

Oconee County Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Meeting
March 14, 2018 -- 6:30 p.m.
Oconee Veterans Park

Elected Officials:

Commissioner W.E. “Bubber” Wilkes
Mayor Dave Shearon, City of Watkinsville

Committee Members Present:

Charles Baugh, Charles Hunt, David Jackson, Tommy Malcom, Becky Moore, Ed Perkins, David Wenner, Brian Broderick, Dr. Philip Brown

Committee Members Not Present:

Bob Bishop, Laura Carmichael, Maria Caudill, Kent Chapman, Lisa Douglas, Thomas Evans, Tammy Gilland, Laura Iyer, Sherry Laboon, Dorann Mansberger, Daniel Marks, Andy Pippin, Tom Porter, Michael Ransom, Ryan Rickard, Patricia Sebring, Marcus Wiedower

Oconee County Staff:

Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Kathy Hayes, County Clerk
Gabriel Quintas, Planning & Code Enforcement

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Staff:

Justin Crighton, Eva Kennedy, Jordan Shumaker

Media:

Michael Prochaska, The Oconee Enterprise
Lee Shearer, Athens Banner Herald

The Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

On motion by Chuck Hunt and second by David Jackson, the June 13, 2017 minutes were approved. On motion by David Jackson and second by Chuck Hunt, the September 19, 2017 minutes were approved. On motion by David Jackson and second by Chuck Hunt, the December 6, 2017 minutes were approved. On motion by David Jackson and second by Chuck Hunt, the February 5, 2018 minutes were approved.

Plan Document Review and Discussion:

Justin Crighton presented two suggestions for changes of the Future Development Map.

The first suggestion included “Regional Center” expansion into “Suburban Neighborhood” areas in the vicinity of Mars Hill Road, Jones Road and Long Road. After a discussion, the Committee Members agreed that Mars Hill Road should be the dividing line, which would leave these areas in the “Suburban Neighborhood” category, as these areas are well-established neighborhoods and should not be re-categorized.

The second suggestion included expansion of the “Workforce Center” into “Rural Places” inside an area outlined by Greensboro Highway, Greene Ferry Road, Old Bishop Road and the City Limits of Watkinsville. After a discussion, the Committee Members agreed that there are other areas

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better suited for expanding industrial areas within the county while keeping a close proximity to Watkinsville.

Several citizens from neighborhoods located on Cliff Dawson Road attended the meeting. The property owners voiced concerns regarding the inclusion of properties on Cliff Dawson Road in the “Civic Center” category.

Committee Members continued with a discussion regarding the expansion of “Civic Center” areas on the Future Development Map into properties currently owned by the federal government. The properties in question front on Cliff Dawson Road and Hog Mountain Road (State Highway 53) and also on Hog Mountain Road (State Highway 53) across from the Oconee County High School. The Committee Members agreed that these areas should be returned to “Rural Places.”

Plan Recommendations:

Mr. Crighton briefly reviewed the Plan Recommendations of Committee as follows:

Land Use – Character Areas to be used as primary source of guidance; growth concentrated within established/identified nodes; County/Cities support development within the identified areas on the Future Development Map/Character Area Descriptions; cooperative planning with the Board of Education when locating new schools; incentive programs for developer/non-profits for mixed housing to accommodate senior living; within the “Civic Center” Character Area, smaller lot sizes could be encouraged to diversify housing stock; encourage multi-family residential in denser development; remove R-3 zoning in Suburban Living area; and multi-family housing is more appropriate within municipalities.

Transportation – Designate truck to lessen congestion through city/towns; prioritize safety improvements on major thoroughfares; prioritize building of sidewalk network; safety improvements on roadways to accommodate cyclists; future development of large-scale, multi-use trail/network of trails; strategy to address lack of broadband internet service; and follow the Water & Wastewater Strategic Plan.

Parks, Recreation, Greenspace – Complete Oconee Veterans Park, Phase II, tennis complex; complete Heritage Park, Phase II; completion of the Parks Master Plan to provide guidance of physical space, staffing and programming needs of the community; diversity of scales in parks/open spaces; include underutilized parks spaces in Parks inventory; and multi-use trail network to connect with other trail networks in the county/region.

Eddie Kinnard, Moss Creek Subdivision (Cliff Dawson Road), asked about the time frame that would be needed to include an AgriBusiness designation. Justin Kirouac, County Administrator, stated that the County is reviewing the Unified Development Code and a rewrite of the code is in the future. The AgriBusiness designation could be included at that time.

Remaining Steps:

Mr. Crighton reviewed with the committee that a draft of the plan will be completed and placed on the website. The final Public Forum will be held at the Planning Commission meeting in April. The plan will then be placed on the Board of Commissioners Agenda for the Agenda Setting Meeting on April 24, 2018, with adoption at the Regular Meeting of the Board on May 1, 2018. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will have 30 days to review the plan. After

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approval by the DCA, the County and municipalities will adopt by resolution. Completion date is scheduled for June 30, 2018.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by:
Kathy Hayes, County Clerk
Oconee County Board of Commissioners

DRAFT