



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

December 17, 2024

TIME: 3:00 PM

I. WELCOME - Some items at this meeting will have a designated public hearing (noted below). Individuals are limited to one 5-minute comment period per public hearing.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The City of Opelika Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting December 17, 2024 in the Meeting Chambers, located at the Opelika Municipal Court. Certified letters have been mailed to all adjacent property owners for related issues.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Lucinda Cannon, Mayor Gary Fuller, Councilman George Allen, Dr. Arturo Menefee, Mrs. Leigh Whatley, Mr. Jay Walters, Mr. Sheldon Whittelsey, and Mr. John Sweatman.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Michael Hilyer.

STAFF PRESENT: Mr. Matt Mosley, Planning Director
Mr. Martin Ogren, Assistant Planning Director
Mrs. Rachel Dennis, Planner
Mrs. Claire Barber, Planning and Zoning Technician
Mr. Scott Parker, City Engineer
Mr. Guy Gunter, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Lucinda Cannon called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Chair Cannon thanked Claire Barber for her work with the Planning Department.

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes November 19, 2024

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Director John Sweatman
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

III. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS PC CASES

Mr. Mosley stated that there are no updates on previous cases.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Master Plan Revisions, Major Amendment and PLAT (Preliminary) - Public Hearing**

1. Major amendment to the Knollwood PUD Master Plan, accessed at 820 Crawford Road, Matthew Richardson, authorized representative of ASH-Evermore Homes of AL, LLC, The amendment decreases lot widths of Lots 2 to 11 from 60' to 55' to add one lot. Lot 44 (9150 sf) is changed from a single family lot to an open space amenity lot.

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the Major Amendment to the Knollwood PUD Master Plan, accessed at 820 Crawford Road. He stated that the applicant has withdrawn the request for the 5x50 property strip on the north property line. He stated that because of this, staff has changed its recommendation to the Planning Commission to send a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Knollwood PUD master plan subject to the following conditions:

1. **All utilities shall be underground.**
2. **Sidewalks required on both sides of the street.**
3. **Label/show a PUD residential buffer on master plan and plat as required from the buffer options provided in Section IX Landscape Regulations including the staff recommended buffer between the Waterford PUD zoning district and the Knollwood subdivision.**
4. **Label/show the 25 foot landscape buffer along the rear lot lines of lots adjacent to Crawford Road along Lots 1-15 and 49-50 on master plan and plat. The buffer planted must be an adequate size to provide a near impervious visual buffer in three years.**
5. **To be consistent with the adjacent Village at Waterford PUD zoning requirements the developer should add street trees. Specifically, one tree per two lots planted on private property.**
6. **Add a note on plat and master plan providing the minimum lot size (7,855 sf), lot width (55'), and minimum setbacks (20'F, 5'S, 25'R, 15'SS). The 55' minimum width is defined as minimum unless the lot is located on a cul-de-sac that prevents the 55' minimum width.**
7. **Revise the master plan exhibit to show the landscape requirements and existing sanitary sewer easement running along the east line of said property.**
8. **Remove the 5x50 property strip on the north property line and connect the proposed Jansen Avenue right-of-way in the Knollwood subdivision with the existing Jansen Avenue right-of-way in the Waterford subdivision.**

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

Queetta Boyd Malone, 849 Lismore Drive, asked if her property would be affected by this or if it was just the new lots?

Mr. Mosley stated that it would be reducing some of the lots along Crawford Road on their property, and it would not affect the size of your lot in any way.

Bill Jay, 713 Crawford Road, asked what kind of barrier will be along Crawford Road? He stated that the backs of the houses are facing Crawford Road. He asked if there will be a red

light and stated that the traffic gets bad there.

Mr. Parker stated that ALDOT will probably require turn lanes for this access to help with traffic. He stated that the access is not centered in this development because of the hill and to keep sight distance from that hill.

Matt Richardson, authorized applicant, stated that there will be a double row buffer of evergreens along Crawford Road and at the rear of the property. He stated that as of right now they don't have plans for a fence in addition to the evergreens, but that it could be a potential in the future. He stated that the additional open space lot addresses multiple concerns such as where to put the cluster mailbox units and an amenity space. He stated that they are committed to sticking with the requirements from previous approvals.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to send a positive recommendation for the major amendment to the Knollwood PUD Master Plan to City Council with staff recommendations

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Director John Sweatman

SECONDER: Mayor Gary Fuller

DISCUSSION: Chair Cannon asked if there will be an HOA?

Matt Richardson stated they will have an HOA which will be responsible for upkeep of the passive open space areas.

Chair Cannon stated that the new lots are 55 feet and won't match the lots across the street.

Matt Richardson stated yes, the new lots are 55 feet and the ones across the street are 60 feet.

Mr. Mosley stated that all the lots are above 8,000 square feet which is above the minimum for this PUD.

