



CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Piper called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Piper and Council Members McCormic, Thrasher, Venable and Crawley

Council Member Lyle arrived late at 6:36 p.m.

Also Present: Sandra Bennett, City Clerk; Jody Campbell, City Attorney and Jerry Weitz, City Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Piper led the Pledge of Allegiance and thanked everyone who has or does serve the armed forces and their families.

PUBLIC HEARING

A motion was made by Councilmember Venable to open the Public Hearing. Councilmember Crawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

1. **V-21-01** Abe Consulting, Inc., applicant, Ellington Farms Development Partners, LLC, property owner, seek a variance from the terms of Chapter 3.06, "Conservation Subdivision Overlay District," Sec. 3.06.003, "Requirements" and Chapter 4.01, Standards, Specifications and Improvements," Sec. 4.01.002 "Curb, Gutter, and Drainage Requirements" of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Statham to waive the requirements for curb and gutter on streets within the proposed Ellington Farms Subdivision (Map/Parcels ST02/020, ST02/021, and ST02/028) (16.696 acres fronting on the south side of Sunset Drive and the northwest and southeast sides of Lillian Way). Current zoning is SR-1, Suburban Residential per the Unified Development Code. Prior zoning under the zoning ordinance governing development at the time was R-1, Single-family Residential District, (Low Density) conservation subdivision overlay district.
2. **V-21-02** Abe Consulting, Inc., applicant, Ellington Farms Development Partners, LLC, property owner, seek a variance from the terms of the Chapter 3.04, "Water Supply Watershed," [Barber Creek] Sections 3.04.003 "Impervious Surface Limitations" and 3.04.004, "Vegetative Buffers," of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Statham (now Article 4 Statham Unified Development Code) to waive the requirements for stream buffers and impervious surface setbacks within the proposed Ellington Farms Subdivision (Map/Parcels ST02/020, ST02/021, and ST02/028) (16.696 acres fronting on the south side of Sunset Drive and the northwest and southeast sides of Lillian Way). Current zoning is

SR-1, Suburban Residential per the Unified Development Code. Prior zoning under the zoning ordinance governing development at the time was R-1, Single-family Residential District, (Low Density) conservation subdivision overlay district.

3. **V-21-03** Abe Consulting, Inc., applicant, Ellington Farms Development Partners, LLC, property owner, seek a variance from the terms of Chapter 3.06, “Conservation Subdivision Overlay District,” Sec. 3.06.003, “Requirements” of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Statham to reduce the open space requirement from 33% to that provided on preliminary plat for the proposed Ellington Farms Subdivision (Map/Parcels ST02/020, ST02/021, and ST02/028) (16.696 acres fronting on the south side of Sunset Drive and the northwest and southeast sides of Lillian Way). Current zoning is SR-1, Suburban Residential per the Unified Development Code. Prior zoning under the zoning ordinance governing development at the time was R-1, Single-family Residential District, (Low Density) conservation subdivision overlay district.

Jerry Weitz, City Planner, stated that the preliminary plat was approved in 2007 by previous administration. The final plat that has been presented to the City would require some changes to bring it up to current standards, curbs and gutter, larger buffers, and open space. Mr. Weitz is recommending the City approve these variances with conditions.

Mr. Abe Abouhamdan, President of Abe Consulting, Inc., presented the plat for Ellington Farms and explained what had been done so far in the development. Streets were completed to standards that the City requires to be accepted, and to go back and add curbs would be not be cost-effective for the development. Ellington Farms does plan to add sidewalks and golf cart paths, which would be done as the lots are developed; any remaining empty lots would have sidewalks added as the subdivision is completed.

The water supply watershed was presented that if the current standards were met, most of the subdivision would be unbuildable. All the requirements the City required in 2007 have been met and approved. Mr. Abouhamdan also stated that the beavers have caused major issues which cause water backup, and that Mr. Mark Jennings (owner of the property) had removed the dams built by the beavers, as has the City street department.

Residents of that area, Rudolf Kraus, Allison and David Strickland, and Adrian and Jacqueline Mellow spoke on the water/rain runoff that runs through this proposed subdivision after many days of rain. They also added that 50 homes would add an average of 100 vehicles to the traffic of Sunset Drive onto Atlanta Highway, and would be a similar problem to that of the Moore Development, which the City had denied their variances.

At 7:26 p.m. Councilmember McCormic made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Councilmember Crawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Beth McIntyre, Director of Piedmont Regional Library System, and Lori Newcomber, the library's project engineer, presented photos and an update to the library remodel. Ms. Newcomber described the change orders that were having to be made due to hidden issues behind sheetrock, mostly being damage caused by a leaking roof. Due to the change orders, the library is asking for additional funding in the FY22 budget.

