

**CALHOUN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
WORKSHOP MINUTES – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

**PRESENT AND ACTING:**

**DANNY RAY WISE, CHAIRMAN  
GENE BAILEY, VICE-CHAIRMAN  
DARRELL MCDUGALD  
JERAL HALL**

**CARLA A. HAND, CLERK OF COURT AND COUNTY COMPTROLLER  
SARAH WILLIAMS, CLERK ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

The workshop was called to order by Chairman Wise at 4:00 p.m., CT.

Mr. Frank Snowden, County Planner, stated at the last workshop some comprehensive plan amendments were contemplated associated with flood zone development. Mr. Snowden provided the Board with a handout outlining some ideas for changes that could be made. Mr. Snowden stated as the Comprehensive Plan is revised, care must be taken to change all language pertaining to an issue so no contradictions are present in the plan.

Mr. Snowden stated in the Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, some changes could be made pertaining to densities for agricultural land use regarding the flood plain. Mr. Snowden stated that on objective three (3) of the Conservation Element, one of the objectives was to “reduce” density in flood prone areas. Mr. Snowden stated he would recommend changing the objective to read “control” density in flood prone areas, or eliminate the sentence totally. Mr. Snowden stated Commissioner Jones, who is not present at the workshop, has spoken with him previously about the extra two (2) feet of freeboard the County imposed in the floodplain ordinance for home elevation. Mr. Snowden stated a number of communities have changed their ordinances to eliminate the two (2) extra feet of freeboard and instead insert elevation must be at or above the base flood elevation. Mr. Snowden stated according to federal regulations a new structure must be at or above base flood elevation, but our ordinance imposes two (2) feet above base flood elevation, which is a lot. There was further discussion about base flood elevation. Mr. Snowden stated he would suggest deletion of policy 3.3 of the conservation element in objective three (3), which reads “development in flood prone areas shall be required to maintain a density of 50% less than the underlying land use area density.” Mr. Snowden stated the Comprehensive Plan already reads in another area that as long as there are adequate uplands (or one (1) acre at least) someone can build a structure. Mr. Snowden stated under the proposed changes, someone with ten (10) acres of land could build a structure as long as there is at least one (1) acre of uplands, as opposed to the current twenty (20) acres needed. Mr. Snowden stated under the Future Land Use Element, he would suggest eliminating the maximum development density of one (1) unit per twenty (20) acres from objective four (4). Mr. Snowden stated if someone has adequate uplands and is out of the wetlands and floodplain, their natural functions are not being interfered with. Mr. Snowden stated in the past this density requirement has not been enforced, and a number of homes have been permitted to be built on less than twenty (20) acres of land. There was further discussion about permitting and density. Commissioner McDougald asked if the one (1) to twenty (20) ratio could be removed and approved by the State. Mr. Snowden indicated an affirmative. Commissioner McDougald asked what the density would be if this were deleted. Mr. Snowden stated

the density would be one (1) to ten (10) acres, and when the Board designates other ratios in the agriculture district these rules would apply to those areas as well. There was further discussion about forming densities for agricultural lands in the future. Mr. Snowden stated under policy 9.4.1: agricultural land use one (1) unit per ten (10 acres), he would recommend deleting the one (1) unit per twenty (20) acres in wetland and floodplain areas as well. Mr. Snowden stated the goal is to protect the wetlands and floodplain areas, not encumber them. Mr. Snowden stated as long as development is outside of these areas and a fifty (50) foot buffer is maintained, he does not see the reasoning behind reducing densities. Mr. Snowden stated these changes would help many people be able to utilize their land.

Mr. Snowden stated at the last workshop Attorney Fuqua suggested Mr. Matthew Griffin could possibly do a small-scale map amendment for his property to be able to build a home. Mr. Snowden stated Mr. Griffin would be unable to do this because Calhoun County is a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), and as a RAO, a small-scale map amendment cannot be issued unless it is for low-income housing. Chairman Wise stated he knows small-scale map amendments have been issued before, and asked when the rules changed. Mr. Snowden stated he is not sure when this became a rule, but there is now a Statute preventing small-scale map amendments unless it is for low-income housing. There was further discussion about small-scale map amendments.

Mr. Snowden stated the changes he has suggested would require a text amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, and the Future Land Use Map could be changed later. Mr. Snowden stated the text amendment would be the quickest way to help solve Mr. Griffin's problem. Commissioner Bailey asked how long it would take to pass the text amendment. Mr. Snowden stated he would estimate the whole process would take about three (3) months; a narrative must be created and sent out to government agencies for comments, and two (2) public hearings must be held on the issue. Commissioner Bailey stated he would like to do more to clean up the entire Comprehensive Plan, and asked how much time this would take. Mr. Snowden stated the changes would have to be made over time. Mr. Snowden stated he has listed some other considerations for the Board to think about when making changes in the future in the handout he provided. Mr. Snowden stated there is a lot of land in flood prone areas where it would probably be alright for someone to build a home. Commissioner Bailey stated he would like to have the Comprehensive Plan language changed where someone could subdivide their flood prone land into parcels that would be affordable to sell. Mr. Snowden stated it would be easy to change the language for subdividing these lands to be permissible, and asked the Board if they would want to allow development in these areas in the floodplain. Commissioner Bailey stated he would not be opposed to development in the floodplain as long as elevations are maintained in these areas, but would only want to allow one (1) per ten (10) acres for development. Mr. Snowden stated he would not want to allow less than ten (10) acres in the floodplain, but would not recommend allowing development in the wetlands. Mr. Snowden stated there is a fifty (50) foot buffer listed for floodplain areas, and this language would probably need to be eliminated and simply state that the County would meet or exceed the Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations. Mr. Snowden stated when the Board makes these changes they would also need to modify the flood plain development ordinance to eliminate the two (2) feet of freeboard and some of the other language. There was further discussion about the flood plain development ordinance and flood elevations.

