



MAYOR
Linda M. Blechinger

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
Michael E. Parks

CITY COUNCIL
Peggy J. Langley
Robert L. Vogel, III
Taylor Sisk
Jamie L. Bradley

**CITY OF AUBURN
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
February 16, 2023
5:00 PM
Council Chambers**

Mayor: Linda Blechinger
Council Member: Peggy Langley
Council Member: Bob Vogel
Council Member: Taylor Sisk
Council Member: Jamie Bradley

City Staff in Attendance: Michael Parks, Chief Hodge, Joyce Brown, Staci Waters, Iris Akridge, Leigh Anne Bland, Johnathen Eggleston, Lt. Patterson, Brooke Haney, Jack Wilson.

Mayor Blechinger called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Citizen Comments on agenda items

Mayor Blechinger asked for any citizens comments for items on tonight's agenda.

Anna Robertson, 1535 Willow Gate Way, Auburn, GA spoke in opposition to Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Ms. Robertson stated that Auburn is her hometown, she grew up here. Said that it was a great place to do so mainly because of the friendly hometown feel. Said that she could remember waving to patrol cars driving through her neighborhood, observing wildlife and playing in the creek in front of her house, walking in woods and feeling safe. Anna stated that she is 20 years old now and things are a lot different. Said she still sees wildlife, but now often dead on the side of the road. Said the creek she played in smells like sewage when it rains since the pump station was added behind the senior living housing. She stated that the Police force is hiring which means we do not have enough Officers. Stated that it is rare that she sees them patrolling her neighborhood anymore. And as far as feeling safe, the roads are over-crowded, and people are driving dangerously. To get to college, she makes a left onto Hwy. 8 from Apalachee Church Road and often feels that it's typical because there are too many cars on the road. Said she would like to mention that recently a church member who lives off of Apalachee Church Road had a medical emergency, an ambulance was called, and it took a long time for them to arrive. The paramedics that got there and were in a hurry to leave because they had to go help someone else. It just goes to show that emergency responders are already strained, and they are having trouble getting to people in a timely manner. How much harder will it be for them to have a huge population increase and even busier roads. Said that she believes when considering the future of our beautiful beloved town we need to first consider what is important to the residents that already live here, the people who call it home. As a resident, she feels that having housing off of McCully Drive and Apalachee Church Road is not in our best interest. On the Auburn website, the Mayor states that unbridled expansion can be detrimental. Planned development allows for stability and preservation of what makes our City attractive. Said that she feels part of Auburn's attractiveness is the small town feel in the once prevalent nature and woods of Auburn. Planned development must be more than a new City Hall and offices, etc. It must include sufficient Police protection because with the increase in population

comes an increase in crime. It must also include safer roads with enough lanes. A few things that are not currently in place, we need to protect our agricultural land, open space, trees, and wildlife for the well-being of the environment as well as the residents that live here. Our schools, emergency responders, and the animal shelters can all negatively be affected with a higher population. And when they suffer, we all suffer. For these reasons and more I do not feel that more high-density housing is in the best interest of our Auburn community. Ms. Robertson thanked Mayor and Council.

Jose Labandero, 330 Honeysuckle Terrace, Auburn, GA spoke in opposition to Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Mr. Labandero stated that there are a lot of folks moving into this area that don't know or don't want to know how government cares or operates. Said that what's happening is that people are burning trash in the City limits and you can smell it. Said they burn plastic, they burn trash, and they are irresponsible. Mr. Labandero thinks that there should be a newsletter saying something about a fine, etc. But says it needs to stop, it stinks! Said it is almost like when he lived in Dekalb County by the incinerator.

Terry Meahl, 1541 Willow Gate Way, Auburn, GA spoke in opposition to Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Mr. Meahl said when he was growing up his dad was in the military, and they moved every 2-3 years. Then he went into the military, and they moved every 2-3 years. Said that Auburn, Georgia is the place he has lived the longest in his life and plans on living here the rest of his life. Mr. Meahl stated that there are already several, more than one, high-density housing developments that are almost complete or that are still under construction. He is against more high-density developments of townhomes. Mr. Meahl stated that he shares the same concerns with impact that this one more will have. Said he is okay with growth development, but how about single-family, a few units per acre, and not 10+ units per acre. This is his concern. Said he agrees with everything Anna Robertson has said and is not going to repeat it. Mr. Meahl thanked Mayor and Council for listening.

Kris Meahl, 1541 Willow Gate Way, Auburn, GA spoke in opposition to Agenda Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Ms. Meahl stated that she agrees with everything her neighbor, Anna Robertson, said and that she agrees with everything her husband, Terry Meahl said. She stated that Anna and her family have been great neighbors. Said they hope that this sweet vision that the leaders have for this community, that it will come about, and that it will not just be cookie-cutter type things. She said it just doesn't fit with the personality of this community. Said that it is such a special place and hopes that it will be preserved. Thanked Mayor and Council.

