

The Planning Commission met Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 5:30 PM at the City of Fairhope Public Library at 501 Fairhope Avenue in the Giddens Conference Center.

Present: Lee Turner, Chairperson; George Roberds, Vice-Chair; Tim Kant; Jennifer Fidler; Bob Clark; Bernie Fogarty; Hollie MacKellar; Kevin Boone; Jack Burrell, Rich Mueller, Diana Brewer, Mike Ford, Jonathan Smith, Planning Director; Nancy Milford, Planner; and Emily Boyett, Secretary; Chris Gill, City Attorney

Absent: Jay Robinson

Chairman Lee Turner called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM and announced the meeting is being recorded.

Mr. Tuner stated the meeting is being held at this location due to the Kids Market being held at the Civic Center. He said this process has had the highest turnout and most participation and he thanked the citizens and the City Council.

Mr. Smith addressed the Commission saying this has been an ongoing process for a year and a half. He thanked the citizens, City Council, and Planning Commission for coming together and for making this happen. He introduced Christopher Baker with Thompson Engineering.

Mr. Baker stated more than 2,500 people participated in the public input and that is impressive. He said the process began in October 2014 and now we are here to adopt a new and revised Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fairhope. Mr. Baker explained there have been multiple steps to get us here tonight, including public participation through Town Hall meetings, 21 stake-holder interviews, and citizen surveys. He said the final plan document that is before the Commission tonight is a culmination of all of these steps. Mr. Baker went over the proposed Comprehensive Plan. His presentation included the following sections: Introduction; Analysis of Existing Conditions; Vision, Goals and Objectives; Land Use Plan; Form, Function, and Design; and Implementation. He explained this proposed Comprehensive Plan will help guide the City of Fairhope's growth and be the road map to get from point A to B. Mr. Baker said a roadmap was desired and delivered. He noted additional planning staff and resources will be necessary in the future to carry out the goals and objectives of the plan.

Mr. Turner opened the public hearing.

Dick Schneider of 113 Orange Avenue - He questioned additional staff and how will people be selected to serve on the Task Force that is called for in the plan.

Kenny Crow of 550 Northstation Drive – He stated concerns with traffic and with all the ongoing development why roads have not already been widened.

Bobby Green of 415 Maple Street – He asked how many villages are in place now. He said there is only one and it is Downtown, not Walmart or Publix. He asked why the rest of Fairhope can't grow like Downtown, on its own.

Jeanie McCain of 505 S. Church Street – She stated Faulkner needs more parking and she chose Fairhope because of its beauty. She said she would like to see more areas beautified like Greeno Road has been.

Johnny Channey of 598 Middle Street – He stated drainage is an issue in the black community on Ingleside Street and Young Street. He said storm water is needs to be handled with underground drainage.

Having no one else present to speak, Mr. Turner closed the public hearing.

Mr. Baker address the comments from the public hearing. He said he is not recommending a certain number of additional staff but making the City aware of the needs. He explained the City currently has a process for selecting board or committee members and he feels the same process will be used for the Task Force. He stated the plan calls for roadway improvements and the existing Subdivision Regulations require traffic studies and supports improvements with development and connectivity.

Mr. Baker explained there are currently four villages and each of them are different. He recommended researching an overlay district for Greeno Road to limit commercial and to prevent striping it out. He said the environment of development has changed and outside involvement will be needed.

Mr. Baker stated the team met with Faulkner and parking was discussed. The said there is an agreement between the City and Faulkner regarding parking but the Comprehensive Plan is not that detailed. He said “Way-finding” is supported by the plan and utilization of the City’s parking deck will help with parking.

Mr. Baker said stormwater management is a city-wide issue and the recently adopted Low Impact Development (LID) guidelines will help with overall City drainage.

Mr. Burrell stated we need to keep Downtown the priority. He said the plan’s schedule is aggressive and asked if we need to be growing any faster. Mr. Baker responded Fairhope is desirable and people are going to keep coming. He said this plan will guide staff on how to create the designated villages as the growth comes. Mr. Burrell said he is not in favor of tax abatements to bring development in. Mr. Baker explained he is not saying it is a requirement but asking the City to consider the option and be open to offering incentives to help the villages develop. Mr. Turner asked how we develop the commercial nodes that are outside city limits and Mr. Baker said the City can regulate access and landscaping but not land use. He said the ALDOT 181 Access Plan is very rigid and will help. Mrs. Fidler said the Greeno Road and Publix villages are already over the recommended commercial square footage in the plan. Mr. Baker said the numbers are the same from the 2006 plan and it is not a hard and fast rule. He stated this plan is a guiding document to help approve developments in the appropriate locations. Mayor Kant stated there is a commercial node shown on the map which has been annexed by Daphne. Mr. Baker noted the area and said they will amend the map to reflect the accurate city limits of Daphne. Mayor Kant asked if the City can make developments wait if they are proposed on roads which are already overloaded. Mr. Smith stated the City has a recently updated Traffic Analysis and staff is aware of the problem areas and the Subdivision Regulations require traffic studies for larger developments. Mayor Kant said developers will bring in smaller portions to get around the traffic requirements and Mr. Smith responded staff will stay aware and know that

fewer lots in multiple phases are still more lots and will require new studies. Mayor Kant asked when the meeting regarding Downtown parking will be and Mr. Smith stated Dan Burden will be here on April 7th. Mayor Kant asked about participation for historic preservation and said the City Council is considering an ordinance and Mr. Baker responded it is a volunteer basis. Mr. Roberds said the property along Greeno needs to be addressed and not zoned R-1 Low Density Single Family Residential District and Mr. Baker responded the plan supports higher density in this area and commercial will follow the rooftops. Mrs. Brewer asked how we will show the differences between the 2001, 2006, and this plan. Mr. Baker responded the 70% of the Strategies Matrix goals from the 2006 Plan have been completed. He said there are new goals in the Implementation section and the commercial nodes are new to this plan. Mr. Baker explained a Comprehensive Plan is a steering document, not a regulatory document. Mrs. Brewer said growth is getting ahead of us and it is great to have this tool to direct and guide that growth. Mr. Clark stated he thinks the City has handled growth as well as any city could. He said anything outside city limits is out of our control and he asked how we should handle those areas. Mr. Baker said there are three ways to annex property and the City should consider additional incentives for annexation.

Mr. Turner asked for the City Council's general consensus of the plan. Mr. Mueller said he is in favor of the updated plan. Mrs. Brewer stated she is in support of the plan and she would like to give it teeth and make sure we have the staff for its implementation. Mr. Burrell said he is in support of the plan but wants to make sure it has teeth and wants to see us improve on the existing villages we have. Mr. Boone stated he supports the plan. He said the 2001 plan did not have a long range plan. Mr. Ford said he does not want to see us lose our imagination and as long as we have flexibility he supports it. Tim Kant made a motion to approve the Comprehensive Plan 2015 Update with the following conditions:

1. The maps shall be revised to reflect the current city limits for Fairhope and Daphne.
2. The plan needs "teeth".

Bernie Fogarty 2nd the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

George Roberds made a motion to adjourn and was 2nd by Bernie Fogarty.

Having no further business, the meeting was over at 7:36PM.



Lee Turner, Chairman



Emily Boyett, Secretary