

Jennifer Rivera (Administration)

From: Beth Garmon (CDI: Planning)
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 10:28 AM
To: Billy Powell (County Commission); Gregg Poole (County Commissioner); Jeff Stowe (County Commission); Kathy Cooper (County Commissioner); Richard Higgins (County Commissioner)
Cc: Zachary Propes (Administration); Casey Ramsey (Administration); Jennifer Rivera (Administration)
Subject: Benefield Road Comments
Attachments: Benefield RD on Agenda for tonight's BOC meeting; Fwd: Thursday's meeting

Good morning, Commissioners.

Please find attached comments from Stephanie Sullards regarding the zoning application for Benefield Road/Edge City Properties.

Jennifer, would you please add these to the application file?

Thank you,
Beth

Beth Garmon

Director of Planning and Zoning
Hall County Community Development and Infrastructure
(office) 770-531-6809
(direct) 770-297-2626
bgarmon@hallcounty.org

All **ZONING, PLAT**, and **BUILDING PERMIT** submittals may be submitted online through [Accela](#). Plat inquiries may be submitted to plats@hallcounty.org. Zoning and general inquiries may be submitted to planning@hallcounty.org.



Jennifer Rivera (Administration)

From: Stephanie Sullards <sdsullards@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 8:34 AM
To: Kristie Turner (Planning)
Cc: Beth Garmon (CDI: Planning)
Subject: Benefield RD on Agenda for tonight's BOC meeting

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Good Morning -

I was informed if I forwarded my concerns to you they would be noted in the records for the agenda item. Thank you for seeing to this.

This is the text from an email sent to Frank Sosebee and CC'd to Kathy Cooper on August 20, 2024.

Good Morning Mr. Sosebee,

I attended the planning and development meeting last night in opposition to the Edge Property development on Benefield RD. I wanted to express my thanks first of all for the work you all put in for our community and Hall County. I left the meeting not quite satisfied however with the assessment that this development should be approved because more affordable housing is needed in this financial climate. You mentioned you lived in the area, so I was curious if you were not familiar with the following developments: Ponderosa Fams, Falls Creek, 2 new unnamed developments on Atlanta Hwy between Oakwood and Spout Springs, Advenir at Flowery Branch, Union Grove, Union Heights, Cambridge at TownCenter, Alma Farms, Crosswind, and Helen Valley (as well as another undetermined name apartment/townhome set in Hoschton).

These communities are all new developments within 6 miles of the Benefield RD proposed development. I believe those are all acceptable options for affordable housing as they range from smaller 300,000 homes to apartments, townhomes, and even rental homes. If they are still not enough additional affordable housing for South Hall County and the area, then it may be that we are attempting to grow this county faster than the infrastructure can carry it. In fact the elementary school that the Benefield RD homes will feed into already had an incredible growth over a summer period. Prior to the summer the school had approximately 400 students registered, and then after the summer the school experienced an approximate 900 student body count! Hwy 211 cannot sustain the traffic at given times of the day, and in fact, we reroute ourselves on local rural roads to avoid traffic issues accessing I-85 at Braselton for both the Chateau Elan and the Braselton/Raceway Exits. My property taxes alone increased from \$4731.77 to \$5,571.60 this year. If my taxes are going to provide infrastructure support, I prefer they support the population already living and working here that don't have adequate roads for the influx of residents or public school buildings to educate the influx of students.

We choose to live in Hall and not Gwinnett for a reason. We choose to live in residential areas for a reason. We will always choose residential. Residential is more desirable, and that is why our community grows because it is calling to those who are attempting to escape the outskirts of Atlanta. But you are dangerously close to extending the outskirts to Hall and then your established residents who have lived here their entire life paying taxes will seek out a new residentially minded county.

The Comprehensive Plan clearly states that the residential area in which we live here should be 2 homes for 1 acre with green space on each lot. I don't understand why you are supporting a development that violates the planning of Hall County. It's clear there is a different motivation involved. Please clarify for us why the comprehensive plan from 2022 is not being followed.

Also, the staff recommended 8,000 sq feet for the lot size, but for some reason you reduced it to 7,000 assuming that small concession of 400 sq ft would be appeasing. We ask you to modify point 3 back to 8,000 sq feet NOT merely 7,000. You and the developer seemed to think 8,000 was not that different from 6600; whereas, we do, and we would gladly accept the 8,000 sq ft concession.

I do appreciate the reduction to 150 homes in the development, but we still ask you to adhere to the Comprehensive Plan and stick to 2 units/acre.

The 28th concession is also expected as the developer said he would be making the advised road changes to Benefield and 53 as advised by the traffic study. We would like the consideration of an improvement to the traffic with a signal at 53 and Benefield to make turning left out of the road possible. It is a D rated intersection with the additional proposed traffic, and I have 2 young drivers I would like to keep safe at that intersection when it is necessary to turn left. Even the owner of the Raceway was in support of this consideration as he knows the difficulty that intersection experiences at peak hours.

The architectural standard for Hall County states the garage should not exceed 40% and 60% of the home's and townhome's facade, yet the planning is allowing an increase to each of an additional 15%. What is the reasoning for allowing this violation of the standard?

With townhomes being denied in nearby development proposals of JM Turk RD and Winder Hwy, and with apartments and townhomes so accessible at Martin RD, Oakwood and in Braselton, we do not accept that they should be included in this development! We do NOT want townhomes here on Benefield RD. NO TOWNHOMES!

