

**TOWN OF CENTRAL
PUBLIC HEARING
1067 WEST MAIN STREET - CENTRAL, SC 29630
THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024 – 5:30 pm**

Present: Mayor Andrew Beckner, Council Members S. Paige Bowers, Joe N. Moss, Lynne Chapman, Ken Dill, Curtis Peek, and Robert Griffin; Town Administrator Phillip D. Mishoe; Ed Martin, Karen Martin, Debbie Peek, Jack Queener, Libby Queener, Will Mullinax, Doug Barry, Melissa Carley, Tripp Brooks, Justin Rakey, Evan Smoak, and Town Clerk Susan A. Brewer.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Andrew Beckner.

Ken Dill rendered the invocation.

Mayor said we were here tonight to hear from the public on consideration of Zoning for a number of parcels of land. There were five Parcels under consideration here and the we are considering a plan use development zone for. That was why we are here tonight to hear from the public regarding that effort is there anyone here that would like to share their thoughts with council.

Jack Queener

Jack Queener approach and introduced himself. He said he lived off of Arabian Lane on Eighteen Mile Road and they use Eighteen Mile Road every day. He thanked Council for hearing their concerns about the project before. He said he had sent each Council member an email previously this week and he hoped they would take the opportunity sometime their deliberations to read and consider it. Then he said “let me let me say that a different way I've been involved with Community Development around South Carolina since the 1970s when my county agent first County agent boss and I took pictures of informal dumps on the side roads in new gr County and we took those to the town Council and the County Council established some of the first landfill transfer stations in the state of South Carolina through that work and since that time I've been involved with a lot of different projects and I've seen good Development. I've seen bad development and I've seen everything in between and I would like to give you a boots on the ground report from 18 M Road tonight and I hope each of you have taken time to go to the site of this proposed development see for yourselves kind of a lay of land when I first heard about this um saw the signs on Eighteen Mile Road I came to town hall and I inquired as to what was going on and I found out well everyone to put some houses and some apartments and things like that down there so I go up there and I say where's all this going to take place and I drive up and I drive down Willy Wonka Road I've never been down to the sewer plant before had no reason to go down there so I drive down there and I come back turn around and coming out of Willy Wonka Road I had to wait for 15 vehicles to pass on Eighteen Mile Road before I could pull on to Eighteen Mile Road. I looked at the dash it was 3:44 p.m. on a Thursday afternoon. It wasn't rush hour, it wasn't a Clemson game just an ordinary Thursday afternoon the end of July and oh by the way it was summer break for the students. We don't have the traffic that we had this week so I would say to you that this single entrance to this proposed PUD is problematic single entrance is just 800 ft away from a three-way stop sign which backs up traffic every day you can go over there and sit at that service station and watch for yourself how that traffic backs up but it's a problem and no engineer would design a road that dumps 6,000 traffic units per day on to Eighteen Mile Road just 800 ft and I measured it on the flat yesterday 800t feet from the entrance from that intersection with all of that traffic you might have read somewhere that the town of Clemson and the do spent a lot of money recently at Cherry Road and Old Stone Church

