

MAY 11, 1998

WETUMPKA PLANNING BOARD

The Wetumpka Planning Board met on Monday, May 11, 1998, at 6:00 p.m. at the Wetumpka City Hall with the following members present: Mayor Jo Glenn, Chairman Mark Presnell, Lewis Washington, Randy Logan, Greg Golden, Henry Swindall, Betsy Sheldon, and Juanita F. Brand. Others present were Velma Gober, Brenda Grey, Joe Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Bozeman, and numerous other Wetumpka residents.

Paulette Hinkle was absent.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Presnell.

Greg Golden motioned the minutes from April 13, 1998, be approved as sent out. Motion was seconded by Juanita Brand and the Board unanimously agreed.

Next on the agenda was the 1998 Workshops. Chairman Presnell encouraged the Board members to view the brochures and if their schedule allows, attend some of the seminars. They could be very beneficial and informative.

The last item on the agenda was Ronnie Bozeman's rezoning request. Mr. Bozeman stated that he would like to get his property on Wilson Street rezoned from R-1 to B-2. Mr. Bozeman stated that he purchased this property about 13 years ago and was told by the previous owner that before the city limits were moved out, it was considered as commercial property. In fact, he stated, the county charged him commercial property taxes for a few years. Several years ago he got a petition of approximately 380 signatures of people who thought the property should be zoned commercial. When he purchased the land it was zoned R-2. He has a letter from the City stating such, but at some point in time he said the City changed it to R-1. He said he is surrounded on three (3) sides by Business Licenses and Hwy 231 faces his lot. He stated he has requested several times before to have it rezoned, but has been turned down each time. This property has never been a part of the subdivision nor has it ever had a structure on it. He stated that the property is an obvious piece of commercial property. He pointed out that even the new zoning map shows business zoning up and down 231, except for his corner, and that is zoned residential. He stated that the people do not want him to build an apartment complex or an office building or a house on the property. They do not want him to build anything on it, but he has an obligation to his family to use this land to the utmost economical value possible.

Mark Presnell clarified that the legal description states the property borders Wilson and Knight Streets. Randy Logan mentioned that Wilson is on Hwy 231 Right-of-Way and is owned by the state but maintained by the City of Wetumpka.

Mr. Shep Gorrie, 21 Brookside Drive, was opposed to the rezoning. His concern was that if the property was rezoned to B-2, what guarantees would they have that he would not put in some other kind of business or sell the property to someone else. Mr. Bozeman assured everyone that he already has financing for this office complex.

Rosemary Weeks, 10 Brookside Drive, spoke against the rezoning because the school bus dispersing children at that intersection.

Watt Jones, Knight Street, was opposed to the rezoning because Mr. Bozeman's lot is the flagship lot and the residents must go by that property to get out of their neighborhood. He stated that even with a traffic light there, they would still have to get in line with commercial traffic, along with the three residential streets that feed into that intersection.

Councilman Lewis Washington asked Mr. Bozeman if some of the names on the petition he spoke of earlier were residents in that area. Mr. Bozeman stated that it was a long time ago and he could not remember the names on the list. He was advised at that time to get a petition, for that might be the best thing to do. So he got business names and residential names to sign the petition. He gave the petition to the city and he did not keep a copy of it.

Betty Blake, 107 Hillside Drive, stated that she now lives alone in that area, but she feels safe. She does not want it to change.

Landon Aldridge, 214 Indian Hills Drive, was opposed to the rezoning. He stated that traffic is already congested there with Smokin' S and the Day Care center, and it needs a traffic light even now. He said there are lots of homes up there and with everyone making U-turns from the restaurants across 231, they have a difficult time getting out. He wants no more traffic since that is their only means of entrance and exit. He stated that their property values would adversely be affected if an office complex went in there.

At this point, Chairman Presnell asked what were some alternatives for this piece of property. What would the people do with the property if it belonged to them. Several said they would build a residence on the lot.

Chick McConnell, 102 Indian Hills Drive, is opposed to the rezoning and stated that he would love to have a house on that lot. He said that is why it is there, for a residential lot and that is

what he would do with it. He stated that all those homeowners chose to live in Wetumpka and with the Planning Board's continued protection, they can still enjoy what Wetumpka has to offer and not have to leave. They chose to make this their home several years ago.

Joe Brown, 16 Brookside Drive, spoke opposing the rezoning. He stated that at times he has to wait as much as ten (10) minutes coming out of that intersection when turning left to go to Montgomery. If zoning changed, it will only add to the traffic problem. He also stated that he would like to see the lot cleaned up and the storefront signs removed. He doesn't think residential lots should be used for advertising.

Chuck Harbin, 117 Hillside, voiced his concern regarding his son getting off the school bus there and the safety factor involved with added traffic.

Ellis Holt, 24 Brookside Drive, stated that this intersection could not take any more traffic and that he does not object to a home being build there.

Carla Caviness, 102 Camelia Drive, stated that she has lived in that area for six (6) years. She was told that a study for a traffic light at that intersection has been ongoing for those six (6) years, so it is not that easy to get a traffic light just because the residents/businessmen want one.

Henry Swindall asked Mr. Bozeman if his property was zoned for business when he purchased it and Mr. Bozeman told him it was zoned R-2. He has a letter from the City stating that the property at time of his purchase was zoned R-2. The Mayor asked if he had a copy of that letter, since they were having a difficult time locating it. Mr. Bozeman stated that he did not have a copy with him.

Lewis Washington said he has heard rumors that a developer is looking into that property and the adjoining houses up the hill on 231. He asked the residents if they would feel the same way if a developer wanted to put in a J. C. Penney mall, etc. The residents said they would have the same response as now and be against it.

Mayor Glenn reiterated that every time she goes to meetings regarding traffic lights, she continues to ask for two lights:

1. intersection of Hwy 170 and Hwy 231
2. intersection of Brookside Drive and Hwy 231

She has had no response in getting a light, and she understands that her predecessors have also tried and have been unsuccessful.

At this point, the residents requested a **NO U-TURN** sign be put up for the restaurant patrons, but Mayor Glenn stated that Hwy 231

is state owned and the City cannot post any signs there.

Chairman Presnell stated that since this affects so many people, he would like to discuss this matter with the Board members and the city attorney before voting. He explained that the Planning Board makes recommendations to the City Council, and they agree or disagree with that recommendation. The city attorney was ill and could not attend this meeting.

Greg Golden motioned to deny the rezoning request. Betsy Sheldon second the motion. All other Board members voted unanimously in favor of the motion to deny, except Lewis Washington, who abstained. He stated he was unclear about the Hwy 231 right-of-way.

Being no further business to come before the Board, upon motion by Mayor Glenn, the Board adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Grey, Secretary