

The Saraland Planning Commission convened in regular session on December 10, 2024, at the Saraland Municipal Court. The meeting was called to order at 5:47 p.m. by Chairman Scooter Thronson.

Roll call was as follows:

Present: Chairman Scooter Thronson
Vice Chairman David Brown
Secretary Julie McGuire
Mayor Dr. Howard Rubenstein
Council Representative Wayne Biggs
Mr. Vincent Walker
Mr. Barry Andrews
Doctor Wayne Lyssy

Absent: Chief Lee Smith

Others present: Mike Black, Saraland Chief Building Official; Brendan Schwandner, Saraland City Planner; Andy Rutens, City Attorney, Jennifer Jemison, Zoning Inspector.

Motion was made by Dr. Wayne Lyssy, seconded by Mr. Vincent Walker, to approve the minutes for the November 12, 2024 regular meetings. All approved. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Dr. Wayne Lyssy, seconded by Mr. Barry Andrews, to approve the December 10, 2024, Planning Commission agenda. All approved. Motion carried.

Chairman Scooter Thronson called for conflicts of interest of any agenda items for members of the Planning Commission. No conflicts.

Mr. Wayne Biggs said the invocation.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Review of the Draft City of Saraland Comprehensive Plan

Motion was made by Wayne Lyssy, seconded by David Brown to postpone this item indefinitely. All approved. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Public Hearing & sketch Plan/Preliminary Planned Unit Development Review or the proposed 579-lot Southwind Subdivision, located on Celeste Road and Radcliff Road concerning parcels 1903070000001.01, 1903070000018.000, 1903070000024.003, 1903070000024.01, 1903070000024.000, 1904180000001.068, 1904180000001.030, and

1903070000024.002, approx. 452.27 acres total, filed by Dwayne Smith on behalf of Susan Walter and Richard Family Properties, LLC

This is a proposed single-family development, located east of Celeste Road, and south of Radcliff within the confines of R-1 Low Density and R-2 Medium Density Single Family Residential Zoning. This item was previously discussed at the July 9, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting, but was postponed due to a portion of the property being unannexed. The remaining portion was approved for annexation with a R-1 Low Density Single Family Residential Zoning on September 12, 2024.

Since July, the plan has been revised with the following changes:

1. The total lot count has been reduced from 751 to 579.
2. The ingress/egress points connecting the proposed subdivision to the Woodlands Subdivision have been removed.
3. The proposed zoning has been reduced from R-2, R-3, and R-1A, to R-1 and R-2.
4. Contingent upon the approval of the rezoning of the property, the traffic improvement on Celeste Road and Radcliff Road as provided in the traffic study and the dedication of the buffer areas shown on the PUD plat adjacent to Radcliff Road as an additional right of way for future Radcliff Road expansion.

Although a zoning amendment was not submitted for consideration to coincide with the PUD application, the lot width and lot area of 475 lots are within the zoning restrictions of an R2 medium density single family residential district the application is subject to the provisions of Section 26-350b(3)b(3), which states that if after a public hearing, the planned unit development project is approved, any rezoning needed shall be instituted subject to revocation and reversion to the original zoning designation of the land, if the final plan is not approved.

The revised plan proposes a density of 1.28 dwelling units per acre, down from 1.73 provided in the previous iteration of the plan, with 104 lots of 75' in width – lot sizes which will require approval of a zoning amendment to R-1 District restrictions, and 475 lots of 100' in width in compliance with R-1 District restrictions, and 475 lots of 75' in width – lots sizes which will require approval of a zoning amendment to R-2 zoning. The subdivision is proposed to have minimum 30-foot front setbacks, 25-foot rear setbacks, and 10-foot side setbacks.

The plan does not indicate a percentage usable open space as part of the submittal Article 30 of the LU&DO requires that a minimum of 25% of the development be dedicated for usable open space.

The development provides a minimum 20-foot vegetation buffer where it abuts existing residential properties, with some areas where the buffer exceeds 50 feet.

The proposal consists of 211.3 acres of developed area, with an amenity area intended for pickleball tennis courts, a playground, and a general-purpose sports field. 140 acres of the property is delineated wetlands to remain undisturbed.

