

Alachua County Local Planning Agency/ Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes: April 16, 2025

The Alachua County Planning Commission held a public meeting on April 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held **in person**.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Raymond Walsh, Chair
Melissa Norman, Vice-Chair
Kristen Young
Samuel Mutch
Jancie Vinson
Barry Rutenberg
Gailine McCaslin

COMMISSIONERS NOT PRESENT:

Sarah Rockwell

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Hays, Director, Growth Management
Chris Dawson, Principal Planner, Development Services, Growth Management
Jerry Brewington, Senior Planner, Development Services, Growth Management
Mehdi Benkhatar, Planner, Development Services, Growth Management
Corbin Hanson, Senior Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney Office
Patricia McAllister, Clerk, Development Services, Growth Management
Mark Brown, Program Manager, Environmental Protection Department

1. **Meeting Called to Order:**

Meeting called to order by Chair Walsh at 6:00 p.m.

2.1 **Approval of Agenda:**

Motion was made by *Commissioner Mutch* to **approve** the agenda.

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.

Action: The **agenda** was **approved** with a vote of 6-0 (unanimous vote)

2.2 **Attorney Office Polling For Ex-Parte Communication**

Corbin Hanson polled the planning commissioner for any ex-parte communications:

- 1) *Commissioner Vinson* disclosed a conversation with Evelyn Foxx that Ms. Foxx stated she was in favor of houses being built on the east side of Gainesville.
- 2) *Commissioner Young* a conversation with a citizen that has concerns with flooding in the area of this project.

2.3 **Clerk Swearing In:** Clerk swore in staff, the applicants and members of the public that planned to speak at tonight's meeting

3. **Legislative Item:**

3.1 **Z25-000003: Hawthorne Road Large Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

A request by Clay Sweger of eda consultants, inc., agent, for Gator Country LLC and Bentley Properties Inc., owners, for a large-scale comprehensive plan amendment. The amendment would change the future land use designations from Estate Residential (up to 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres), Low Density Residential (1 to 4 dwelling units/acre) and Commercial to Low Density Residential (1 to 4 dwelling units/acre) and Conservation. The site is approximately 82 acres and is located to the northwest of the SE Hawthorne Rd./Lakeshore Dr. intersection on parcels 16184-000-000, 16185-000-000, 16201-004-000, 16194-001-000, 16194-002-000 and 16194-000-000. This request is associated with the rezoning application Z25-000004 that seeks to rezone these same parcels

Commissioner McCaslin arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Staff Presentation:

Mehdi Benkhatar presented this application.

Clay Sweger, eda, inc., was present, made a presentation and was available for questions.

Krissy Karr introduced herself, spoke briefly and was available for questions.

Motion was made by *Commissioner Rutenberg* to **recommend approval of transmittal** of this application to the state agencies to the Board of County Commissioners.

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Mutch*.

Public Comments: When asked who planned to speak tonight, the following people requested to speak or to yield their allotted time to speakers for the group:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Lisa Holder | (yield my time) |
| 2) Thomas Stewart | (yield my time) |
| 3) Karen McCloud | (yield my time) |
| 4) Susan Stewart | (yield my time) |
| 5) Geneva Forester | (yield my time) |
| 6) David Wilkhom | (yield my time) |
| 7) Paul Pritchard | (yield my time) |
| 8) Sharon Conway | (yield my time) |
| 9) Joy Adams | (yield my time) |
| 10) Mike Adams | (yield my time) |
| 11) Tom Workman | (yield my time) |
| 12) John H Dane, Jr. | wants to speak |
| 13) John Anderson | (yield my time) |
| 14) Terri Haskins | (yield my time) |
| 15) Charles Robertson | (yield my time) |
| 16) Amir Fields | (yield my time) |
| 17) Cliff Robertson | (yield my time) |
| 18) Kim Robertson | (yield my time) |
| 19) Cliff Robertson | (yield my time) |
| 20) Gary Brooks | wants to speak |
| 21) Glenda Lanier | (yield my time) |

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 22) Michael Clare | (yield my time) |
| 23) Ed McCloud | wants to speak |
| 24) Greg Donower | wants to speak |
| 25) Ivy Larson | (yield my time) |
| 26) Dawn Lauren | wants to speak |
| 27) Tom Poveny | (yield my time) |
| 28) Sally Poveny | (yield my time) |
| 29) Shawna Lily White | wants to speak |
| 30) Alexi Huckleys | (yield my time) |
| 31) Dave Willis | wants to speak |
| 32) Kelly McPherson | wants to speak |
| 33) Ed Redstone | wants to speak |
| 34) Nathan Westman | wants to speak |

