

BENTON PARISH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, October 4, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.
Benton Town Hall
105 Sibley Street
Benton, LA 71006

MEMBERS PRESENT

Martha Reyenga
Steve Vercher
Michael Jorgensen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Bryan Kauffer
Ray Delia

OTHERS PRESENT

Carlotta Askew-Brown
Daniel Besinaiz
Pat Doane
Micha Duffy
Imack Collins
Ryan Estess
Neil Erwin
Al Herring
Cody Goodwin
Josh Jamar
Dan Wolff
Mayor Shelly Horton
James Cody Goodwin

Martha Reyenga, Chairman called the meeting to order.

(A) Carlotta Askew - Brown, MPC Executive Director, called roll and stated a quorum was present.

(B) PUBLIC HEARINGS

Vercher: I make a motion to strike items BP-20-21, BP-21-21, and T-16-21 from the agenda. All three applicants have requested to be postponed.

Askew-Brown: The MPC is requesting to delay BP-20-21 and BP-21-21. We are working diligently with Neil Erwin Law to look at more strict regulations when it comes to enforcement, violations, and fees. I want to delay while we work on that. I have received a request from the applicant to delay T-16-21 as they are working on the lot lines.

Vercher: We will also add a number 9 to preliminary hearings.

Askew-Brown: It will be BP-26-21 for Turtle Creek.

A motion was made to amend the agenda was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

1. BP-18-21 – The application of River Ranch Acres, LLC requesting Final Plat approval for Belmere Unit No. 6, being 24.597 acres more or less, located in Section 4, Township 19 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 3)

Micha Duffy, Coyle Engineering, was present to answer any questions.

Vercher: This is the last phase of Belmere?

Duffy: No, there will be one more.

Reyenga: Are the other five units full?

Duffy: They are not full but they are filling.

Reyenga: You have not received any comments from Cypress Black Bayou District?

Askew-Brown: No. They have been overwhelmed by the activities happening in South Louisiana so they have not been able to respond. I am sure they will have some comments by the time it goes before the Police Jury. Any comments they have will be required to be on the plat.

Reyenga: Any questions from the public?

Herring: I have two questions. Originally when the plat was drawn, it showed two lots behind our house on Bay Ridge Drive. Now, it has been increased to at least three lots and half of another lot. They are trying to jam lots in and get more houses in there, which we feel will affect our property value. The second thing is that ever since the lots have been cleared, we have water that is being pushed onto our lots. Nobody has ever taken care of it. I have requested it through the Police Jury and nothing has happened. There has to be something done to keep that water off of us. It has taken top soil off of our lot.

Vercher: Do you have a master plan, Carlotta?

Askew-Brown: We do not have a master plan. We took over in 2014 so I would have to research the master plan unless Micha has a copy of that.

Duffy: I am sure it has evolved over the years.

Collins: I live in the last house on the street near the lake. There is natural drainage behind my house that makes the back of my lot very muddy. All the runoff from the proposed project will make this situation worse. I want the developer to know that this is a problem.

Duffy: As part of our package, we submitted a preliminary drainage plan. We tried to identify these issues. I will try to go out and visit to see if we can plan for erosion control or other mitigation solutions. I would like to meet with these residents to see the specific issues.

Vercher: We would like to see the original master plan. We do not have full files sometimes so we will have to do some research. We do not want to create any negative effects.

Duffy: We will meet with them. I ask that we table the application until the next meeting.

As there were no further comments from the Board or the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to delay the application was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

5. BP-22-21 – The application of Joshua Jamar requesting Minor Plat approval for a tract of land being 2.558 acres, more or less, located in Section 23, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 3)

James Cody Goodwin was present to answer any questions.

Goodwin: We took this to the Cypress Black Bayou Commission and got approval to place the driveway across the flowage easement.

Reyenga: Any questions from the members?

Erwin: I do not understand about the emergency servitude? What is that and has it ever come up before?

Goodwin: This came about when the Cypress Black Bayou board wanted us to put a driveway out of the Cypress Shores subdivision onto this property. That goes against all the rules and regulations for subdivisions. It was a solution that, if any of this property ever flooded, this emergency access would be a way to get in and out of their home. It is for emergency purposes only.

Erwin: Who polices that it is not being used other than in that emergency situation? Are the record owners agreeable to that?

Goodwin: The record owners are agreeable. As far as policing, it would be complaint-driven by the neighbors.

Erwin: Have you talked to Mr. Eric Hudson, Assistant Parish Engineer?

Askew-Brown: He demanded access come from Vos Road with the supplemental access from Cypress Shores.

Goodwin: To my knowledge, Vos Road has never flooded to that point. Utilities are coming from Vos Road as well.

Jamar: I am the applicant for this application. My in-laws own this property. We do not have a utility servitude but the utilities will be coming from Vos Road.

Vercher: As long as you are coming off Vos with your power and water, what else can we say?

Wolff: I have never seen the area flood. I am getting a bit more flooding since culverts were put in but nothing of concern.

Reyenga: Any comments from the committee? Any comments from the public?

As there were no further comments from the Board or the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to table the application was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

6. BP-23-21 – The application of Citizens Bank & Trust Company of Vivian, LA, Inc. requesting Minor Plat approval for Fairburn Subdivision Unit 6 being 1.308 acres, more or less, located in Section 17, Township 19 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 3)

Micha Duffy, Coyle Engineering, was present to answer any questions.

