

The special called work session of the City Council of the City of Newnan, Georgia was held on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. in the Richard A. Bolin Council Chambers of City Hall with Mayor Keith Brady presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brady called the meeting to order and delivered the invocation.

PRESENT

Mayor Keith Brady: Council members present: Rhodes Shell, George Alexander; Cynthia E. Jenkins, Ray DuBose, Paul Guillaume and Dustin Koritko. Also present: City Manager, Cleatus Phillips; Assistant City Manager, Hasco Craver; City Clerk, Megan Shea and City Attorney, Brad Sears.

PUBLIC HEARING (CONT)- ANNEXATION REQUEST, ANNEX2021-01 BY POPLAR 20-20, LLC, 42.20 + ACRES ON POPLAR RD.

Tracy Dunnavant, Planning Director stated that the packet included information requested at the previous meeting including a map showing approved projects and reports from the Fire Dept. and Police Dept.

Applicant:

Candace Boothby from the Newnan-Coweta Chamber began the presentation discussing how this project came about. She explained there was a meeting 3 ½ years ago with a group of community leaders to discuss how to attract high paying jobs. This is a high-end office development that will bring high paying jobs. She then introduced Hal Berry.

Hal Berry, Chairman of Berry Companies. Mr. Berry gave background information on himself and other projects that he has worked on over the years. He's been involved in primarily office development in Atlanta since the 1960's and he convinced Georgia Pacific Company to relocate from Portland, Oregon to Atlanta.

Mr. Berry explained that with all the changes happening nationally, there will be another suburban surge and it won't all go North. His group listened to the comments from the last public meeting and the hesitation with all rentals. They have decided to change the rentals to for sale townhomes, all 110. Phase One is a multi-generational, high-density, urban, walkable community. He thanked all the people who have been supportive of the project so far.

Opposition:

Dave Powell, lives off Poplar Rd. He conducted research that shows that large, high-density developments lead to an increase in crime, particularly violent crime and lowers

property values. The congestion on Poplar is already bad and should be addressed before a project like this is considered.

Melissa Barronton commented that she does love Avalon but the world is different post covid and more people are working remote. Can we attract companies to fill the office spaces? Infrastructure is also something to consider, the impact on police, fire and schools and with other apartments going up in the area.

Cindy Pursley, lives at 71 Brown Ridge Dr. She used to work in Sandy Springs and thinks if Poplar Rd is not widened the congestion will get worse. A lot of people moved here for the charm of the area. Will this development hurt downtown? She also commented that Columbia Woods was supposed to be owner townhomes and then a rental company bought and now it's a rental community. Bullsboro at rush hour is terrible. This development needs to be smaller.

Frankie Hardin, lives at 21 Pine Lake Dr. She drives to Sandy Springs every few months and the traffic is terrible and that is what will be brought here with this development. This will have a fundamental change to downtown. She stated we are losing green space faster than we replant trees. She explained that she loves our rural community and a sterile development like this will degrade our downtown.

Jennifer Petrino, 26 Piedmont Dr. She expressed concern about the density of this project. This will not keep with the rural character of Newnan and the City of Homes. She explained she is concerned about the impact on fire, police and schools. The police department would need 4 new officers and cars for those officers. Fire department said response times would lengthen and that is a concern. Traffic is a concern. She stated this will set a precedent, what will happen on the other side of the interstate? Do we want to be urban, like the North side of Atlanta?

Anne Sherhardt, 21 Piedmont Dr. She wanted to urge Council to reject or request a downsized scale of this development. She stated that the City's Comprehensive Plan says "maintain its' level of services while continuing to grow", how can that happen with this project? The County approved a development across the street at Yeager and Poplar that includes a large medical facility, office buildings and a hotel. That would leave this area with 6-8 office buildings and more and more people working from home. In 2019 TSPLOST was voted down and that restricts the ways we can address the congestion.

Tim Ross, lives in Stonebridge subdivision. He wanted to reiterate things that had already been discussed as concerns. He stated that at his most recent HOA meeting there were 15 people who disliked this project. He commented that he chose a rural setting to live in and does not want to live near a large city.

Q & A

Councilman DuBose asked about traffic and infrastructure, particularly the entrance and exit to the development being so close to I-85. City Engineer, Michael Klahr explained that

the developer did an extensive traffic study that went to the City and GDOT and it also went through Three Rivers and the Atlanta Regional Commission. He stated he does not disagree with any points in the study. Traffic Engineer for the project, Brian West with Kimley, Horn & Associates walked through the details of how the traffic study was conducted. There were 9 intersections identified that would be impacted by this development and needed to be studied. Some of the traffic improvements that are proposed need to be made with or without this development. The office space accounts for about 40% of the traffic and this is the perfect location for class A office space.

Councilman Guillaume asked Mr. West to explain further how the traffic counts are done and who does them. Mr. West stated there are physical traffic counts conducted, there are different count stations around the County then a growth rate is added including other developments coming to the area. They don't want to build something that doesn't work.

Councilman Alexander inquired if tax incentives or tax breaks are going to be asked for and Hal Berry stated no but they are looking at infrastructure financing bonds. Councilman Alexander stated that a lot of citizens are against all the apartments, could thought be given to more home ownership? Mr. Berry explained that this development is meant to create a place of employment and with the cost of land more ownership would not work.

Mayor Pro Tem Shell asked about the office building, if they are looking for major tenants now? Mr. Berry explained that it doesn't have to be 100% pre-leased and doesn't have to be one tenant.

Councilman Koritko asked for more details regarding the bonds that Mr. Berry had mentioned. Mr. Berry explained that they are special service bonds. The County development authority would administer the bonds. Mayor Brady clarified how the tax abatement would work and the need for the City, County and School Board to approve. He asked Mr. Berry where they will get the investment to do the vertical (streets, roads, sewer etc.) and what happens if City, County and School Board don't sign off? Mr. Berry explained there will be a gap that will require equity. There would be an escrow of funds from the bond underwriters. There would then be options if the approvals don't go thru such as other sources of capital.

Councilman Koritko asked what the ballpark total cost on the bonds would be? Phase 1 is about \$39 million and Phase 2 is about \$44 million. If the development is not completed, the institutions that buy the bonds are on the hook, not the city or citizens. There was discussion about restricting corporate rentals on the townhomes.

Councilwoman Jenkins discussed concerns of the scale of the project. We are a different community and people love the small-town charm of Newnan. Is there flexibility in the project to only build 4-5 stories and not 8-9? This project has the opportunity to adjust and standards can be set to ensure the small-town feel or it can completely change the future of Newnan.

Mr. Berry stated again that this project is meant to bring higher paying jobs to the area. To do that, you need to create a place of employment and a place to live.

Mayor Brady proposed continuing this discussion into the regular scheduled council meeting at 2:30pm.

Motion by Councilman Guillaume, seconded by Councilman Koritko to continue this item into the regular meeting.

MOTION CARRIED. (7-0)

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 2:16pm.

Megan Shea, City Clerk

Keith Brady, Mayor