

Cherokee County Planning Commission
Public Hearing Minutes
Tuesday, January 8, 2013
7:00 p.m.

Approved March 5, 2013

The Cherokee County Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2013 in Cherokee Hall at the Cherokee County Administration Building. In attendance for the Planning Commission were Chairman Bob Whitaker, members Thais Escondo, Dr. Rick Whiteside, Betty Callahan, Scott Barnes, Garland Stewart, Elizabeth Semler and Tom Hill. Charles Kirby was not in attendance. In attendance for Cherokee County Staff were Jeff Watkins, Director of Planning and Tamala Davis, Planning Technician.

Chairman Bob Whitaker called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m.

Mr. Whitaker took a moment to thank Ms. Semler and Mr. Kirby for their service to the County.

Case #12-12-009 Trevor Barnett requesting to rezone 1.89 acres from R-40 to GC. If rezoned, the property will be utilized for commercial uses. The property owned by Alfred R. Roach, Jr. is located on Hickory Flat Highway and Reece Road in Land Lot 726 of the 2nd District, 2nd Section of Cherokee County, Georgia and indicated as Parcel 253 on Tax Map 02N04.

Jeff Watkins presented the case. Mr. Watkins discussed staff comments, surrounding zoning and land use. Mr. Watkins stated that the applicant did hold a public participation meeting and had four (4) attendees. He noted there were no letters submitted of support or opposition.

Trevor Barnett represented this case. Mr. Barnett stated he is the owner of Nikka Corporation and would like to be allowed to rezone this property to build an office with a small showroom. He stated they are specialty flooring company and are looking for an opportunity to build instead of rent. He stated some of the things they do is carpet, tile, ceramic, and they install industrial coatings, polished concrete and some machinery would be in the building. Mr. Barnett stated they do have their own brand of products and in the future would like to bring these to market.

Mr. Whitaker asked if there was anyone to speak in support of this application. There being none, he asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition.

Mr. Bill Holcombe spoke in opposition. He stated he lives on Reece Road and has lived there for 32 years. Mr. Holcombe stated this is a great place to live and Reece Road is a very narrow street. He stated the properties in this area are residentially zoned and it is a very quiet and peaceful neighborhood. Mr. Holcombe stated his main concern is the increase in traffic on Reece Road, the lighting for the premise being adjacent to residences and noise. He stated he doesn't feel this is compatible with this area and conflicts with the Land Use Plan. He stated he would like to see this request denied and keep this neighborhood residential.

Mr. Bill Sharpe spoke in opposition. Mr. Sharpe stated he and his wife have lived on Reece Road for about 20 years. He stated currently they have 9 acres and are raising their 2 children

there. He stated Reece Road is about 14 feet wide and can barely accommodate 2 cars as it is. He stated this proposed project is not compatible with this area. Mr. Sharpe stated what Mr. Barnett is proposing looks very nice but feels if this zoning is approved to commercial other uses could be possible. He stated he is not against business growth but there are many vacant buildings and lots already zoned General Commercial to meet Mr. Barnett's needs and that are compliant with the current land use plan. Mr. Sharpe stated in conclusion he would like to see this rezone request denied to maintain the current residential zoning and to preserve the country/farm feel environment of Reece Road and the surrounding community.

Ms. Nancy Harper spoke in opposition. Ms. Harper stated her and her husband moved to Hickory Flat two and a half years ago so their children would have solid schools and a better living environment. She stated their house is very close to this property with the corner of their yard approximately 15 feet away. She stated their yard is only 20-30 feet from their front door to Reece Road and this is a great concern for fast moving traffic when their children and their friends are outside. She stated the warehouse operation would create greater noise pollution and air pollution. Ms. Harper stated this would create a commercial property between two schools, one of which their children attend and walk to regularly. She stated industrial lighting would produce a direct impact on their children's bedrooms and a commercial drive opening on Reece Road is not possible. She stated she would like this request to be denied.

Mr. Barnett spoke in rebuttal. He stated he has been a Cobb County resident for most of his life. He stated he and his wife chose to move to Cherokee County with their children for the schools. He stated they agree to not have an entrance off of Reece Road since it is too small. He stated this is a good, fair piece of property and is developable. He stated as far as the concerns with chemical containment, his business would only have a tenth of what Sherman Williams has 2 miles down the road and no more than what someone would have in their garage. He stated he would do what is necessary so the lighting would not impact the neighbors and would maintain the buffers.

Mr. Whitaker closed the public hearing.

Ms. Escondo asked Mr. Barnett where his current business is located. Mr. Barnett stated he works out of his home and they have all the goods shipped to the location.

Ms. Escondo stated there is already properties zoned General Commercial and asked why the applicant would bypass these properties. Mr. Barnett stated from a business standpoint you have to look at cost and this is a convenient location. He stated he doesn't see this property as being developed as residential with it being on a four lane highway.

Mr. Barnes asked Mr. Barnett does he have company trucks. Mr. Barnett stated he has a company truck and 2 company trailers. Mr. Barnes asked what the set hours would be if someone has to pick up equipment or purchase equipment. Mr. Barnett stated they do not have any retail currently that everything for sale is shipped directly from the manufacturers to the

clients. He stated since they don't have a retail facility, this is why they do not have a lot of business in Georgia. He stated most construction workers start at 7 a.m. and hours of operation for retail would be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 or 5 p.m.

Mr. Barnes asked why the applicant did not find an industrial parcel in an industrial park like on Old Hwy 5 near Ball Ground or an industrial park in Canton or Holly Springs. Mr. Barnett stated he chose this location for convenience, visibility and he does not want to have to pay rent.

Mr. Stewart asked Mr. Barnett if he was the manufacturer or distributor of these products. Mr. Barnett stated they do not manufacture they are more like a distributor.

Mr. Whiteside stated he understands why the adjoining property owners would not want a commercial entrance into their neighborhood and when you start deviating away from the land use plan this drastically he feels it is inappropriate. Mr. Whiteside stated using the cost to justify this site is not a reason to rezone this property and there are other existing properties already zoned.

Ms. Escondo asked the Chairman or Commissioners if we have someone that could work with the applicant to find a suitable site. She stated we want to attract business and is sure there is a place to accommodate everything Mr. Barnett wants. Commissioner Nelms stated Misti Martin with the Development Authority.

Ms. Escondo stated this property is still suitable at this time for residential and rezoning this property would create a spot zoning. She stated she agrees with Mr. Whiteside and cannot support this application.

Mr. Hill stated there was a lot of time, effort, energy and resources put into developing the land use plan and the General Commercial zoning does not comply with this.

Mr. Stewart made a motion to deny this rezone application. Seconded by Mr. Barnes. Motion passes unanimously.

The next item was the approval of the November 6, 2012 Minutes. Ms. Callahan made a motion to approve. Seconded by Mr. Whiteside. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Whitaker suggested we defer the election of 2013 Officers and the approval of the 2013 schedule to the work session.

Mr. Whiteside made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Callahan. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