Duffy: This is splitting the one lot into two lots. The access is staying the same from the previous plat.

Vercher: No longer a bank?

Duffy: Still a bank. A smaller bank.

Vercher: So Lot 1 will still be accessed from Fairburn Avenue?

Askew-Brown: Correct.

Reyenga: Looks like Lot 1 will be left pretty small.

Duffy: We are aware of the intended use and it is plenty of space.

Reyenga: Any comments from the public?

As there were no further comments from the Board or the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to approve the application was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

7. T-4-21 – The application of Ryan Estess requesting a Zoning Amendment to change the zoning classification of a tract of land being 26.706 acres more or less, from R-A (Residential Agriculture) to R-1 (One-Family Residence District) for a proposed residential subdivision located in Sections 29 and 32, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (near intersection of Palmetto Road and Larkin Street). (Town District 5) (Police Jury District 3)

Ryan Estess, Raley and Associates, was present to answer any questions.

Vercher: What has evolved in regards to traffic?

Estess: I have two traffic studies. One with proposed traffic and one was with actual counts. I have submitted both of those and have asked for comments from the Town.

Vercher: In the first traffic study, the majority of traffic went down Larkin Street. On the next traffic study, hardly anybody went down Larkin Street. Your traffic engineer did a trip generation study and forecasted that hardly anybody would use Larkin.

Estess: Correct. Just like how nobody uses Larkin now.

Vercher: That is correct because there is no subdivision. We have talked about it in numerous meetings.

Estess: We have decreased the number of lots. The traffic studies are based on the original number of lots. The only way to mitigate traffic on Larkin Street is to increase the roadway width, which is what the Town and MPC do not want to do. The second way is to use traffic calming measures.

Jorgensen: Have we had any comment from people living on Larkin Street?

Vercher: In the very first meeting, we had quite a few people here upset about it.

Reyenga: I, personally, think this is a safety concern.

Estess: Concerning pedestrian safety, we would be the only street in Benton south of Hwy 162 that has sidewalks.

Vercher: This development does not have a proposed density that is compatible with existing development.

Estess: Are there any other concerns that we can talk about?

Vercher: There is also the water and sewer. Where are we at with that?

Estess: I had no response from the Town engineer.

Mayor Horton: There are sewer concerns with the density they have now. Our treatment plant where this would go is really close to capacity. With the build-out that is proposed, our facility would be at the limit. It becomes very risky. Water is fine. We have determined that the water is fine. The only way to remedy this is to get your permit level raised and that may never happen.

Vercher: So you are looking at the proposed subdivisions that have already been promised sewer service?

Mayor Horton: That is correct. This subdivision added to those ones put the system at the limit.

Estess: We have several options for this. There is an option to apply to connect sewer to Cypress Black Bayou.

Vercher: I come back to the same things over and over being density and traffic.

Jorgensen: What about the houses on Palmetto? What do they have to say about it?

Reyenga: They are not for it.

As there were no further comments from the Board or the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to deny the application based on incompatibility of the proposed density which would overload the existing public streets creating a public safety risk, with proposed street calming measures being impractical, and overload public utilities was made by Vercher and seconded by Reyenga.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried.

Reyenga: Yes

Vercher: Yes

Jorgensen: No

(C) PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

8. BP-25-21 – The application of Elmer Matamoros requesting a Zoning Amendment to change the zoning classification of a tract of land being 0.587 acres more or less, from R-A (Residence-Agriculture District) to R-1 (One-Family Residence District) for a proposed 30' x 60' manufactured home located in Section 5, Township 19 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 3)

Micha Duffy, Coyle Engineering, was present to answer any questions.

Askew-Brown: We have been working with Mr. Matamoros for the past year. He was sold some property improperly so we have been working with him to try and fix it.

Jorgensen: Would you say it is compatible with the development around there?

Askew-Brown: There are mobile homes everywhere around there and this proposed one might be the nicest one.

As there were no further comments from the Board or the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to move the application to public hearing was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

9. BP-26-21 – The application of Micha Duffy, Coyle Engineering requesting Preliminary Plat approval for Turtle Creek Subdivision Unit 3 being 26.935 acres more or less located in Sections 2 and 11, Township 19 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 3)

Micha Duffy, Coyle Engineering, was present to answer any questions.

Vercher: This will go back to the Police Jury, correct?

Askew-Brown: Correct. This was approved by the Police Jury contingent upon DHH and DEQ stipulations in October of 2017. Because it is over two years old, we have to rehear it. I believe the streets are already in and everything is complete so this is more of a formality.

Vercher: So there is no issue with drainage?

Askew-Brown: Correct.

Vercher: When you go before the Police Jury, please look back at that.

As there were no further comments from the Board of the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to move the application to public hearing was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes

- a. A motion to approve the September 13, 2021 was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen.

The motion passed unanimously.

- b. A motion to approve the September 13, 2021 Special Call Meeting was made by Vercher and seconded by Jorgensen

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business

N/A

3. New Business

Vercher: What is the status of our future land use maps?

Askew-Brown: We approved them and now they are being forwarded to the Police Jury and the Town of Benton.

Doane: They will approve them with the corrections that were brought up by this governing body and by the public to this governing body.

4. Adjourn


Martha Reyenga, Chairman