Road to resolve this same problem over there you had a neighborhood in that case only 30 or 40 houses so that's many fewer units than y'all are considering and much less traffic that they had to spend a lot of money to resolve and I don't know how that resolution took place I know we had friends over there who couldn't get in and out of their neighborhood because of the traffic generated by that three-way stop. Well, I mentioned the number of units okay let's look at that 640 number that's in this proposal you and I and everyone else in the room knows that's just a star okay there's another 100 acres right behind this PUD that you're considering and you know a similar proposal is coming from that property sooner rather than later so if you accept this proposal and give them 650 houses on 70 Acres the next proposal will be for 900 houses on 100 acres my question is what are you going to do when the property just up the road is sold and people want to be annexed and want they want the same deal they want 9 something houses per acre and you're contiguous to 70 acres that belonged to Guy Higdon. Pretty soon they're going to want to come in they're going to want their 9 something houses per acre and what you've done is you've set a precedent and you're going to be hard pressed not to follow that precedent going down the road and that's a disaster waiting to happen for Eighteen Mile Road. That's a disaster happen for the Town of Central and those results that disaster starts with the decisions that y'all are considering beginning tonight and considering over the next few days and weeks. I want to read just a line from your own zoning ordinance of section 512 under plan unit development and it says a planned residential development is not intended to encourage greater density of development but rather to encourage Ingenuity resourcefulness and land planning and to ensure the provision of Parks and Recreation land and facilities for use of occupants in order to maintain to obtain a more desirable environment that's the guiding principle in your ordinance that's the that's the goal. That's what your own law says that you should pursue and acting on all of these kinds of proposals and to consider these things so any ordinance you pass is basically going to be a contract between the city and the developer. I'm not here to teach that lesson tonight but that's what I understand from everybody that I've spoken with so everything needs to be clearly enunciated in that ordinance the number of units what those units are going to be used for. Are they going to be single family dwellings? Are they going to be low-income houses? Are they going to be whatever? They call it for these student Apartments 4x4 that rent by the bedroom and if that's the case how many of those? Are they going to be devoted to that? The question the reality is that answer impacts the traffic and all these other considerations because of for student apartment means more cars and more traffic per unit. If you will so I encourage you to not accept vague statements like I'm seeing in the statement of intent and things like, we're going to put another outlet on highway 88 toward Pendleton okay. That's Pie in the Sky that might happen sometime so don't accept a statement that we're going to open up a route through the range to alleviate the traffic impact on Eighteen Mile Road. I can tell you that nobody's going to drive that route around through the Grange to get over there to Chapman Hill Road. It's full potholes right now. I don't know if you've driven down that way lately. I did a little boot on the ground survey over there too. It's all busted up from the construction traffic and I don't know whether it's the Town of Central's or the Town of Clemson's responsibility or the developer's responsibility. Nobody's gone out there and even put a cold patch in the potholes and we want we want to be good neighbors but we want good neighbors and I can say that there's some questions there for me so in saying all that I want to go back to saying don't accept vague statements. In your ordinance and your proposal but set things up and put them in concrete and have the things that are supposed to be paid for by the developers paid for upfront or at a staged point through the process. You know there was something I read that all the open space amenities have to be developed by the time you issue 70% of your um 70% of your certificates of occupancy and so those are the kinds of things that absolutely need to be specified there so I think that. In summary the only people that won't see this project are the people are going to end up with money in their pocket. The people on Eighteen Mile Road don't want it. They don't want the traffic. They don't want the smoke from the debris burning which I mentioned in my letter to you. We were 2 miles exactly straight line from the project that was done on the hill down there

