

**MINUTES**  
**DALTON-WHITFIELD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**December 16, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jim Lidderdale, Chairman  
Scott DeLay  
John Thomas  
Mitch Sanford  
Tom Minor

**WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Lynn Laughter; Chairperson, Harold Brooker, Greg Jones, Roger Crossen, and Barry Robbins

**VISITORS PRESENT**

Brandon Harrison, Bart Rich, Mark Barnwell, April Ogle, Anthony Sides, and others

**STAFF PRESENT**

Ethan Calhoun  
Jean Price-Garland  
Robert Smalley  
Gary Brown

**I. GENERAL**

A. Call to Order: Chairman Laughter called the meeting to order at 5:56 p.m. and confirmed a quorum of commissioners was present with no absences. Chairman Lidderdale confirmed a quorum of members was present with Jody McClurg absent.

B. Minutes: Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion to approve or correct the November 25, 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. Sanford made the motion to accept the minutes as written and his motion was seconded by Mr. DeLay which then passed unanimously 4-0.

Mr. Calhoun gave a brief overview of the meeting procedures and stated that final action would likely occur during the regular January meeting of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners.

**II. REZONING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Heard the request of April Ogle to rezone from General Agriculture (GA) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 1.00 acre located at 2800 Dutch Lane, Tunnel Hill, Georgia. Parcel (12-004-01-000) (County)**

Mr. Calhoun oriented the audience to the subject property and summarized the staff analysis which was in favor of the requested R-2 rezoning. There were no further questions for Mr. Calhoun.

April Ogle stated that the need to subdivide the subject property from the parent tract was in order to deed the property to her daughter. She had stated her daughter's recent marriage and that the parent tract was a family-owned property.

With no other comments heard for or against this hearing closed at 6:05.

**B. Heard the request of Bart Rich to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to High Density Residential (R-7) a tract of land totaling .34 acres located on Francis Drive, Dalton, Georgia.**

**Parcel (12-313-06-002) (County)**

Mr. Calhoun oriented the audience to the subject property and summarized the staff analysis which was in favor of the requested R-7 rezoning. Mr. Minor asked Mr. Calhoun if there would be any buffers required along the adjacent R-5 properties to the north and south of the subject property. Mr. Calhoun confirmed with Ms. Price-Garland that no buffer would be required between R-5 and R-7

Bart Rich stated that the existing sewer taps made the subject property a viable extension of their adjacent R-7 property in order to create more flexibility for the proposed development. Commissioner Robbins asked how many buildings were proposed and Mr. Rich stated there would be up to seven buildings totaling 14 units. Mr. Rich went on to state that the property design may only create six buildings with up to twelve total units. Mr. Rich then noted that he and a business partner own and operate the adjacent commercial property to the north of the subject property.

With no other comments heard for or against this hearing closed at 6:16

**C. Heard the request of T. Mark Barnwell to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Agriculture (GA) a tract of land totaling 5.00 acres located at 516 Brandon Drive, Resaca, Georgia. Parcel (13-209-10-055) (County)**

Mr. Calhoun oriented the audience to the subject property and summarized the staff analysis which was in favor of the requested GA rezoning. There were no further questions for Mr. Calhoun.

Mark Barnwell stated the need for a second dwelling was due to the fact that he had recently sold his home in Florida and wished to live on the subject property adjacent to a family member. He noted his existing ownership of the subject property. Chairperson Laughter affirmed that the proposed dwelling would be a manufactured home rather than a site-built dwelling.

With no other comments heard for or against this hearing closed at 6:22

**D. Heard the request of Crow Road Holdings to rezone from General Agriculture (GA) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 61.77 acres located on Crow Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-232-01-000) (County)**

Mr. Calhoun oriented the audience to the subject property and summarized the staff analysis which was in favor of the requested R-2 rezoning. There were no further questions for Mr. Calhoun.

