Alan Polackwich, Sr., District 2 Appointee; **Mr. Curtis Carpenter, Jr.**, District 3 Appointee were absent.

Also present were IRC staff members: Mr. William DeBraal, Deputy County Attorney; Mr. Phil Matson, Community Development Director; Mr. Ryan Sweeney, Chief of Current Development; Mr. Patrick Murphy, Senior Planner; Environmental Control Officer, Ms. Julianne Price; and Recording Secretary, Ms. Lisa Plesnarski, Commissioner Assistant.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Day called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. The secretary called roll and established a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

ON MOTION BY Todd Brognano, SECONDED BY Beth Mitchell, the members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2022 meeting as presented.

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

There were none.

Items Not on Consent

Chairman Day read the following into record.

A. 16th Street Apartments: Request for major site plan approval for a 154-unit multi-family apartment complex with associated amenities (e.g. clubhouse, fitness room, pool). 239 Monterey Road, LLC, Owner. BGE, Inc., Agent. Located north of 16th Street, approximately 900' west of 66th Avenue. Zoning: RM-8, Residential Multiple-Family (up to 8 units/acre). Land Use Designation: M-1, Medium-Density Residential-1 (up to 8

units/acre). Density: 7.97 units/acre. **[SP-MA-20-12-43/2005090430-87977] [Quasi-Judicial]**

Chairman Day asked if any members had any ex-parte communication or conflict that would not allow them to make an unbiased decision. There were none.

The secretary administered the testimonial oath to those present who wished to speak.

IRC Senior Planner Patrick Murphy reviewed information about the request for major site plan approval and gave a PowerPoint presentation, copies of which are on file in the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Office. Mr. Murphy ended his presentation by affirming staff's recommendation with associated conditions.

Mr. Murphy responded to commissioners questions about traffic flow and explained that there will be a dedicated turn lane from 16th St. to turn right into the project. Mr. Sweeney provided some information about the history of zoning changes and the current land use and allowable units per acre. Mr. Sweeney also clarified that the residential buildings will not have garages but there will be surface lot parking and some detached garage type buildings. Ms. Mitchell commented that she likes the preservation of wetlands and the abundance of parking planned for the project.

Chairman Day opened the floor for public comment. There were none. Chairman Day closed the item for public discussion.

Chairman Day asked if there were any other commissioner questions. There were none.

Ms. Mitchell moved to approve.

ON MOTION BY Beth Mitchell, SECONDED BY Todd Brognano, the members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve staff recommendations with its associated conditions on this Quasi-Judicial matter.

Planning Matters

Chairman Day introduced the Land Use Visioning presentation. This is a presentation by the MPO's planning consultants, Kimley-Horn and Associates, on potential strategies for rural lands in Indian River County followed by opportunity for public comment and feedback.

Mr. Brian Freeman, staff director with Indian River County MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) explained this is the third public workshop, public comment and feedback are welcome and comment forms were distributed.

Mr. Freeman shared a PowerPoint presentation on the land use visioning workshop that was held October 14, 2021. The presentation included the purpose of the study,

preliminary findings, preliminary consensus items and a summary of the next steps. Mr. Freeman concluded his presentation and said the full final report will be available at the April MPO meeting.

This was an informational item only and did not require an approval or motion.

Chairman Day asked if there were any commissioner questions.

A discussion followed on the topics of economic development and alternative strategies such as cluster subdivisions, agrihoods, flexible uses, and others. The feasibility of agricultural neighborhoods was discussed and Mr. Freeman noted the important aspect of an agrihood would be that it ties in to a productive agricultural use that is shared among members of the community. The commissioners raised the issue of affordability. Mr. Freeman responded that the issue of diversity of housing scored highly with community input and that some options address affordability more than others. Mr. Matson commented they are still brainstorming strategies. Ms. Teri Barenborg, School Board liaison, commented that availability of workforce housing is already a problem for the school district in regard to recruiting and retention. Ms. Barenborg commented that land will need to be saved for schools and bus depots if land in the western portion of the County is developed and also expressed concern over the issue of water and landfill impact.

Mr. Freeman reviewed the comprehensive plan process, and stated he believes the visioning will lead to discussion of comprehensive plan updating. Mr. Freeman added that the MPO will soon be updating their long-range transportation plan which is updated every five years. The issues of solar farming and environmental conservation were also discussed.