and we smell the smoke for days. We sat on our porch and our eyes burned because they burned all the trees and brush and debris from there and my letter to you says require them to bring a tub grinder in grind all that into mulch and return it to the site. They talk about being environmentally friendly and environmentally sensitive give them the opportunity to do that. I go back to who doesn't want it. The people on Eighteen Mile Road don't want it. The people with kids in the schools don't want it because the classrooms are already full. You can talk to teachers. I've spoken with the guy who wrote the letter from the school board school district and he tells me that they're at Optimum capacity. Anything else coming in is a strain. He refers in that letter to have a Capital Improvements plan and all of this and I said well do you have bonds sold and do you have construction plans and do you have contracts and he said no this is our this is our long range Improvement plan that that we might get funded somewhere down the road and we might do see that's a whole different deal to me than say we can take your students right now and we have capacity in our schools to accommodate them. So, talk to teachers and talk to parents and talk to the people who are on the ground and doing the work so the people traveling the streets of Central right now to get their kids back and forth to school. They don't want this project. Guess what that's going to do to the traffic problem that y'all have over there at the underpass everything's going to be complicated and impacted I highly respect uh your Planning Commission chairman for saying we need a full and comprehensive traffic study on this project before we move forward and I affirm that so somebody's going to whisper in your ear and they're going to say you know this would be good for business in town business in town, is good anybody who's meeting in need has enough rooftops within the range of their business to support their business and they're going strong. I called yesterday get somebody to look at my vehicle and they want to make an appointment in September. I've got a car that's breaking and they want me to wait till September to bring it in to see what they can do for it. Try to book a doctor this week they're booking at the end of September or the 1st of October. So, people are doing okay. You can't even get a plumber. So, the only people again who want this project are the people who is going to make money on it. Somebody's going to say well if the city gets the revenue, you know they're going to begin to see the economies of scale and we're going to be able to lower the taxes in the city because we're going to have more Revenue coming from those people over there. I say to you that that is not worked in community after Community there is no data that that validates that and I'd like you to show me a community that that's happened in everywhere. The taxes go up when you start hiring more policemen and you buy new police cars and you have to replace your garbage trucks sooner because they're running up 18 Mile Road picking up garbage. You know all of those factors come in. Then you're going to say well I guess we got to raise taxes to get that new fire truck or to get that new garbage truck. So, the data is just not there to say that's a big bonus in your tax base is coming from a development like this. So, I would say to you this. The decisions that you're facing right now are not only zoning decisions but they're ethical decisions are you representing the citizens of Central who elected you. Are you representing your neighbors who have been here long-term and who have supported the community and who pay out of town membership at the Rec and supported the businesses on Main Street? Are you going to vote in favor of those people or are you supporting the families with kids in the schools already or are you voting to support somebody who wants to take the money and walk away. It's really that simple. It's this or this. I would encourage you to negotiate something substantially lower than 650 units something. Substantially reduced from nine to three or four or whatever that calculation is per acre and I would encourage you to make your decision based on the big picture and knowing that while Ed Martin, my good friend says his property is going to be pastors for as long as he's around and I respect and affirm that but somewhere down the road you're going to end up with things opportunities and you're going to be challenged to follow the precedents that you set in the next month and I appreciate your time. "He then said he would be happy to respond to any questions. He thanked Council for their time.

Mayor asked if anyone else wanted to speak.

Doug Barry

Doug Barry approached Council. He said he agreed with Mr. Queener. Especially the up-to-date traffic study. As I stated the last time we were here when they did the traffic study the original one for the Lawton Road subdivision. They did it when school was not in session, on a holiday weekend, and the numbers are so out of whack it was ridiculous that they had to do another one. So, we do have to make sure we have a complete comprehensive traffic study done on this. He asked if anyone had been down to Willie Wonka Road. It's the most beautiful Gravel Road around. So how many lanes is it going to be coming out? When they do this and is it going to still be gravel or is it going to be sub straight and asphalt and Medan down the middle at the entrance and as Mr. Queener said. Chapman Hill Road, seriously they finally got the bridge fixed so people could get out and move in. He said he spoke to a gentleman this week who had to put his moving in plans on hold for two months while he waited to get that bridge fixed so he could move into his house. Are we going to look at the same thing with the Youngblood property that's going to get annexed off and sold to for the PUD? Are they going to add sidewalks and street lights? All those things you need in a development that size because I have one that's directly behind me and that's only 100 homes but it's still a cluster development that somebody's going to get hurt. He said he has called probably once a week to either speak to Mr. Cloer or Chief Thompson about things going on in that development. He said he went by there the other day and had the whole road was blocked off chopping up trees in the middle of the road and they looked at me like I was crazy when I told them that was illegal and they couldn't block the road like that. He said that's when he called and left message Chief Thompson that they should move along. He said as far as the plans, he doesn't know all the vocabulary for building but have we seen any drawings or any in depth plans of what they're going to put there Because as we know this was a section that Clemson turned down. They didn't want to Annex that property in the Clemson and it was going to be Hotel Business Center, town houses, and condos. Is that what we're going to have back there or is it going to be retail business too? Have they addressed it? It's the same property that Clemson had turned down and with that being said the public needs to know what's going on. He said he knew they are trying and be as transparent as possible but if the developer is not being transparent with you and laying out exactly what he's doing or she's doing or whoever number of stallions is doing, if these people don't lay it out to you as Mr. Queener said they're pulling the wool over your eyes and we're going to pay for it even more down the road. Go through there on a on a game day weekend. It's bad as 76 or 93 getting into Clemson so you add another 4,000 vehicles and look what you got. He said he understood. He said he had looked at the comprehensive. He said we have got to make sure that the developer is going to pay for that and can't come out of the town and the town end up paying that much more. We just got a new garbage truck. Now we have to get another garbage truck and we have to get a few more police patrol cars now. There's a lot of expense with that many homes in that size development we just got to make sure everybody's looking. He said that's all he had to say and thanked Council.