A traffic study was completed for the last iteration of the plan, accounting for 751 lots and incorporating estimated traffic from THE Land sportsplex project and provides intersection improvement recommendations at the major subdivision to each entrance of the subdivision. The traffic study was reviewed by the City Engineer, who stated that the plan indicates what is to be expected with regard to the increased traffic volume, and recommended that at a minimum, the recommended improvements within the Traffic Study be incorporated into the development of the project.

Upon his review, Chief Sealey stated that he saw no issues with the proposal as it pertains to the fire code, with egress and several approved turnarounds throughout the neighborhood.

If this application is approved, planning staff recommends the approval be contingent upon:

1. Approval of the rezoning of the required portions to R-2 Medium Density Single Family Residential zoning at the following Planning Commission meeting.
2. Incorporation of all recommended roadway improvements within the Traffic Study at a minimum as applicable, per the review by the City Engineer.
3. The provision of a revision to the plan showing that the proposal complies with the requirement of a minimum of 25% of the subdivision being intended for usable open space.

A few citizens came up to speak in regard to issues against the subdivision. Some of the concerns mentioned were rezoning, poor planning, road traffic, wildlife and crowding of the schools and buses. Mayor Howard Rubenstein said he is aware of the problem and has had extensive conversations and ALDOT. Mr. Scooter Thronson mentioned that the city and school are in constant conversations. Mayor Howard Rubenstein stated that the school board states that they have the ability to expand.

Motion was made by Wayne Lyssy, seconded by Vincent Walker to approve contingent upon Approval of the rezoning of the required portions to R-2 Medium Density Single Family Residential zoning at the following Planning Commission meeting. Incorporation of all recommended roadway improvements within the Traffic Study at a minimum as applicable, per the review by the City Engineer. And the provision of a revision to the plan showing that the proposal complies with the requirement of a minimum of 25% of the subdivision being intended for usable open space and the rezoning of the property, the traffic improvements on Celeste Road and Radcliff Road as provided in the traffic study and the dedication of the buffer areas shown on the PUD plot adjacent to Radcliff Road as additional right of way for future Radcliff Road expansion.

Mayor Howard Rubenstein mentioned earlier that he is aware of the traffic problems and has had extensive conversations with ALDOT. He also mentioned that they allocated a few hundred thousand dollars and will be widening part of Celeste Road to five lanes in the years 2026-2029. Later he mentioned that he has a different opinion, and he doesn't think they need to approve unless it is R-1.

Roll call vote:

Scooter Thronson	No
David Brown	No
Julie McGuire	No
Mayor Howard Rubenstein	No
Councilmember Wayne Biggs	No
Barry Andrews	No
Wayne Lyssy	Yes
Vincent Walker	Yes

Motion Denied.

- B. Public Hearing & Sketch Plan/Preliminary Planned Unit Development Review for the proposed 99-lot Celeste Road Subdivision Tract, located on Celeste Road, concerning parcel 1904180000001.45 and a portion of parcel 1806130000001.000, approx. 58.4 acres total, filed by Dan R. Gibbs of Atwell, LLC on behalf of J3 I, LLC. This is a proposed single-family residential development, located just south of The Oaks at Celeste Subdivision.

Although a zoning amendment was not submitted for consideration to coincide with the PUD application, the lot width and lot area of 70 lots are within the zoning restrictions of an R-1A Patio Residential district. The application is subject to the provisions of Section 26.346 – Development Regulations, which states that provisions of residential districts as applicable shall generally be adhered to in all planned unit developments, as well as Section 26-350b(3)b(3), which states that if after a public hearing, the planned unit development project is approved, any rezoning needed shall be instituted subject to revocation and reversion to the original zoning designation of the land, if the final plan is not approved.

The plan proposes a density of 1.71 dwelling units per acre, with of 100' in width and of 80' in width and a minimum area of 9,600 sq ft. – a lot size which will require approval of a zoning amendment to R-1A or R-3 zoning. The subdivision if proposed to have minimum 20-foot front and rear setbacks, and 5-foot side setbacks. The proposal contains 16.4 acres of open space and is proposed to include an amenity area.