Mayor Piper asked for a motion to Amend Agenda at the request of the Councilmembers to add the following items: Reducing fines, fees and jail time for minor possession of marijuana; Restructuring and realigning the city's assets and real estate to accommodate the building of a new annex for the city on the adjacent property; and Public Work Department-the hiring of additional personnel.

Councilmember McCormic made the motion to amend the agenda, and add each of the items requested by council members. Councilmember Venable seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Water and Sewer Rates:

Councilmember Venable stated that increasing the 5% annually did not seem to be inline with the annual cost of living rates. Mr. Venable thinks this should be looked at more when we have an increase of our water purchase and not just an annual increase. Councilmember Crawley and Lyle agreed with Councilmember Venable's view.

2. Ethics Committee:

It was discussed that according to our Charter there are to be three members of this committee. The Mayor selects a member, the Council selects a member, and those two selected members select the final member. Councilmember Crawley asked that Debi Kraus be considered. Joan Hammonds was mentioned as a member as well. The members of this, and all committees, are required to be residents of the City of Statham.

3. Tree & Beautification Committee:

Councilmember Venable explained that he had stepped down from being the Chairperson of this committee and the Council Member McCormic was now the Chairperson. There are to be seven members on this committee.

4. O-21-01 Trees and Tree Care Standards Ordinance:

This is the first reading to create terms of office for the Tree Committee (two years limit); to have an effective date; to correct section numbering to integrate with the exiting Code of Ordinances, and for other purposes.

5. Crosswalks, Sidewalks and Striping Repair and Maintenance:

Councilmember Venable discussed the need for the repair and maintenance of crosswalks, and would like to see added flashing solar stop signs and crosswalks lights. Mr. Venable had requested from the Police Department areas that are in need of maintenance or repair. Some mentioned areas were Broad Street, Price Street and Railroad Street. Atlanta Highway also needs crosswalks, however, since that is Highway 211, GDOT would need to be brought into the discussion.

6. Possession of Marijuana Charge (added agenda item):

Councilmember McCormic asked that the City consider reducing fines, fees and jail time for minor possession of marijuana so that the police department could focus on other issues. Council Member Venable is against this and Councilmember Lyle added to leave the law as-is and let the police department continue doing the great job that they are doing. Chief Underwood was asked to give his recommendation on this by Councilmember McCormic. Underwood is not for this at all, and stated that Statham has some major drug issues within our city limits that needs attention. The Chief also stated that a K-9 unit would be an added benefit to help curb this issue, and was to be discussed later in the meeting.

7. City Annex (added agenda item):

Councilmember McCormic asked the City move forward with bids to build the adjacent building to current City Hall that was planned with the previous administration. There was discussion of having a City-owned property for the police department so the City would not be paying \$1,600 a month in rent. Councilmember Venable added the City needs to look at property we own but is not using nor planning on to use, and stated that property the City is not using needs to be sold.

8. Public Works Department Additional Personnel (added agenda item):

Councilmember Crawley asked about the two additional personnel that were budgeted for the Public Works Department. She added that the streets and roads were littered with trash and needed mowing and maintained better. Mayor Piper explained that one was hired but did not work out. He also added that due to possible lower revenue he would hate to hire someone and then have to lay that person off a few months from now.

9. Restoring the Statham Police Department K-9 Unit (added agenda item):

Councilmember Venable stated that adding a K-9 unit to our Police Department would be an initial \$12,000 investment for a dog. Chief Underwood and Officer Russo, who is a Certificated Dog Handler, talked about the value this addition would be to the department. This dog would be a non-bite K-9 and could help Statham with some of the drug dealing and drug houses going on in the City. This K-9 would also be a great asset to locating lost or missing persons, and because this would be a no-bite K-9, the dog could be used in our elementary and middle schools to help keep drugs from our younger citizens.

CITIZEN INPUT

Rudolf Kraus, Kay and Chris Manning, and Alan Crawley all spoke out against the lowering of fines and jail time of possession of marijuana. Kay Manning talked about the number of illegal drugs going through Statham on a daily basis, and of the number of drugs found here and in surrounding counties. She and others also added that harder drugs are being added to marijuana to get people interested and hooked on other drugs.

MINUTE APPROVAL

1. January 19, 2021 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes

Councilmember Venable made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 19, 2021 Public Hearing and Work Session. Councilmember Crawley seconded. Councilmembers Thrasher and McCormic voted yay. Councilmember Lyle voted nay.

The motion passed 4-1.

ADJOURN

At 9:28 p.m., Councilmember Crawley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Venable seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.