

**Auburn Planning Commission
April 8, 2013 – Special Meeting
MINUTES**

The Auburn Planning Commission (PC) met on Monday, April 8, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. in the Development Services Building at 171 North Ross Street.

PRESENT Phil Chansler, Emily Sparrow, Warren McCord, Marcus Marshall, Charles Pick, Matt Rice, Sarah Brown, Mark Yohn, Wayne Bledsoe

STAFF PRESENT Forrest Cotten, Justin Steinmann, Cathy Cooper, Matt Mosley, Jeff Ramsey, Alison Frazier, Rick Davidson,

NEW BUSINESS

Major Street Plan

Ms. Frazier discussed proposed changes to the Major Street Plan. The Commission tabled the request at its March 14, 2013 regular meeting. The changes included in the current proposal included:

- Reclassification of South Yarbrough Farms Boulevard south of Richland Road from a local street to a residential collector.
- Updated configuration of the connection of Watercrest Drive through The Shoppes at Cary Creek development
- Reclassification of Sandstone Lane (from North Dean Road to Bedrock Lane) and Bedrock Lane from local streets to residential collectors.
- Reclassification of Woodfield Drive from a local street to a residential collector.
- Classification of Riley Street as a local commercial and deleted the proposed cul-de-sac.
- Removal of Bridlewood Court from the plan since it is not a major roadway

The removal of Bridlewood Court from the plan was made since the street was not a major roadway. Ms. Frazier explained the major street plan was a planning tool that shows locations of existing streets and proposed layouts within the Planning Jurisdiction, as well as identifying areas where staff desired connectivity. The Alabama State Code provided guidelines for major street plans, and Auburn used the plan in conjunction with Lee-Russell Council of Governments (LRCOG) to work on the area's long-range transportation plan. The plan is also used when developing capital improvement proposals as well as for developing budgets. Ms. Frazier identified several streets that had been constructed after being shown on the plan, including Richland Road, portions of Longleaf Drive, and the extension of East Samford Avenue. Staff particularly looks at potential connectivity when 100 or more lots are planned as well as in mixed-use developments.

Ms. Frazier explained the map was reviewed annually and was a guide, not an actual design. The last major update occurred in February 2012.

Mr. McCord stated that residents of subdivision at times resist connectivity to other properties based on safety concerns. He asked if there was data that showed improved circulation did not pose safety issues.

Mr. Ramsey had never seen any compelling data that showed connectivity causes a neighborhood to be less safe. He acknowledged there were two sides of planning: engineering and political.

Mr. Chansler asked if there were any statutory requirements for the plan.

Mr. Ramsey said the State Code said the plan should be approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. There were no requirements as to what the plan should include.

Ms. Sparrow asked what the City's relationship with LRCOG was.

Ms. Frazier said the City works with them on long-range transportation planning.

Ms. Sparrow asked what authority they have over Auburn's jurisdiction.

Mr. Ramsey said they have funding authority, and improvements and construction cannot happen for a road that is not shown on the plan. They do not have authority over what the City puts in the plan.

Mr. Chansler asked how the City informed owners of adjacent properties that would be affected by roadway changes.

Mr. Ramsey said that was the reason for the map. It gave both developers and private property owners a chance to look at potential roadway developments.

Mr. McCord said the Commission had to make sure the public good is balanced with property rights.

Mr. Chansler wished to discuss the reason the Commission table the request.

Mr. Ramsey explained the connection to Bridlewood was eliminated because it did not meet the requirements for major roadway connection. The issue could be readdressed in the future if conditions warrant.

Mr. Chansler commented that the plan was publically available information that everyone had access to. He thought it was reasonable that the City would analyze elements of the plan after affected property owners brought forth concern.

Mr. Marshall asked if there was a way to give notice that the plan may change.

Mr. Ramsey explained that the map would be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council, and those interested in development typically follow the agendas of both.

Lot Sizes in the Planning Jurisdiction

Mr. Cotten began discussion regarding the disparity in lot size requirements between the planning jurisdiction (one acre) and the City's Rural zoning district (three acres). A number of times, owners have subdivided property in the planning jurisdiction into one acre lots and subsequently annexed the property, thus creating non-conforming lots in terms of size. At the time of the most recent amendment to the annexation policy, the Commission discussed the possibility of requiring a two-year waiting period for properties that were proposed for annexation but recently subdivided. The Commission decided not to require any formal waiting period, but staff began informing the Commission of any subdivision activity for the property. Mr. Cotten noted that CompPlan 2030 addressed the lot size disparity rather directly:

"The City also faces a challenge in designating large areas of the optimal boundary as Rural. Though the designation is important to pursuing a strategy of infill development, it does present challenges. The minimum lot size in Rural is three (3) acres, which differs from the County's minimum lot size of one (1) acre. A study to determine the most effective method for rectifying this disparity to prevent this designation from serving as a disincentive to annexation will be necessary."

Mr. Cotten further discussed the area encompassed by the planning jurisdiction, which included land not only within Lee County, but also both Chambers and Macon Counties. He explained the formulation of the City's optimal boundary, which was the city's potential boundary at the year 2030. CompPlan 2030 places a clear emphasis on infill and redevelopment, and it is a recurring theme throughout the various chapters. This emphasis combined with a future land use plan that purposely reflects rural land use along the city periphery and throughout the "optimal boundary" led staff to recommend that the minimum lot size for properties within the planning jurisdiction and optimal boundary be three (3) acres. This would allow for consistency in rural character on the outer fringe while "disincentivizing" premature and/or "leapfrog" developments that could present themselves at the expense of more appropriate infill

development/redevelopment opportunities. Outside of the optimal boundary, the minimum lot size would remain one acre. This option would require an amendment to the subdivision regulations, but not the annexation policy.

Mr. Chansler asked how this recommendation encouraged infill and redevelopment.

Mr. Cotten said it immediately reduces the development potential of land available in the optimal boundary.

Mr. McCord asked if any city services were provided for lots outside of the optimal boundary.

Mr. Cotten said certain public safety services. City utilities should not be available.

Mr. McCord commented that Auburn's planning jurisdiction was reduced when Opelika annexed property.

Mr. Cotten added that Opelika reduced its planning jurisdiction from five miles to three miles. Auburn's remained five miles.

Commissioners were responsive to the suggested amendment, and Mr. Cotten stated that the proposal would be placed on the Commission's May 9, 2013 agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATION

STAFF COMMUNICATION

ADJOURNMENT - With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

Mark Yohn, Secretary

Emily Sparrow, Chair