

BENTON PARISH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, March 8, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.

Zoom (Virtual)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Martha Reyenga  
Steve Vercher  
Bryan Kauffer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ray Delia

OTHERS PRESENT

Carlotta Askew-Brown  
Daniel Besinaiz  
James Cody Goodwin  
Jesse Hooker  
Pat Doane  
Neil Erwin

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

1. BP-1-21 – The application of James Cody Goodwin requesting Final Plat approval of Meadows Hills Subdivision being 16.329 acres, more or less, located in Section 14, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 3 & 4)

James Cody Goodwin was present to answer any questions.

Vercher: In the last meeting, you stated these would be site built homes. Could you confirm that?

Goodwin: Yes, these homes will be site built. The client is actually the homebuilder and his plan is to build these homes. They will be brick and mortar homes on slabs.

Reyenga: Any other comments from the audience?

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 Kauffer and seconded by Vercher.

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

2. BP-2-21 – The application of Jesse Hooker requesting a Planning Approval for a temporary use commercial dirt pit operation to be located at 145 Sirman Rd., also being located in Section 14, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, LA. (Police Jury District 4)

Hooker: I am wanting to excavate some dirt to build a pond. It is roughly going to be fifteen acres of my sixty acres. It will be dirt removal that I will sell to help pay for the pond.

Reyenga: Is the remaining land timber or cleared property?

Hooker: It is cleared property ma'am.

Reyenga: The whole sixty?

Hooker: Yes, ma'am. It's just underbrush. It was previously owned by a timber company that cleared the property and I did not replant.

Askew-Brown: I wanted to state that they are planning to start 3/1/21 and the estimated completion date is 9/30/22. Mr. Hooker, are those dates still the same?

Hooker: I suspect that it will take that long.

Reyenga: In other words, you are going to be selling the dirt where you are going to construct the pond. You are not just going to construct the pond all at one time. You are going to remove the dirt as it sells.

Hooker: Yes, ma'am. The elevation needs to be cut down in order to build the pond.

Reyenga: So this will be a lengthy process with truck traffic on Sirman Road.

Hooker: I am thinking one year.

Vercher: Are you working with Butch Ford on egress out of there? As well as traffic control, layout of the pond, and dirt in the road?

Hooker: Yes, I am going to be working with Butch. I am working with the engineers and the state engineers as well.

Vercher: Can you tell us what you have to do? Do you have your permits?

Hooker: I am actually applying for the permits now to continue on. This step is the first of many steps before we can break down and start digging.

Reyenga: Well the biggest problem I have are the dump trucks coming in and out on that road. There are some new homes built on the right.

Hooker: There are not any new homes on the right side of that road.

Reyenga: Carlotta, did any of the people who live out here have any complaints?

Askew-Brown: We did not receive any calls about this case. On Friday, we met with Butch and Eric and they brought up some of the information that Mr. Hooker was stating. The state usually looks at ponds that are over five acres. He will have to come to an agreement with the Police Jury about maintenance to the road. They will also have to do a drainage impact study. All of that will have to be done before he starts.

Reyenga: Nobody on Peterson has complained?

Hooker: No ma'am.

Reyenga: I do not think we will start hearing complaints until dump trucks start coming in and out. Sometimes it is hard to appease everyone. Any other comments from the members?

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

A motion to approve the application with the condition that the project receive all proper Parish and State permitting approvals was made by Vercher and seconded by Kauffer.

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

(C) PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

N/A

REGULAR MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes

- a. A motion to approve the February 1, 2021 minutes was made by Vercher and seconded by Kauffer.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business

- a. Amend 2021 Meeting Dates and Deadlines

Askew-Brown: Independence Day is observed on July 5 and the Municipal Complex will be closed. We will need to change the meeting date to July 12, the second Monday in July.

Reyenga: Is that the only change?

Askew-Brown: Yes.

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

A motion to approve the amended 2021 Meeting Dates and Deadlines was made by Vercher and seconded by Kauffer.

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

3. New Business

- a. Review and Discuss the Draft Benton – Parish Future Land Use Maps/Basic Plans

Askew-Brown: Last month, we mailed out a package that had maps in them. Did everyone receive those? I have Pat and Neil here to show where we are so far.

Doane: Before we go into any kind of public meeting, we want to be sure that we add any changes that you want to see in these maps. You have two sets. One is for the Town of Benton and the other is for the unincorporated five-mile area. As you know, this is your framework and outline for future zoning so a lot of this map is going to be very similar to your current zoning districts. Looking to future development, we know there are going to be some area that you think should be eligible for rezoning if a property owner suggests it. Those are the main places that we hope to identify on these maps. The zoning is regulatory and the future land use is just a guiding concept.