Please come sit in my driveway and imagine the construction vehicles, mud, and additional 327 turns across from where you are sitting. Or simply go to the end of your drive and imagine an additional 327 turns at your drive. How does it sit with you?

As I alluded to last night, I am a 50 year resident of Hall County - born and raised here. I remember when the Oakwood exit's McDonalds was constructed and how excited I was for that development. I remember when 211 was nothing but cow pasture and walking on that land and showing horses at the Mountain Stream Saddle Club. I am not opposed to development. I encourage the subdivision across the street. Benefield RD is a beautiful place to live and raise a family. BUT PLEASE put in developments that are NOT against the comprehensive plan. 2 homes per acre is ENOUGH! We don't have to over grow Hall County to be a viable economy. We can put in developments that fit our character and support our community. I'm begging you to please only allow 2 homes per acre and have NO townhomes.

Mr. Sosebee if you represent our district, I would greatly value that you do so according to the comprehensive plan for Hall County. This will not go unnoticed or unheard. We will represent ourselves if you fail to do so.

Thank you for your time,
Stephanie Davis Sullards

4337 Benefield Road
Braselton, GA 20517
770-519-2504

Jennifer Rivera (Administration)

From: Stephanie Sullards <sdsullards@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 8:35 AM
To: Kristie Turner (Planning)
Cc: Beth Garmon (CDI: Planning)
Subject: Fwd: Thursday's meeting

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Here's another email if you could add it as well to the record. Thank you!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Stephanie Sullards <sdsullards@icloud.com>
Subject: Thursday's meeting
Date: December 10, 2024 at 9:27:16 PM EST
To: kcooper@hallcounty.org

Hello Kathy,

I'm reviewing the site plan changes for Benefield RD prior to our meeting Thursday as well as updates to the long term plan. I'm reticent to support the site plan based off updates just recently made in November to a long term plan. I ask the county to uphold the long term plan in place when this site plan was originally proposed. It seems that several of the contingencies set by planning have been altered, and I don't support adjustments made without the consideration of Benefield RD residents.

Additionally, I have not heard from anyone at Hall County about my concerns I detailed in an email to Frank Sosebee months ago. I hope you read the email and have heard my concerns. I will be in attendance on Thursday night. Unfortunately, the developer and county have sufficiently pushed this agenda item out far enough to exclude many of our neighbors who are in opposition as they will not be able to be in attendance. That is disappointing as we were well prepared for the previous meetings.

I hope you will not allow the overcrowded high density housing I'm seeing throughout Jackson and Hall County. Our surrounding area is polluted with box houses that are 10-12 feet apart. Our original long term planning calls for low density housing with 2 houses per acre. Town homes and 3.85 houses an acre does not meet the standard. I hope you will take into consideration the concerns of your hall county constituents over a developer from Duluth.

I don't understand the push for development that pursues so many houses per acre even if it is done so to create a larger green space. Subdivisions like Regency Park with individual green space per lot are far preferred over crammed houses.

My parents, Spencer and Jackie Davis, would be disappointed at the direction this commission is moving. They invested years of their lives, incomes, and community and civil service to Hall County. I hope you hold some degree of connection to our parents and our long standing families to stand firm for the rural residential integrity of Benefield RD.

If you have an understanding that you believe would enlighten me, I would appreciate a conversation.

Thank you for hearing me,
Stephanie Sullards
4337 Benefield RD
Braselton, GA 30517
770-519-2504

Points I'm noting within the comprehensive plan update:

There's a historic home built prior to 1900's listed in the plan. It appears to be on the property in question.

Residential, single family is single family detached houses and manufactured houses on individual lots <5 acres. The existing land use summaries describe lots less than 5 acres, small tracts between 5-20 acres and large tracts 20 acres or more.

Residents and those who work in the Chestnut Mountain/Candler area identified preserving the overall rural character of the area and its proximity to basic services such as schools, groceries or medical access, as two qualities they liked about it, and that they would want to see prioritized in the future.

Specific to the issue of over-development, residents shared there has been too much multifamily housing developed, as well as too much warehousing and manufacturing developed in the last 5-10 years. Similar to the rest of the county, they supported more preservation of farms and woodlands and additional community-serving businesses, including restaurants.

Respondents indicated housing preferences in line with their desire to maintain the rural character of Chestnut Mountain/Candler. The primary house type desired was neighborhoods with open space (75%) followed by houses on large estate lots (62%). Comments also brought up the issue of accessibility to greenspace in this area, and desire for more intention around not just preserving it, but accessing it as well.

RESIDENTS FELT TOO MUCH MULTIFAMILY HAD BEEN DEVELOPED HERE, CHANGING ITS RURAL CHARACTER.

Overview

Suburban Neighborhood, Medium Density - These areas consist of medium-density, single-family housing (attached or detached). They should be located where there is existing water and sewer infrastructure, or where future infrastructure is expected to be located. Future infrastructure may be driven by the *Sewer System Master Plan & Rate Study* or by developers willing to fund access where it isn't already planned. Depending on the character area and what zoning districts they allow, residential densities can be up to 2.5 dwellings per acre or up to 8 units per acre. In some cases, maximum density may be up to the discretion of the BOC.

Appropriate Zoning Districts:

R-TF (limited), R-X, MHP (limited), PRD (limited)

** excludes multi-family development in some character areas*

Planned Residential Development - The proposed residential development should make maximum use of natural features and through proper site planning measures, it should conform to the existing character and development pattern of the surrounding area. Every effort should be made to preserve and protect any existing residential uses from adverse impacts, which might result from a higher density development.