Brandon Harrison drew attention to a presentation showing the proposed shared access apron or road entrance to the proposed new lots as a way to lessen individual driveway access to Crow Road. Mr. Harrison then showed photos of the proposed new dwellings he intends to construct on the proposed tracts. Mr. Harrison stated that up to six lots are proposed for the portion of the subject property along the west R/W of Crow Road. Commissioner Crossen asked Mr. Harrison what the average lot size would be for the proposed new tracts to which Mr. Harrison stated that they would be well-above the minimum lot size for R-2 but would vary based on topography and lot depth. Commissioner Crossen then asked Mr. Harrison what the average size of the proposed dwellings would be and, Mr. Harrison stated that each dwelling would be approximately 1,500 to 1,600 square feet in size. Commissioner Brooker asked if any of the proposed new tracts would be planned to utilize Old Crow Road as an access to which Mr. Harrison confirmed there would be several. Commissioner Brooker noted that Mr. Harrison may have difficulty achieving access to Old Crow Road. Mr. Harrison stated that tracts with larger lot size would boast larger dwellings with estimated values of over \$200,000 each. Mr. Harrison noted that there would be no proposed driveway access to Highway 2. Mr. Minor asked Mr. Harrison if he would be able to agree to a limit of sixteen access points along Crow Road. Some discussion occurred in regard to the number of driveways and shared road access points that resulted in Mr. Harrison stating that he would agree to a limit of sixteen total access points to Crow Road.

Ricky Smith noted his concern with the proposed development due to the potential for new residents to wonder upon his adjacent property that he leases to a hunting club. He stated that he is also concerned about setbacks and an adequate buffer between the proposed development and his adjacent property to the east. Mr. Smith also noted concern with increased traffic generation created by additional dwellings that may result in more accidents at the infamous Crow Road and Highway 2 intersection.

Commissioner Crossen and Brooker stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation was actively studying intersection improvements to mitigate the long-standing safety issue.

Ann Swinney stated that she was strictly opposed to the R-2 rezoning based on her concern that the proposed development would increase traffic issues in this area. She also stated that she was concerned that the proposed development would be a threat to the environmental assets in this area such as Coahulla Creek.

Shannon Sutton, adjacent property owner on west R/W of Crow Road, stated that he is opposed only to the development along the west R/W of Crow Road. He noted his concern with multiple neighbors on smaller lots than his that would change the character around his property. He then stated that he had difficulty achieving access to Old Crow Road for his own property access in the past. Some discussion occurred regarding Mr. Sutton's family being the previous owners of the subject property and, that the subject property had been sold recently due to financial issues. Mr. Sutton repeated that he was only opposed to the proposed rezoning and development along the west R/W of Crow Road on the subject property

Mr. Harrison rebutted by stating that negotiations and contact to adjacent property owners, including Mr. Sutton had occurred prior to the proposed rezoning to no avail. Commissioner Crossen asked if there would be any buffer area adjacent to Mr. Smith's property to the east. Mr. Harrison stated that there would be buffer area based on the fact that these lots would be deeper due to the shape of the subject property and the County's 4:1 lot ratio. Mr. Harrison estimated that the eastern tract's adjacent to Mr. Smith's property would likely have back yards of 200 feet of depth. Mr. Harrison did state that if a road is constructed as part of the development then back yards would be much less and a buffer would be minimal to Mr. Smith's property. Mr. Thomas confirmed with Mr. Harrison that he had already closed on the subject property. Some discussion occurred regarding setbacks along Crow Road and Highway 2 to ensure that thought had been given to consider the potential widening of Highway 2 in the future. More discussion occurred regarding the concern with the adjacent hunting property. This discussion ended with the understanding that the concern was with new residents accidentally trespassing on Mr. Smith's property when hunting or shooting is in process. More discussion occurred with the conclusion that the existing tree growth and a fence would help to mitigate the concerns with Mr. Smith's adjacent property.

Rob Bradham, President and CEO of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce's Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy recommends new development that mirrors the proposed development on the subject property. Mr. Bradham stated that the strategy and Chamber of Commerce are in favor of the proposed rezoning and development.

