

WHITE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
WORK SESSION

Monday, July 31st, 2023
6:00 pm

White County Senior Center
1239 Helen Hwy, Cleveland, Ga., 30528

Board members present were Larry Freeman, R.K. Ackerman, Dona K. Burke, Charlie Thomas, Brad Ash, and John Yarbrough. Staff members present were Harry Barton, John Sell, and Mercedes Dodd.

Chairman Thomas called the meeting to order. No changes made to the agenda.

Mr. Barton and Ms. Dodd gave a summary of the following applications:

Application of James Allison to request a variance from Section 802 Lot Width and Size for acreage. Property is located on Taxiway Lane, Cleveland, GA, 30528. Tax map and parcel is 063A-043. Total acreage is 0.19.

Application of James Allison to request a variance for Section 802 Lot Width and Size for acreage. Property is located at 202 Aviation Boulevard, Cleveland, GA, 30528. Tax map and parcel is 062-208C. Total acreage is 0.185.

Application of Mark King to request a variance from Section 14-133(K) for RV Park Square Footage for a total of 435 square feet. Property is located on 66 Timberview Drive, Cleveland, GA, 30528. Lot 142 in Brookside Campground. Tax map and parcel is 004E-142.

Application of Chris Walls to request a variance from Section 601 Access, Section 802 Lot Width and Size for acreage, and Section 804 Building Lines for building within a building setback. Property is located at 107 Runway Circle, Cleveland, GA, 30528. Tax map and parcel is 063A-028. Total acreage is 3.04.

Application of Shaun York to request a variance from Section 601 Access. Property is located on EDS Drive, Cleveland, GA, 30528. Tax map and parcel is 031-108A. Total acreage is 1.98.

Application of James Gregg to request a variance from Section 601 Access. Property is located on Fortner Lane, Cleveland, GA, 30528. Tax map and parcel is 033-046. Total acreage is 1.21.

Request for Preliminary Plat Renewal by Chad Knott for Blue Creek Forest Subdivision on Duncan Bridge Road. Tax map and parcel is 074-053A. Total acreage is 30.24.

Mr. Sell provided a summary of the updates to the proposed amendments to the White County Land Use Ordinance related to provisions for Historic Preservation. Chairman Thomas requested the amendments be added to the Regular Session agenda for August 7th for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation.

Chairman Thomas asked if there was any public comment. Staff advised the Chairman that public comment is not typically part of the Work Session. Chairman Thomas opted to proceed with public comment.

Claudia Brathe of 207 East Underwood Street in Cleveland said she recently moved back to White County and was attracted to the area because of the historic homes on her street. She said she is a preservationist and realtor, explaining that she is not against growth or progress but it should be compatible building and smart growth, adding that it is worth preserving the rural nature and beauty of the county. She said Helen has remained true to its vision and she hopes the same for this rural area.

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Will Wagner of 3998 Slack Trail in Sautee Nacoochee and Chairman of the Historic Preservation Committee said he wanted to thank everyone for the opportunity to put the Historic Preservation Ordinance together and the citizens who gave input. He said there was very little opposition during the public comment process. Mr. Wagner explained it is business forward with intentions to protect the area and support the community while not trying to intrude on private property.

Johnna Tuttle 175 Wilderness End in Clarkesville, GA said she works for the Sautee Nacoochee Cultural Center in environmental stewardship and historic preservation. She said she has never been in a place where people care so much about the land they live on and hears concerns about what could happen with the Sautee Nacoochee valleys and view sheds in historic areas with being so close to Helen. Ms. Tuttle said she is worried about the people wanting to purchase the Hancock property and how it will affect the entire area with what they are planning to do. She urged the Planning Commission to consider the view sheds in already historic areas and passing the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Price Muir of 340 Teresa Drive in Sautee Nacoochee said he lives directly across from the Hancocks. He said he thought the meeting started at 7 o'clock and asked if he was okay to speak, the Planning Commission allowed him to proceed. Mr. Muir explained that when he first purchased his property he was a disruptor and had an impact of community and historic preservation, but has grown to love the area. He expressed concerns of allowing short-term rentals along the Chattahoochee River and said it would be a great disservice to area, adding that agricultural property is so rare.

John Erbele of 1037 Joe Black Road and Historic Preservation Committee member said as a point of clarification that Mr. Muir is against the Hancock short-term rental, he is not against the Historic District Overlay. He explained the importance of the view shed and the need to protect what we have. He said view shed was an uncomfortable concept but the people of Sautee want it unchanged if possible throughout the growth that is coming. He expressed appreciation to the board for all they have done.

Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Burke and seconded by Mr. Ackerman. Motion was unanimous.