Members of the group listed above yielded their time to 6 representatives of their group
(21 X 3 minutes each equals 11 minutes per group speaker)

The following speakers presented in opposition of the project:

- 1) Steven Boyes, Professional Geologist
- 2) Kelly McPherson, Arborist
- 3) Dan Smith owns the 91-acre conservation area located adjacent to this property
- 4) Lesa Holder, resident of Magnolia Estates
- 5) Greg DeLong lives close to this property and has an Airbnb
- 6) Gary Brooks

Public Comments: (regular) 3 minutes per person

- 1) *Josh Lanay*, spoke in favor of this application.
- 2) *Sergio Quintano* spoke in favor of the application
- 3) Nathan Westman, spoke in opposition.
- 4) *Ebony Bryant*. Read a statement from Evelyn Fox into the record and is in favor of development.
- 5) *Ed McCloud* lives on Lakeshore Drive, opposed to this development.
- 6) *Eli Redstone*, Alachua Audubon Society, concerned with the increase in housing close to Newnan's Lake.
- 7) *Rob Brinkman* states he was not notified of this application, and neither were any of his neighbors that live in Green Grove subdivision and for that reason alone, this application should be denied.

Commissioner Mutch asked the county attorney what the requirements are for notification.
Do we send the notification or does the applicant?

Corbin Hanson answered by stating the county notification policy is 750 ft from the development and we look to the Property Appraiser's website.
Chris Dawson stated the labels are created in Growth Management and given to the application.

- 8) *Adam Brewski* spoke in favor of the application.
- 9) *John H. Dane, Jr.*, spoke in opposition.
- 10) *Shawna Lily White* spoke in opposition.

- 11) *Adrian Hayes Santos*, former City of Gainesville Commissioner, spoke in favor of this application.
- 12) *Eric Godet*, Gainesville Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of this application.
- 13) *Jason Sanchez*, Chair of the City of Gainesville Plan Board, spoke in favor of this application.

Commissioner Mutch asked Jason Sanchez if he was representing the city tonight.
Jason Sanchez stated that this is a county issue and not a city issue.

- 14) *Anne Barkdoll* spoke in opposition to the application.
- 15) *Sandy Vardeman* spoke in opposition to the application.
- 16) *David Lewis* spoke in opposition to the application.
- 17) *Gabriel Tyner* spoke in opposition to the application.
- 18) *Helen Warren*, Former City Commissioner and realtor, spoke in favor of this application.
- 19) *Dawn Lauren* spoke in opposition to the application.

Questions for staff:

Commissioners Vinson and Rutenberg asked questions of Staff.

Commissioner Mutch asked those present in the audience if they received a notice for neighborhood workshop meeting.

Motion for approval **was not approved** and the motion failed. (Roll call vote: Norman-No; Young-Yes; Mutch-Yes; Rutenberg-Yes; Vinson-No; McCaslin-No; Walsh-No=3 Yes votes and 4 No votes. Vote: 3-4 **Motion failed**.)

5-minute break

Chris Dawson stated the choices for the Planning Commission are to 1) recommend approval of transmittal, 2) recommend approval of transmittal with modifications or 3) recommend denial of transmittal

Motion was made by Commissioner Mutch to **recommend denial of transmittal** of application Z25-000003 to the Board of County Commissioners.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vinson.

Roll call vote: Norman-Yes; Mutch-Yes; Vinson-Yes; Walsh-No; Rutenberg-Yes; Young-No; McCaslin-No Vote: 4 Yes and 3 No.

Action: Recommend denial of transmittal of application Z25-000003 to the Board of County Commissioners with a **4-3 vote**.

4. **Quasi-Judicial Item:**

4.1 **Affected Party Statement and Determination**

Corbin Hanson read party statement and recommendations for parties

- Party requests:
- 1) Dan Smith
 - 2) Gainesville Retreat Center
 - 3) Tom Workman
 - 4) Greg DeLong
 - 5) Paul Pritchard

6)Lesa Holder

Motion to grant party status to the six people listed above by Commissioner Young

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rutenberg.

Party request by Dawn Lauren due to Class 1 Wildlife License classification.

Motion to add Dawn Lauren to the above list by Commissioner Vinson. Motion seconded by

Commissioner Norman Vote: 7-0 add to party list above.

