

June 29, 2024

To: Hall County Planning Commission

From: Janet L. Allison

Re: Rezoning application for 29.65+/- acres at 3969 Bolding Road (7/1/2024)

I would like to submit my **opposition to this rezoning as it is currently submitted.**

This is a residential/agricultural area and many have wanted/do want to keep it that way. However, you saw fit to approve a rezoning for a commercial entity right across the road from the subject property in September, 2019. Since 2017, ten new builds have gone up within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from me on Schubert and on Bolding. I'm apparently not the only one who thought (and thinks) this still is a residential/agricultural area.

I'm personally not opposed to a **small** subdivision. Smaller than what is proposed. I haven't been upset by the 10 houses I mentioned above, one of them a former planning commission member. Again, it is a residential area and these 10 represent quite a few acres in this neighborhood. Most are on at least one acre, several on multiple acres.

This proposed subdivision is not small and will abut a much larger subdivision with entrances/exits on Poplar Springs Road – a very busy thoroughfare with both entrances near a curve which is problematic when turning onto Poplar Springs Church Road. Hopefully, there will be no connecting road between these two.

I do not think you believe how busy Sloan Mill, Schubert, and Bolding are. The intersection in front of my house is very busy. Do you know how many walkers, runners, etc., frequent these roads?

## **My opposition:**

- 1) **Density:** 58 single family residences (although 59 and 60 are mentioned within the pages of the rezoning PDF). Which is it?
  - a. Please restrict minimum lot to standards of at least 8,000 sq feet, preferably more.
  - b. 29 (half of the 58) is too much on half the total acreage stated in application.
    - i. In the summary analysis, it reads “a total of 14.9+/- acres of open space...” While that’s great there will be that much open space, it is about half of the total acreage. Too dense.
    - ii. Do we *\*need\** all this housing in Hall County, southern Hall particularly? Or are we lining the pockets of out of town or out of state developers who have no skin in the game here? They make their money and are gone. Most of the new builds are not affordable.
      1. Recently, our county administrator was quoted as saying the average house value in Hall County is around \$400,000. Property taxes are causing many to be forced out.
      2. These are not affordable to the average worker. I rode through a few recent developments in South Hall recently. Many had short, but double-wide driveways and were packed with four vehicles in each. No room for more. I’ve checked rental prices and I’ve checked sale prices. I truly do not know how the average worker affords what is being built. I have young nieces and nephews who cannot afford a house and struggle to pay rent. Good, hard working young people. Need multiple workers residing in the same house to pay the bills. We can’t possibly keep workers when they can’t afford to live here. And the density in all of these developments is outrageous. We don’t want to be another Gwinnett!

2) **Traffic:** Imagine an additional 58 vehicles (that's a conservative minimum) being added daily to Bolding.

- a. We live here. I live at the 3-way stop and have almost been hit at my mailbox by someone running off the road and have almost been hit at the 3-way stop by someone who didn't stop at the stop sign when I was trying to make a left turn onto Schubert. Almost been hit backing out of my driveway by speeders. The shoulder in front of my house has been torn up so many times by drivers running off the road, tearing down one or all of my reflectors multiple times. More traffic = more issues.
- b. The approval of the grading company in the middle of residences in 2019 has already presented challenges. Challenges I anticipated and spoke of in my opposition then. Most of the additional traffic from this new proposal will travel by the grading company, then by my house through the 3-way stop, and onto Highway 53. This is a narrow, two lane road. Try meeting these large vehicles/trailers/equipment on a straightaway, much less in one of these curves. I've had to stop before to let them pass by – they take up much of the roadway. Traveling from the new subdivision to Hwy 53 will include navigating the 90 degree curve approaching the grading company and another curve – with two driveways – just prior to exiting onto Highway 53.
- c. There are people running (sometimes with leashed dogs), walking, and riding bikes every week. Some daily.
- d. There is a young girl who rides her bike, walks, or rides her skateboard on Bolding and Shubert. I love to see children outside instead of constant screen time inside, but this is currently a potential accident waiting to happen. How unfair is it she has to stop doing what she loves just because she doesn't live in a subdivision. She doesn't live on a state highway, either.
- e. We have golf carts driving Schubert and Bolding (far away from the golf course and on County roads, not their s/d streets), not to mention UTVs and ATVs operating on Schubert, Bolding, and Sloan Mill. No helmets and many times small children are aboard. Motorcycles.
- f. How can I forget potholes – or potholes that have been patched, multiple times, especially the last 5 years. I see in the Hall County

Budget for FY2025 that there are only 30 miles of roadways budgeted for the coming fiscal year. That's not a lot in this County. I'd like to know where Bolding is on a repaving list. I will be requesting this information.