Chairman Day opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Freeman stated that comment forms were passed out and that public comment is welcome.

Mr. Robert Grice of Vero Beach spoke and explained he was a member of the planning board in the 1970's. Mr. Grice commented on an area known as A2 on the map, an area that runs from the main relief canal to Oslo Road. He commented that it is zoned agricultural, one house per every 5 acres. He explained the area used to be citrus groves and was beautiful, but now seems like a blighted area. Mr. Grice spoke about the history of the area and zoning changes. He expressed his opinion that the 5 acres is not working and the zoning should be something other than 5 acres. Mr. Grice provided a written narrative that was taken into record.

An unnamed citizen asked if the MPO received input on home ownership vs. rentership. Mr. Freeman responded that the visioning effort hasn't touched directly on the affordable housing issue but that it seems to be happening at the same time that other efforts are focusing on housing affordability. Mr. Matson explained there are other advisory committees to the County such as the Affordable Housing Committee and the MPO. The

speaker commented that Singapore has no land and a 90% home ownership rate, he believes it is a common good and asked the Board to give that consideration.

IRC Environmental Control Officer, Ms. Julianne Price expressed she is glad there has been discussion about workforce and affordable housing and that the option of accessory dwelling units is probably the only one that speaks strongly to workforce affordable housing. Ms. Price said the affordable housing committee is working on that and noted the good ideas expressed tonight.

Ms. Kelly Jackson of Indian River Pioneer Farms spoke to the Commission and explained she is a 5th generation County resident and that her family farmed the island before the railroad existed. She explained how she feels the lack of support and knowledge of what small farms can do contributed to her loss of 5 acres in 2012. Ms. Jackson said she liked the comments about zoning change but wondered why we can't get more creative. Ms. Jackson explained she has travelled Florida and discovered there are amazing things going on in farming. Ms. Jackson expressed she is surprised we don't have food in our economic development plans. She noted this as an opportunity to look at what food does to our local economies and feels it can create change and benefit as is being discussed in different departments. She spoke about new food growing technologies such as vertical farming and encouraged the County to look at how that can be incorporated on a County level regardless of zoning. Ms. Jackson also wanted to make sure there was awareness of the Cottage Food Law, which increased during the pandemic to \$250,000 per year persons can make out of their homes. Ms. Jackson explained that she formed the Indian River Food Policy Counsel as a chapter of the Florida Food Policy Counsel because there is a lot to look at in regard to food and economic growth and embracing culture in the community. She noted with new technologies there is no limitation to growing seasons and a lot of opportunity exists.

Resident Mr. George Blithe spoke. He gave his opinion that the elephant in the room is Fellsmere and said we should be doing these things in cooperation. Mr. Blithe spoke about the lack of consistency in the type and size of housing. Mr. Blithe stated he feels people should be able to keep their estate sized properties without the fear of smaller communities encroaching and that the one house per 5 acres keeps it consistent. He further explained his opinion is that regardless of house value, the consistency of 5 acres and one house and maybe accessory property or barns as they see fit is what he envisions. Mr. Blithe explained he has 21 heavily wooded acres zoned AG-1 with a comprehensive land use plan of 8 units per acre, and that if he goes to sell he doesn't know what to tell a buyer to expect. Mr. Matson described the basic underlying land use and offered to meet with Mr. Blithe to discuss specifically.

Mr. DeBaal asked the consultants if the numbers have been run for the potential increase in population if the land is zoned differently. Kimley-Horn staff responded that a detailed demographic analysis has not been done. There was further discussion about long term forecasting in regard to population and traffic volume as well as diversity of housing.

Ms. Jackson spoke again and asked the Commission to keep in mind that we used to do monocropping and big farms, but they would be shocked at what now can be done on 2

acres. She spoke about environmentally conscious farming (growing a lot in a small space), vertical farming, and indoor growing farming. Ms. Jackson also stated that as restrictions on the land are being discussed, we need to be more conscious of the small farm concept and that maybe some smaller parcels would still allow people the farming lifestyle.

Other Planning Matters

Mr. Matson is seeking a member of the Planning and Zoning Board to serve as an alternate advisor on the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. They meet every other month at 10:30am.

Commissioners Matters

There were none.

Attorney's Matters

There were none.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.