Commissioner Hall asked what the holdup is for Mr. Griffin to be able to build on his property. Mr. Snowden stated Mr. Griffin has ten (10) acres of land, which contains wetlands/floodplain, and the Comprehensive Plan states currently he would need twenty (20) acres in order to build. Mr. Snowden stated Mr. Griffin is unable to do a small-scale map amendment to be able to build. There was further discussion about the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Snowden stated a Comprehensive Plan amendment is needed to make these suggested changes, and possibly more could be added such as adding solar farms as an allowable use. Mr. Snowden stated for Mr. Griffin's sake, the Board could make these suggested changes first and then continue to go through the Comprehensive Plan and make further changes. Commissioner McDougald stated he feels these changes are a good start, but more changes are needed. Commissioner McDougald stated Mr. Doug Goodman has some changes that need to be made so he can utilize his land as well. Mr. Snowden stated a map amendment would be needed to solve the issue Mr. Goodman is having, and he does intend to make those changes in the future. Mr. Snowden stated the map changes are going to be more complicated to do because a GIS map professional would need to be hired to complete the work. There was further discussion about amending the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Snowden stated the Comprehensive Plan amendments are going to be time consuming, and he would need compensation for the extra time that would be needed to put together the amendments. Mr. Snowden stated he could charge by the hour for the time he works on the amendments, or the Board could raise his annual pay for compensation. Mr. Snowden asked the Board to think about how they would like to proceed, and in the meantime, he would continue to work on the Comprehensive Plan a little at a time. Commissioner Bailey asked if Mr. Snowden has a contract with the County. Mr. Snowden stated he has no signed contract with the County. Commissioner Bailey asked Mr. Snowden what he is currently paid per year. Mr. Snowden stated he is paid \$25,000 per year. Commissioner Bailey asked what Mr. Snowden would charge for an hourly rate. Mr. Snowden stated his survey rate for his time is \$120 per hour. Commissioner McDougald stated a salary adjustment rate would make the funding easier to budget. Commissioner Bailey asked how many hours Mr. Snowden thought it would take to put together the amendment. Mr. Snowden stated he estimates it would take about forty (40) to fifty (50) hours. Commissioner Bailey asked what Mr. Snowden would request for a salary adjustment. Mr. Snowden stated he would like to be paid a minimum of \$30,000 per year. There was further discussion about salary and Planning Department fees.

Mr. Snowden stated next year a Technical Assistance grant might become available for the County to hire a consultant to do some revisions to the Future Land Use Map.

Mr. Snowden stated he would like to get the Comprehensive Plan in better order, and leave it in good condition for the next County Planner to take over. Mr. Snowden stated he would keep working on the changes that need to be made. Commissioner Bailey stated he wants to achieve as much growth as possible for the County. Mr. Snowden stated the suggested changes would be a good place to start for the County. Mr. Snowden stated the text amendment would be the easiest process to address some of the issues with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Snowden stated if there are any objections through the process of amending the plan they could be addressed, but the County should be able to achieve the goal of making changes with the density issues in the Comprehensive Plan because they are not unreasonable goals. Commissioner Bailey stated he would like to discuss the issue further at the regular Board meeting at 6:00 p.m.

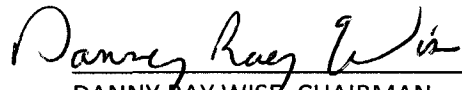
Commissioner Jones stated he arrived at the meeting late because of work, and asked Mr. Snowden to explain the need for an increase in salary for work that would need to be done on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Snowden explained to Commissioner Jones the need for an increase in pay, and the two (2) options for payment. Mr. Snowden stated Comprehensive Plan amendments are not listed as a duty of the County Planner, and any time the previous Planner made amendments to the Comprehensive Plan he billed by the hour. There was further discussion about salary. Commissioner

Jones asked if there is a job description from the contract with the previous Planner. Mr. Snowden stated job duties of the Planner are listed under administrative official in the Land Development Regulations. There was further discussion about the job duties of the Planner.

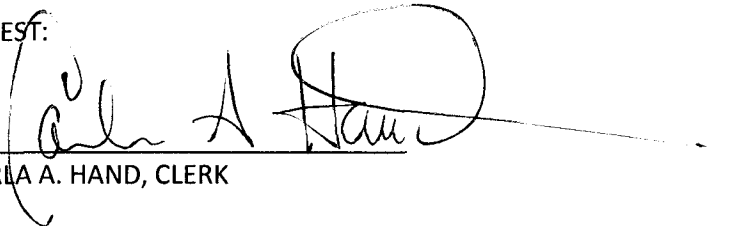
Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Snowden if he thought in about three (3) months a Comprehensive Plan amendment could be approved. Mr. Snowden indicated an affirmative. Mr. Griffin stated Mr. Snowden has met with him over the past year several times and his efforts are appreciated.

Commissioner McDougald inquired about the Technical Assistance grant that could become available next year to address the Future Land Use Map changes. Ms. Snowden stated she will gather more information about the grant before next year.

There being no further business, the workshop adjourned at 4:53 p.m., CT.

  
DANNY RAY WISE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

  
CARLA A. HAND, CLERK