Blake Griffin, city manager for the City of Tunnel Hill, stated that Mr. Harrison is a member of the Tunnel Hill Planning Commission and believed that there is a need for housing like the proposed development on the subject property.

Ann Blankenship, a local realtor, spoke in favor of the proposed request based on her opinion that the proposed development would increase property values in the surrounding area.

Ken Gowen, Mayor of the City of Tunnel Hill, stated that public schools, such as Coahulla Creek, are catalysts for community-style development such as that proposed for the subject property.

Wes Snyder, Whitfield County resident, stated that his daughter is enrolled in Coahulla Creek High School and that he is in favor of the proposed rezoning based on the fact that he believed it is a good location for a residential community surrounding the high school.

Chairperson Laughter confirmed with Mr. Harrison that the existing tree cover would be undisturbed as part of the proposed development particularly along the eastern boundary of the subject property.

With no other comments heard for or against this hearing closed at 7:16

**E. Heard the request of Brookside Holdings, LLC to rezone from General Agriculture (GA) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 38.83 acres located on Crow Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-232-01-000) (County)**

Mr. Calhoun oriented the audience to the subject property and summarized the staff analysis which was in favor of the requested R-2 rezoning. There were no further questions for Mr. Calhoun

Anthony Sides passed out packets to the Planning Commission showing proposed housing design and other information regarding the subject property's proposed use. He went on to state that the development would be approximately fifteen to twenty lots that range from one to five acres in size. Mr. Sides then stated that the price range for the proposed properties would be \$200,000-\$500,000 each. Mr. Sides then restated that the proposed housing development is supported by the Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy as well. Chairman Lidderdale confirmed with Mr. Sides that all road access for the proposed development would be individual driveways along Crow Road.

With no other comments heard for or against this hearing closed at 7:24

### **III. REGULAR MEETING**

**A. Recommendation regarding the request of April Ogle to rezone from General Agriculture (GA) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 1.00 acre located at 2800 Dutch Lane, Tunnel Hill, Georgia. Parcel (12-004-01-000) (County)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-2 rezoning. **Mr. Minor then made a motion to recommend an approval for the R-2 rezoning based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the requested R-2 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**B. Recommendation regarding the request of Bart Rich to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to High Density Residential (R-7) a tract of land totaling .34 acres located on Francis Drive, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-313-06-002) (County)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the proposed R-7 rezoning. Mr. Thomas recused himself from this vote and exited the chambers. **Mr. Sanford then made a motion to recommend an approval of the R-7 rezoning based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Mr. DeLay seconded the motion and a recommendation to recommend an approval of the R-7 rezoning followed, 3-0.**

**C. Recommendation regarding the request of T. Mark Barnwell to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Agriculture (GA) a tract of land totaling 5.00 acres located at 516 Brandon Drive, Resaca, Georgia. Parcel (13-209-10-055) (County)**

Mr. Thomas re-entered the chambers. Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested GA rezoning. **Mr. Minor then made a motion to recommend an approval for the GA rezoning based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Mr. Sanford then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the requested GA rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**D. Recommendation regarding the request of Crow Road Holdings to rezone from General Agriculture (GA) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 61.77 acres located on Crow Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-232-01-000) (County)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-2 rezoning. Mr. Minor mentioned the staff recommended limit on no more than sixteen curb cuts along Crow Road and, Chairman

Lidderdale mentioned that the impact on the bike lanes along Crow Road should be easily dealt with. **Mr. DeLay then made a motion to recommend an approval for the R-2 rezoning including the condition that no more than sixteen access points to Crow Road be permitted. Mr. Minor seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the requested R-2 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**E. Recommendation regarding the request of Brookside Holdings, LLC to rezone from General Agriculture (GA) to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) a tract of land totaling 38.83 acres located on Crow Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-232-01-000) (County)**  
Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-2 rezoning. **Mr. Thomas then made a motion to recommend approval for the R-2 rezoning based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Mr. DeLay seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the requested R-2 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**F. Other Business**

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business scheduled, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ethan Calhoun  
Secretary