Charles Sewell, 187 Park Place, Auburn, GA spoke in opposition to Agenda Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Mr. Sewell stated that last census for Auburn, we had 7,500 to 8,000 people in population. Currently, we've got either under construction or already approved about 1,000 housing units. The average number of children per household is about 1.94 children. That averages out to be about 166 new students per grade for 12 grades. Stated that we are already overloaded in our schools right now. Said the residential was a large burden on these guys patrolling, on our fire department, and on our schools. Stated that the residential basically brings in the property tax and that's it. Said that people come here to sleep, they go elsewhere to spend their tax dollars. Said that businesses pay inventory tax, employee tax, property tax, and a merit of other taxes that will help support our infrastructure and our services. Mr. Sewell stated that we do not need another high-density development. He stated that he feels bad for the Browns in that this would be a good income for them to totally retire. But feels this developer can develop this into something else more beneficial. He stated that the City has been begging for a good sit down restaurant, if this would be a good place.

Mindy Robertson, 1535 Willow Gate Way, Auburn, GA spoke in opposition to Agenda Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Ms. Robertson said she is sitting here looking at the

Auburn seal that has the leaf on it. Said that when they moved to Auburn, one of the first things they noticed was the Auburn City trees. Said that more and more throughout the City it is being clear-cut and she thinks in general it is said. Said that probably with the townhomes, not entirely sure, but will probably be the same. Ms. Robertson said it would be beneficial no matter what is being developed, to eliminate clear-cutting just to preserve more of nature and the environment. Said she thinks the roads have become overcrowded and it's dangerous. She also spoke regarding Agenda Item # 3 Rate Increase for Perry Rainey Center. Ms. Robertson said as far as the Perry Rainey Center, the rate increase, she thinks because the citizens of Auburn are already paying additional tax in addition to County taxes, it would be nice if the additional fees that have been included would be waived for the citizens of Auburn.

Benjamin Gallardo, 977 Ponce De Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30606 and lives at 41 Buena Vista, Winder, GA 30680 and is here representing the Browns. Mr. Gallardo spoke in favor of Agenda Item #2 Discussion for rezoning of McCully Properties. Mr. Gallardo said that there are a couple of points that people have made regarding the density of this unit. He stated the development would cover 13.6 acres, 107 townhome lots would result in under 10 units per acre. He said these are going to be or what is proposed right now, 3 bedroom, 2 ½ bath which would typically with townhomes present less children per unit in regards to the concerns with schools, and over 20% of the site or 2.7 acres is going to be devoted to open space. One other point he wanted to make about this is the product location, it is surrounded by commercial property which provides a good transition from what it is surrounding the proposed development. Mr. Gallardo stated he just wanted to raise those points for attention. He thanked the Mayor and Council.

Mayor Blechinger thanked everyone for coming out and for their remarks.

Item: **Discussion for Rezoning of McCully Properties**

Michael Parks and Jack Wilson presented.

-for discussion only

Jack Wilson stated that he knows it can be a little confusing and hopes that everyone can understand that this is not a voting item tonight. Mr. Wilson stated that this is a work session for discussion only. He stated that there would be a Public Hearing on this zoning matter in two weeks from tonight, March 2, 2023 at 5:00PM and everyone is welcome to come back then. Let everyone know that this item was put on the agenda tonight just for staff to report to Mayor and Council. Stated that there was a planning commission meeting last night and a Public Hearing. Mr. Wilson said that a lot of these things came up, some of the same folks were there and made the same, similar comments. Mr. Wilson stated that the planning commission voted to recommend denial of the application and like he said, the Public Hearing will be in two weeks, March 2, 2023. He let everyone know this was put on the work session for discussion. Mr. Wilson let Mayor and Council know if they have any questions for staff or if they need more information between now and the March 2, 2023 meeting, staff will be happy to get that information together for them. Mr. Wilson stated again that this was on the agenda to report the planning commission outcome.

Item: **Perry Rainey Center Rental Rates**

Michael Parks presented.

-placed on March 2, 2023 Council Business Agenda

Item: **Executive Session – Personnel and Pending Litigation**

Mayor Blechinger asked for a motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel and Pending Litigation.

Motion: Made by **Council Member Sisk** to go into Executive Session for Personnel and Pending Litigation.

Seconded: By **Council Member Bradley**.

Mayor Blechinger asked for any discussion. There was none.

Vote was taken with all members present voting yes.

Jack Wilson: “ During Executive Session the Council met to discuss personnel and pending litigation. There were no votes taken and no evidence received in the Executive Session. The original affidavit and resolution have been signed and I will give them to the clerk to be included in the minutes.

ADJOURNMENT: **Mayor Blechinger** asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Made by **Council Member Vogel** to adjourn.

Seconded: By **Council Member Sisk**.

Mayor Blechinger asked for any discussion. There was none.

Vote was taken with all members present voting yes. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Brown, City Clerk

Read and approved this ____ day of March 2023

Mayor Linda M. Blechinger