

The Planning Commission met Monday, February 3rd, 2014 at 5:00 PM at the City Municipal Complex, 161 N. Section Street in the Council Chambers.

Present: Lee Turner, Chairperson; George Roberds, Vice-Chair; Tim Kant; Bob Clark; Dick Charles; Bernie Fogarty; Jennifer Fidler; Hollie MacKellar; Councilmember Diana Brewer; Jonathan Smith, Planning Director; Nancy Milford, Planner; and Emily Boyett, Secretary

Absent: None

Chairman Lee Turner called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and announced the meeting is being recorded. The minutes of the January 6th, 2014 meeting were considered and Dick Charles moved to accept the minutes as written and was 2nd by George Roberds. Motion carried with one abstention by Hollie MacKellar.

Mayor Kant introduced Hollie MacKellar and welcomed her as the newest Planning Commissioner.

IR 14.01 Request of C.P. Achee Builders, LLC for an Informal Review of Point Place Subdivision, Pat Achee. The property is located on the north side of County Road 44 (a.k.a. Twin Beech Road) just west of Battles Road. Jonathan Smith gave the staff report saying the property was originally located in Baldwin County and unzoned. On July 24, 2006, the property was annexed into the City of Fairhope as R-1 Low Density Single Family Residential District. The subject property consists of 4 lots on approximately 5.21 acres. The subdivision has never been developed to date and currently exists with no improved road system, only a gravel private drive, as approved by the Planning Commission. The applicant would like to rezone the property to a PUD. The subject property is surrounded by unzoned property on all but the west side of the property. The west side of the property is bordered by R-1 zoning district property. The applicant would like to propose a plan for a development of very restricted homes that the applicant compares to the 18 lot "Poplar Place" within Sandy Ford and the 10 lot cottage section of "The Waters at Fairhope". The applicant is proposing a PUD and lots 90 feet wide. The goal is to fill a niche of high end smaller lots to accommodate empty nesters. The applicant would like to keep the street narrow and preserve trees. The applicant contends that the benefit to the City would be to improve an abandoned vacant subdivision.

The applicant, Pat Achee, provided a hand-out to the Commission and addressed them saying he has been a builder in Fairhope for 20 years. He stated he has developed several projects like this one. He referenced Sandy Ford's Poplar Place saying those lots are 75' wide with 2200 square foot house minimums. He explained there are lots of people in this area that are looking to scale back from their larger homes and this proposal will meet this niche. Mr. Achee stated there are lots of trees on the property and it is his goal to keep as many as possible although there are several that are diseased. He described a 14 lot subdivision that would keep with the subdivision, Point Clear Court, to the west of the subject property. He is proposing 90' wide lots, a 35' landscaped buffer along Battles Road in addition to the existing 22', and non-traditional drainage. Mr. Achee mentioned the 10 lot "Cottage" section in The Waters subdivision and explained that since 2008 there has been a shift in the type, size, and cost of what people want in a home. He said people want the old Fairhope style house but in a smaller size. He stated he is proposing

2000 to 1800 square foot minimums and aimed at empty nesters and owners with multiple homes. He stated he is looking for a streetscape and to get away from front entry garages. He said these lots are substantially larger than Watershed subdivision which is across the street. He is also proposing to extend the right-of-way to the east to connect with the adjacent property.

Mayor Kant asked what type of drainage is proposed and street width. Mr. Achee responded he is looking at Low Impact Development designs and a 40' ROW with 18' of pavement with a ribbon curb. He added he is proposing pervious concrete and asphalt for the street and to use the landscaping as part of the detention. Mrs. Fidler asked if anything will be done to Coleman Trail and Mr. Achee stated he has no intention of doing anything to it. Mr. Clark questioned the proposed density compared to the existing surroundings and Mr. Achee responded it is the same as the adjacent subdivision but much less than Watershed. Mr. Clark asked why they are proposing a PUD and Mr. Achee explained a PUD allows more flexibility with sizes, setbacks, right-of-way width, and he is used to dealing with a PUD. Mr. Fogarty stated the proposal fits in with the surrounding area and he likes the overall idea of a softer development. Mr. Turner stated he likes the proposal and said it does fit in. He also said he likes the use of a LID detention design. Mr. Charles asked why they want to change what's there and put more lots. Mr. Achee stated the original plan was done in 2007 and obviously it didn't sell so they are trying something different.

Ken Cole of 304 Poplar Place – Mr. Achee built his house and he loves it, but he would like to move closer to Lakewood. He said that many of his friends would love to downsize into smaller, more affordable housing in the Lakewood area. He added he bought his lot on Poplar Place because of the trees.

Mrs. MacKellar stated there are never houses for sale on Poplar Place and if one is listed it does not stay long. Mr. Roberds said he likes the plan and recommended Mr. Achee talk to the neighbors about his proposal. Mrs. Brewer stated she likes the design and is glad to see talk about using a LID. Mrs. MacKellar asked if sidewalks will be installed and Mr. Achee responded yes, sidewalks will be installed. Mr. Roberds asked who the engineer is and Mr. Achee stated he is not certain at this time but he has been looking at Trey Jinright. There were no further comments and Mr. Achee thanked the Commission for their input.


New / Old Business

Sign Ordinance – Mr. Smith suggested selecting a committee to review it prior to bringing it back before the Commission or sending it to the Council. He stated he sent a draft to Chris Gill for comments and he has made additional changes. Mr. Smith said he will e-mail the revised draft to the Commissioners to get their comments.

Comprehensive Plan – Mr. Smith stated the ACE results will be given at the City Council meeting next week and he will set up a meeting in February for the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Planning Operations Update – Mr. Smith stated staff is currently working on several projects primarily for long range planning updates.

Having no further business, George Roberds moved to adjourn and was 2nd by Dick Charles. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was duly adjourned at 5:40 PM.



Lee Turner, Chairman



Emily Boyett, Secretary