- g. I just looked up my vehicle count (NOT buses or big trucks/equipment) in September 2019 between 7:05 and 8:05 a.m. There were 164 vehicles approaching the 3-way stop in front of my house the morning of 9/11/2019. I haven't had a chance to do a recent count during the same time frame. Will need to wait for school starts to compare apples to apples.
  - h. So many vehicles already run the stop signs and speed. Most of them are frequent flyers – and **LIVE** here. A couple of ladies rarely stop – and I'm not even talking a rolling stop, either. They just barrel through like there are no signs there at all.
- 3) **Minimum lot size:** Please restrict to no less than 8,000 sq ft, preferable more. The developers are proposing 5,000. That is too dense.
- a. My adjacent vacant lot is 0.79 acre. Am I going to be allowed to build on it? If I can't, tell me why I can't if all these developers can build on less? If I can build on it, will I be able to build something 1,200-1,500 sq ft of heated living space? That's all I need. Why should I have to build something bigger, if I don't need it?
- 4) **Sidewalks:** Please require sidewalks on both sides of the s/d streets, not just one side.
- 5) **Buildout:** What is the projected timeline?
- a. How long will we be inundated by more big trucks/heavy equipment, cement trucks, asphalt contractors?
    - i. One recent new build had many cement trucks running within minutes of each other all of one day and part of another, utilizing Sloan Mill, Schubert, and Bolding on most of the runs. It was dangerous trying to back out of my driveway as they, too, ran the stop signs and/or sped through the yield sign, almost coming onto my driveway or hitting my mailbox! Also had days of dump trucks running with loads of dirt. That was ONE new build, not a subdivision.
  - b. When will the demolition and grading begin?

- c. School will be starting in early August and the daily vehicle traffic count will not only increase, school buses loaded with children will be on the roads. Does the developer have any idea how many bus stops currently exist between the development and Hwy 53? My bet is they don't know - just like the last applicant didn't know.
- 6) **School enrollment:** Does anyone ever consider how much strain each and every development you approve places on the Hall County School District? Do you discuss with the school district in advance of hearings? I see you get letters from other entities, involving them in the process, but see nothing from HCSD.
- a. Because of school capital outlay funding formulas, the most recent eSPLOST vote and project list, and the explosive and uncontrolled growth that just keeps being forced on us all, HCSD cannot keep up. I'm very aware of this funding formula and these issues. It is a large part of what I did in GCSS for many years, including dealing with the effects on capital outlay budgets, eSPLOST project lists, general fund budgets, and millage rates.
    - i. Hall County (and all the municipalities) do not think it is their problem. It most certainly is. Hall County is approving most everything presented to them and expecting HCSD to work miracles, but then blaming them for increasing the system's millage rate which, in turn, increases Hall County tax bills and, rightly so, angers taxpayers.
- 7) **Conditions:** There are 17 listed. Will compliance be monitored?
- a. Compliance was not and is not monitored nearby (2019 rezoning). That rezoning still has a few unmet conditions – almost five years later.
  - b. Do you have enough staff to monitor compliance? My guess is no – not by a long shot.
    - i. Are conditions being approved on almost every application only to appease residents and taxpayers, knowing that many of them won't be monitored anyway, much less enforced?
  - c. 50 ft planted exterior buffer along perimeter: Definitely should be required. 50 ft natural buffer was required nearby, but was never completed in its entirety and contents can be seen by passing traffic and neighboring properties.

**8) 192-lot s/d on Poplar Springs will abut this subject property:** Please do not allow these two subdivisions' roads to connect!

**9) Existing structures on Tract 1:** When will these be demolished? The old commercial buildings have been an eyesore for years. The current owner has not complied with Hall County ordinances for non-operating vehicles and junk, yet nothing seems to have been done about the non-compliance.

I have talked to so many people in Hall County – young, old, and everything in between. Many, like me, were born and raised in Hall County. Many were not. Most say the same thing: We don't want to be another Gwinnett, or Fulton, etc. If we did, we would live there, not here.

As I talk to people and as I ride around Hall County, I cannot believe how much we have grown in just the last five years. There are developments everywhere! While I know growth is inevitable, THIS growth is out of hand. It is uncontrolled and the infrastructure is not there to handle what we already have, much less every new application that shows up in the planning office.

**This freight train needs to be slowed down.** We submit valid concerns and arguments, yet they never mean anything. If you believe the majority wants this, you would be wrong. I have asked residents/taxpayers to speak out, to show up for meetings, to write letters, etc., but have been told so many times: Why? They do not ... will not... listen to us. They do not care what we think. By the time the first hearing is scheduled, they already know how they will vote and opposing does no good. Hearings are just a formality.

What a sad state of affairs that developers' (with little to no skin in Hall County) wishes and profits are put before the taxpayers of this County.