

Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting Minutes For the March 22, 2006 Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Linda Jones, Rick Lowe, Sue Francis, Chuck Shaheen, Doug McDowell, Bill Douglas, Bob Hubbard, Chuck Ramsdale, Brad Fink, Jack Steed

Staff Present:

Steve Engle, Jacob Cox, Jesse Fountain, Jessica Swecker, Michael Whipple, Mike Beecham, Patrick Eidson

Chairman Rick Lowe opened the meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and a motion was made to waive a reading of the minutes and to approve. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

Chairman Lowe turned the meeting over to Michael Whipple of the Middle Georgia RDC to cover the City of Perry's presentation on character areas. Mr. Whipple introduced Mike Beecham of the City of Perry. Mr. Beecham presented a power point presentation about the character areas in Perry. These areas included: Downtown District, Historic District, Neighborhood Commercial Corridor, Classic Neighborhoods, New Neighborhoods, Cross-Roads Commercial, Industrial/High-Density Commercial, Park/Openspace/Conservation.

Lengthy discussion then ensued from the committee members about the potential need to describe every character area in the county, what makes an area special, environmental and physical features and the need to preserve the identify of a character area that makes it special - assuming the character area is not in need of improvement.

Following the discussion of character areas, Chairman Lowe transitioned the meeting into a discussion of the March 29th kick off of the public involvement portion of the comprehensive plan at the Vision 20/20 meeting. Steve Engle briefed the group about the power point presentation to be presented to Vision 20/20 on March 29th. Michael Whipple reviewed the agenda for the March 29th comprehensive plan presentation with the committee. Mr. Whipple thanked Mr. Engle for agreeing to return to Warner Robins from his vacation to participate in the March 29th rollout of the comprehensive plan at the Vision 20/20 meeting. All members signified their intent to be in attendance at the meeting.

Possible dates for the first post-kick-off, public input meetings were discussed. Mr. Engle reiterated that these two public input meetings would be held with one occurring in the north end of the county and one at the south end of the county. In further discussions of these first two public involvement meetings, Mr. Engle suggested that a framework related to content and agenda be developed before a date is announced for the community meetings. Committee members agreed and a discussion was brought up about scheduling the meeting for late April or early May. It was suggested to go ahead and pick a date for

the first meeting on Thursday, May 4th. However, Mr. Engle suggested again that a plan be put together and be in place concerning the two public involvement meetings. The May 4th meeting date was tabled and the committee suggested moving the meetings to later in May in order to have time to prepare for the meeting and confirm a venue. It was noted that it is vital to first define specifically what the group wants to obtain from the meeting. Then decide the best possible means to insure that this is accomplished. It was decided that the meeting should be informative in the sense of quickly providing information related to the planning process but then transition to a information gathering input process. Possible information to be garnered could include further identification of issues, opportunities and concerns. This information would potentially validate what the committee and the assessment has already established or possibly reveal further issues not previously addressed. Other needed information to be gained via the public meetings and the best means to get at this information will be discussed in the next general CPC meeting.

Mr. Whipple presented to the committee response cards to be used for public comments from individuals at the public meetings or presentations to civic groups throughout the planning process. Chuck Shaheen commented that the note cards could be brought to the Eggs and Issues breakfast sponsored by the Warner Robins Chamber of Commerce next Thursday. These cards also reference the joint plan website that provides information on the planning process and the means to provide additional public response.

Jim Elliott, City Attorney for the City of Warner Robins, made a short presentation on the “private cities bills” – HB 1323 which has passed into the Georgia Senate. Mr. Elliott said that SB 414, a similar bill, died for a lack of a required 2/3rds vote. Mr. Elliott explained that if this bill should pass and be signed into law and approved by a voter referendum, this legislation would allow developers to issue tax exempt bonds, levy a millage rate and not be subject to service delivery strategy requirements or develop a comprehensive plan. The fact that the plans sponsor was from the Houston County planning area and that the bill is intended to address significant development projects currently underway with in the County emphasizes the relevance of this issue to the committee’s work.

Mr. Shaheen volunteered to give the committee members Senator Ross Tolleson’s cell phone number in order for them to provide comments to the Senator regarding the proposed bill. The phone number is 478-542-0943.

A meeting of the technical advisory committee was called to begin preliminary identification of character areas definitions for consideration by the whole committee.

Before adjourning the meeting, Mr. Whipple announced to the committee that he would be resigning his position with the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center. Mr. Whipple stated that Phil Clark of the RDC would be taking over Mr. Whipple’s position with the committee. Brent Lanford would be in charge of website development and posting information to the committee’s website, but would not be making any corrections

to material sent to him. Mr. Whipple said he would be available for the next few weeks to assist the committee.

Mr. Whipple announced that the next Committee meeting would be scheduled for Wednesday, April 5th at 8:30 AM at Warner Robins City Hall. The agenda items for this meeting will include a recap of the kick-off meeting, a discussion of the housing element, and development of the agenda for the first general public input meeting.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Lowe.

Minutes submitted by Jacob Cox, Community Planner – 542-2117

The Comprehensive Plan website can be accessed and previewed at:
<http://www.mgrdc.org/jointplan>