This application was reviewed by Chief Sealey with the Fire Department, who noted no issues as it pertains to the fire code.

If this application is approved, planning staff recommends the approval be contingent upon:

1. Approval of a zoning amendment of the required portions to R-1A Patio Residential of R-3 High Density Residential zoning.
2. Relocation of lots 1 and 99 outside of the area adjacent to Celeste Road.

A few citizens came up to speak in regard to issues against the subdivision. Some of the concerns mentioned were rezoning, poor planning, road traffic, wildlife and crowding of the schools and buses. Mayor Howard Rubenstein said he is aware of the problem and has had extensive conversations and ALDOT. Mr. Scooter Thronson mentioned that the city and school are in constant conversations. Mayor Howard Rubenstein stated that the school board states that they have the ability to expand.

Motion was made by Wayne Lyssy, seconded by Vincent Walker to approve contingent upon rezoning amendment and relocation of lots 1 and 99 outside of the area adjacent to Celeste Road.

Roll call vote:

Scooter Thronson	No
David Brown	No
Julie McGuire	No
Mayor Howard Rubenstein	No
Councilmember Wayne Biggs	No
Barry Andrews	No
Wayne Lyssy	Yes
Vincent Walker	Yes

Motion Denied.

- C. Sketch Plan Review for the proposed 72-lot Bear Run North Subdivision, located near Celeste Road, concerning a portion of parcel 1904180000001.078, approx. 43.73 acres total, filed by Jared Landry of Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. on behalf of Jim Moore.

This is a proposed single-family residential development, located just north of the Bear Run Subdivision Phases 1 & 2, and just south of the Rolling Hills Subdivision, within the zoning restrictions of an R-1A Patio Residential district.

The plan proposes a density of 1.64 dwelling units per acre, 44 lots 62' 28 lots 75' min area 8,370 with a coinciding zoning amendment to R-1A zoning. The subdivision is proposed to have minimum 30-foot front, 25-foot rear setbacks, and 10-foot side setbacks. The proposal contains 15.05 acres of open space.

This application was reviewed by Chief Sealey with the Fire Department, who noted no issues as it pertains to the fire code.

If this application is approved, planning staff recommends the approval be contingent upon:

1. Approval of the rezoning to R-1A Patio Residential zoning.

Motion was made by Wayne Lyssy, seconded by Vincent Walker to approve.

Roll call vote:

Scooter Thronson	No
David Brown	No
Julie McGuire	No
Mayor Howard Rubenstein	No
Councilmember Wayne Biggs	No
Barry Andrews	No
Wayne Lyssy	Yes
Vincent Walker	Yes

Motion Denied.

- D. Recommendation to the City Council on the Zoning Amendment concerning a portion of parcel 190418000000178, approx. 43.73 acres total, to be rezoned from R-1 (Low Density Single Family Residential) to R-1A (Patio Residential), filed by Jared Landry of Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. on behalf of Jim Moore.

This concerns the rezoning of the property pertaining to Item C – the Bear Run North Subdivision Prelim PUD. The property abuts R-1A zoned properties to the south and R-1 zoned properties to the east, north, and west. This property is classified as low-density single family residential in the City of Saraland Master Plan.

Tabled due to denial of PUD (Item C) – No motion.

- E. Planning Approval for Phillips Feed Inc., for a proposed farm and garden supply store, located on a B-2 zoned lot at 1013 Shelton Beach Road, parcel 2203810000044.000, filed by Clay Sellers and Melanie Sellers on behalf of Ferrouillat Real Estate Investment, LLC.

This concerns the use of an existing commercial structure which has previously been utilized for heavy commercial uses. This property is zoned B-2 General Business and is abutted by B-2 zoned properties to the north, west, and south, and R-1 zone properties to the east.

Motion was made by Wayne Lyssy, seconded by David Brown to approve. All approved. Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Planning commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED:

Wayne E. Buzzi

Don Brown

Mr. J. A.

U. B.

L. B. Cendrows

Julia M. G. Muri