AYES: Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

2. Knollwood SD, 49 lots, accessed at 820 Crawford Road, Matthew Richardson, authorized representative of ASH-Evermore Homes of AL, LLC, preliminary approval

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the Knollwood Subdivision accessed at 820 Crawford Road. He stated that the applicant has withdrawn the request for the 5x50 property strip on the north property line. He stated that because of this, staff has changed its recommendation to the Planning Commission to a recommendation for preliminary plat approval subject to the following:

1. **The City Council approve the amendment to the Knollwood PUD master plan.**
2. **The Jansen Avenue right-of-way connection at the north property line is required before final plat approval is submitted.**
3. **Add the name and address of the owner/developer on final plat.**

- 4. Show the existing dwellings on the property.**
- 5. Add a note stating the existing dwellings will be removed prior to final plat approval.**
- 6. Install underground utilities.**
- 7. Install sidewalks on both sides of the streets.**
- 8. Locate the existing sanitary sewer easement along the east line of said property.**
- 9. Approve the proposed minimum building setbacks on plat: 20 feet front yard, 5 feet side yard, 25 feet rear yard, and 15 feet side on street (corner lots). Add the 55-foot minimum lot width on the final plat.**
- 10. On final plat add a note providing the minimum building setbacks and lot width.**
- 11. Install a residential buffer along the perimeter property line of the PUD property as required from the buffer options as provided in Section IX Landscape Regulations. The buffer option selected must be shown on the site plan when a building permit is requested for approval.**
- 12. Preserve the 25 foot natural buffer along the rear lot lines of those lots that border Crawford Road, where a 25 natural buffer does not exist, add a 6 foot privacy fence and plantings to meet the equivalent of the 25 foot natural buffer. If a fence is proposed, then fence must be installed between the 25 foot buffer and residential home. Buffer must be shown on the site plan when building permit is requested.**
- 13. On final plat add a note detailing ownership and maintenance of all detention and open space, the Knollwood Subdivision HOA is owner of Lots 48 and 49 as shown on the Knollwood subdivision plat. Lots 48 and 49 are reserved as stormwater detention for the subdivision and open space for the Knollwood property owners. The Knollwood HOA is responsible for the maintenance of all detention/open space on Lots 48 and 49.**

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services. He stated that the applicant will be required to submit a site construction and grading plan for the drainage, utility, post construction detention, and roadway installation to the Engineering and Public Works Departments. Once this approval and all other utility approvals have been met, a Land Disturbance Permit will be issued in concurrence with any applicable State and Federal Permits.

Construction of infrastructure and utilities will be monitored by the Opelika Engineering Department.

The developer will be required to connect the new subdivision to Jansen Avenue (not Arlee as shown) to the north.

The access and turn lane requirements to connect to Crawford Road will be under the jurisdiction of Alabama Department of Transportation.

The Engineering Department has no other comments or concerns with this proposed Preliminary Plat.

He stated that Water is available from the south side of Crawford Road (ALDOT Permit Required) and from the existing development on Arlee Ave. Connections at both locations will

be required.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

Willie Joyner, 759 Lismore Drive, asked about the letter he received regarding this item.

Mr. Mosley stated that under state law, anytime someone comes in with a new subdivision plan or a new zoning change, we are required to send a letter out to adjoining property owners. He stated that what they are requesting is to change one of the home lots into an open space lot and then slightly decrease the width of some of the lots from 60 feet wide to 55 feet wide which would allow them to keep the same number of home lots. He stated that this will not affect the size or area of your property.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to grant preliminary plat approval with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Arturo Menefee
SECONDER:	Jay Walters
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

B. TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE - Public Hearing

3. A public hearing to consider a recommendation to the City Council on proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance: Section 5.1 B. Amendment Procedures Definitions; Section 8.17 C. Conditional Use Procedures.

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance: Section 5.1 B. Amendment Procedures Definitions; Section 8.17 C. Conditional Use Procedures. He stated that staff recommends the Planning Commission send a positive recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to send a positive recommendation for proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to City Council with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Sheldon Whittelsey
SECONDER:	Director John Sweatman
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

C. TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS - Public Hearing

4. A public hearing to consider a proposed text amendments to the Subdivision Regulations: Section 4.3 B. Preliminary Plat Review and Approval Procedure Requirements; Section 4.4 A. Final Plat Approval General and D. Final Plat Requirements

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the proposed text amendments to the Subdivision Regulations: Section 4.3 B. Preliminary Plat Review and Approval Procedure Requirements; Section 4.4 A. Final Plat Approval General and D. Final Plat Requirements. He stated that staff recommends approval of this change to the Opelika Subdivision Regulations.

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to grant proposed text amendments to the Subdivision Regulations approval with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
SECONDER:	Director John Sweatman
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

D. OTHER BUSINESS

5. Consider an amendment to the Planning Commission By-Laws, Article V Agenda

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report for an amendment to the Planning Commission By-Laws, Article V Agenda. He stated that this proposed change to the by-laws would ensure that the by-laws are consistent with the recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Motion to amend the Planning Commission By-Laws, Article V Agenda with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Director John Sweatman
SECONDER:	Arturo Menefee
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

V. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn at 3:30 p.m.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
SECONDER:	Sheldon Whittelsey
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whatley, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller, Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Director Sweatman
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

_____ Lucinda Cannon, Chair

_____ Matt Mosley, Secretary