Mayor asked if anyone else want to share their thoughts.

Tripp Brooks

Tripp Brooks approached Council and he was not there on behalf of the plan commission but as a citizen he did actually have possession of some data that may be of value, just in his current role. He said he wanted to suggest that we take a minute to account for some of the numbers here. He said he was not trying to add to the kind of scare tactic or something like that. He just was really trying to put this in context here. 650 apartment units at 69 occupants per which is the national average right? These aren't all apartments. He said he was just doing this so we can shortcut the math a bit It's about 1100 people current population. He said population for Central

right now is 5375. It's a fair amount for us to break all and I think what I'm what I want to make sure that we have in front of us is less the concern for that number specifically and more the concern for the administrative burden that that will cause for us right. Philip can probably answer this question. I'm not in possession of the numbers exactly but my guess is right now we're administering somewhere between 10 and 30 certificates of occupancy per year in year 2025-2026. We may be looking at a and that's probably one of these things that we need to get in front of so that's one example I think some of the concerns that that Doug brought up regarding the development that we have at Springwood Grove is legitimate. You know there are obligations. I think that the town will need to fill in terms of just maintaining some sense of order and respect for the plans that we' communicated to the developer. We've got to get in front of having the right people in he wants to make sure that folks hear from me the number itself. It's a big number and that's kind of why he wanted to put it in context I think that we certainly are capable of administering the plan and keeping the plan he worried about is more the administration side and the execution side right. He said we can come up with all the plans in the world, we could come up with ordinances. Often it then becomes incumbent on us to fulfill those plans. Enforce those ordinances. Keep people honest. Sometimes we're falling a little short. He thanked Council for their time.

Mayor asked if anyone else would like to share thoughts.

Justin Rakey

Justin Rakey approached Council and stated he was glad Mr. Brooks went ahead. He said he was scribbling his notes out. He was talking to Tripp and thanked him for his comments. He said a couple things he wanted to mention. First of all, he was not envious of the decisions that Council will have to make over the coming weeks and months. He said he was also a member of the Planning Commission but he was there as an independent citizen expressing my comments. He said it's going to be an interesting next couple of weeks. I definitely share many of the concerns that have been escalated about traffic concerns with the current design. Thankfully there's a process for the developer to make improvements based on input that Council, Planning Commission, and the citizens provide and this hearing tonight is a small part of that. So, he was happy for people to be here to express their thoughts and I'm confident that we can make improvements to what's been proposed. Because what's out there right now ain't going to fly. He said second I do want to mention I read an article just the other day in the Charleston posted Courier that mentioned the average income to afford a home in South Carolina has gone up 80% in 6 years to \$110,000 a year people need houses we have a housing crisis right here in South Carolina and the idea that you have to make \$110,000 is it's tough it's tough for a lot of people so we need to make sure that people have a place to live. He said he did want to respond to a comment from Mr. Queener saying that it sounds like and he said Mr. Queener that he may have gotten it wrong but he did disagree that it's okay to say that our businesses downtown are healthy. I think that we have some strong businesses but if they were really healthy one of our most popular restaurants wouldn't have closed just a couple weeks ago and that's a loss for our town so and I personally have been working to try to bring a specific business to downtown Central for about three months and just heard from the business owner a few weeks ago that after they spent a lot of money trying to make this happen but their review said you don't have the population to support this business and this would have fit our character in my opinion. He said he was disappointed to hear that but I say all that to admit that the challenge is there to decide between growth and the protection of our current character and our small-town feeling. He said he would finally say this I'm glad what we're seeing as for proposed development is on the south side of 123. we've had a lot of development on the north side of tracks and I've still got a lot of concerns about further development up there. He said and this case he was excited to see it's not on the north side of the tracks directly. He thanked Council for your service appreciated letting him speak.

Mayor asked if there was anyone else.

With no objections, Mayor Andrew Beckner adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan A. Brewer, CMC
Town Clerk

Approved:09/09