If you could look at Page 3 of the text document, you will see a chart that shows how the zoning relates to each future land use classification. We will be adding two additional zoning districts in here so the main changes are going to be in your R-U rural district and the R-E residential estates zoning district that you have Carlotta working on now. It is going to be a lower density residential. If you skip down to the Mixed Use Corridor, this follows what the Parish put out a few years ago. In this district, it will require a new set of zoning regulation that allows any of those four types of zoning (the residential or the low intensity commercial). The others are pretty self-explanatory.

The way this works is that if somebody were to come in and ask for rezoning from a rural district in the future land use map and they wanted to put in a high density residential district, it would require that you change the future land use map. So we want to prevent anything

like that before we approve the future land use map. You have also seen in that text document that was sent to you in the map that there will be a pretty lengthy approval process for this. In addition to meeting with the public, we have to have official public hearings and then do some other things with the state. This final product will be recorded and sent to the Secretary of State. We do have some guidelines we need to follow but before we start that, we want to be sure that we have everything in here that you are interested in seeing. I am looking forward to seeing what you recommend.

The floodplain map that you can overlay onto the future land use map helps to illustrate what land is eligible for development. There is some land that would be very difficult to develop. You can see some yellow at the bottom of the MPC future land use development that stretches across the flood plain. You will see several spots like that. In some areas, you may find that the future land use is not the same as the current zoning. We can address that. Down the road, zoning will eventually become closer to this future land use plan.

Reyenga: What color designates the flood areas?

Doane: There is a legend there that shows the designations. We are only showing the 500-year flood plains and the AE zone. It is the blue and grey colors.

Vercher: What are churches classified as?

Askew-Brown: Usually they are permitted in all designations.

Doane: I did find a few churches that are in commercial and residential zones. I had to study the zoning code to create this. I found that there are a few inconsistencies in the commercial zoning designations. It is to be anticipated in an old code like this that you will need to edit the code as we move forwards.

Askew-Brown: Bigger churches may require a different zoning code because of the traffic they bring.

Doane: We will need to be specific on our edits. We will need to define compatibility buffers that address noise, landscaping, and other things like that. The mixed use zoning is based on village development. We want to be sure that the future development is compatible with the existing neighborhoods.

Reyenga: A few of these businesses were there before developments really started on Kingston Road.

Vercher: There are a lot of things you cannot put next to churches.

Reyenga: Right. We do not want anyone building a strip center or a bar next to a church.

Askew-Brown: This future land use map will definitely help us when we get our zoning cases. If something wants to come in that is adverse to what is existing, then we have the teeth to say that it is not appropriate. It does not fit our land use plan. If everyone could look through this and send edits our way, then we could revise it before public meetings.

Reyenga: This will also help us with concerns like the development at Cottage Hill. I am not against progress but some things are just not a fit.

Vercher: I agree. We have talked about minimum lot size many times before. One of the drawbacks of having a great school district like ours is that it draws more people up here.

Reyenga: Yes. Eventually, people will need to start moving to Plain Dealing.

Vercher: Are we going to have a workshop with the public where they can provide input?

Doane: Yes. We will have several meetings with them. It will be a public hearing where they can address their concerns. There will be three official hearings as well as several informal hearings. I personally feel that all of your eyes are the most important because you see it every day.

Erwin: The idea of just showing flood zones strikes me as being a very useful base. It helps to show how much of the Parish is covered by flood zones.

- b. Consider approval of Patricia A. Doane, Code Author, and Cartographer, Neil Erwin Law, a Limited Liability Company, for legal services associated with the Benton – Parish Future Land Use Maps/Basic Plans for the Benton – Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission and authorize the executive of documents therewith.

Erwin: I think Pat and I will excuse ourselves so that you have the ability to chat about this without us being here. Good to see all of you.

Askew-Brown: Back in November of 2018, we contracted with Neil and Pat. They have requested to finish this out with eight thousand dollars. This will be split between the Town of Benton, Benton MPC, and the Police Jury. The Police Jury will contribute three thousand dollars. The Benton MPC will contribute twenty-five hundred and the Town of Benton will contribute twenty-five hundred. We do not have a budget item oriented to this so it will have to come from the reserve fund.

Reyenga: And we have enough to cover it?

Askew-Brown: Yes.

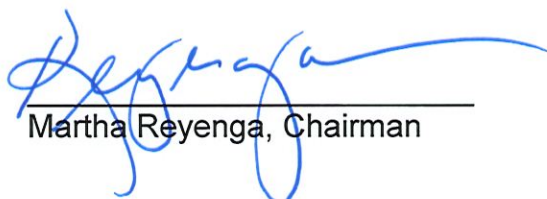
Reyenga: Well, I see that we need to have a motion to utilize the reserve to continue with our land use and future plans.

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

A motion to approve the use of funds for Patricia A. Doane, Code Author, and Cartographer, Neil Erwin Law, a Limited Liability Company, and to authorize the executive of documents therewith was made by Kauffer and seconded by Vercher.

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

#### 4. Adjourn

  
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Martha Reyenga, Chairman