4.2 **Z25-000004 Hawthorne Road Rezoning**

A request by Clay Sweger of eda consultants, inc. agent, for Gator Country LLC and Bentley Properties Inc., owners, for a rezoning. The request would rezone from R-1a, A, BR, BH and MB to C-1, RE-1 and R-1a. The site is approximately 82 acres and is located to the northwest of the SE Hawthorne Rd./Lakeshore Dr. intersection on parcels 16184-000-000, 16185-000-000, 16201-004-000, 16194-001-000, 16194-002-000 and 16194-000-000. This request is associated with the large-scale comprehensive plan amendment application Z25-000003 that seeks to amend the future land use designation on these same parcels.

Staff Presentation:

Mehdi Benkhatar presented this application. Staff recommend approval of Z25-000004 with the bases as noted in the staff report.

Questions for staff:

Commissioner Mutch asked whether the Planning Commission should be hearing this rezoning request due to the failure of the previous zoning application.

Staff response:

Corbin Hanson and *Chris Dawson* responded.

Applicant's presentation:

Clay Sweger was present, made a brief presentation and was available for questions.

Parties:

1. *Dan Smith* questioned whether the rezoning application could be heard because the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and spoke about the wetlands and impacts to the prairie and the lake.
2. *Gainesville Retreat Center*- No representative present
3. *Tom Workman* designated *Kelly McPherson* as his spokesperson. She asked what zoning is consistent with Estate Residential (RE). She requested the land be rezoned to RE instead of the proposed rezoning by the applicant. Her concerns for the conservation and development with higher density would possibly harm Newnan's Lake. She also has concerns about traffic in the area. She stated the map from the neighborhood workshop is different than the map for this application.
4. *Greg DeLong* was not notified. Proposed letter stating three major problems including increase of traffic, rainwater runoff and flooding and the Newnan's Lake watershed that would have increased pollution. Newnan's Lake is magical.
5. *Paul Pritchard* was concerned with seven points: this application is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, staff report provides analysis of impacts on public facilities, neighborhood workshop was inconsistent with notification policies—ad on the county website is not adequate, developer would need a development review application,

according to Missy Daniels e-mail from 6-22-2017 only 2 homes per acre allowed, environmental impact and transportation issues

6. *Lesa Holder* offered a visual perspective of the area and was concerned with the existing wetlands and conservation of the land.
7. *Dawn Lauren* stated this area is priceless to our community, county, state and nationally.

Questions for staff:

Commissioner Young provided comments.

Corbin Hanson provided information about the bases for action on a quasi-judicial item.

Commissioners Vinson and Mutch asked staff questions.

Chris Dawson provided responses. *Patricia McAllister-Clerk* stated the mailout was done correctly.

Motion was made by *Commissioner Young* to recommend **approval of this rezoning application** to the Board of County Commissioners.

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner McCaslin*.

Action: Roll call vote: Norman-No; Mutch-No; Vinson-No; Walsh-Yes; Rutenberg-Yes; Young-Yes; McCaslin-No **Vote:** 3 yes, 4 no=**3-4 Motion failed.**

Motion was made to **deny this application for rezoning** by *Commissioner Norman*.

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.

Motion to amend the motion was made by *Commissioner Mutch* to say that there was competent, substantial evidence presented by interested parties that this application did not meet the comprehensive plan and, therefore, should not be adopted.

Motion was seconded by *Commissioner Norman*.

Vote: Roll call vote: Norman-Yes; Young-No; Mutch-Yes; Vinson-Yes; Rutenberg-Yes; Walsh-No; McCaslin-Yes **Action:** Vote: **5-2 to deny application.**

Corbin Hanson stated that before the last vote, we neglected to conduct Public Comment. Mr. Hanson stated we need to make a motion to reconsider.

Motion to reconsider by *Commissioner Mutch* and **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.

Public Comment:

Gary Brooks spoke in opposition.

Chair Walsh clarified that the Planning Commission is now voting on the **motion to not adopt the rezoning application.**

Vote: Roll call vote: Norman-Yes; Young-No; Mutch-Yes; Rutenberg-No; Vinson-Yes; McCaslin-Yes; Walsh-No **Action:** Vote: **4-3 to deny the rezoning application.**

5. **Approval of Minutes: March 19, 2025**

Motion was made by *Commissioner Young* to approve the minutes from March 19, 2025 Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission meeting.

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.

Action: The **minutes** for the March 19, 2025 Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission meeting were **approved** with a **vote of 7-0**.

6. **Attendance Report:** No comments.
7. **Public Comment:** None
8. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned **at 10:58 p.m.**