



Making Sound Decisions in Planning & Zoning



Mini – CPI Training for Appointed Board Members

Gordon County Agricultural Service Center, Calhoun

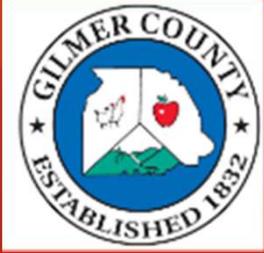
Tuesday, November 14th, 2017

Jim Dupont – GCPC Member

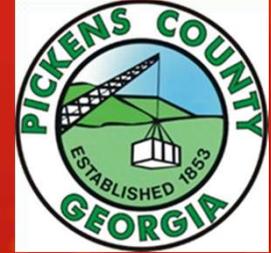
Gilmer County Planning & Zoning

Richard Osborne - Director

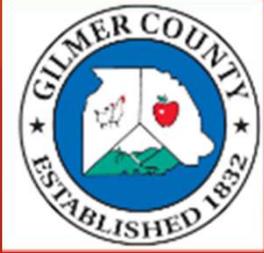
Pickens County Planning & Development



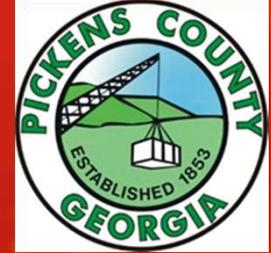
Agenda



- **Composition of your Board**
- **Know your Community, Ordinances, Comprehensive Plan**
- **Review your Packet info**
- **Meeting Relevance**
- **General Principles**
- **Example cases**



Jim Dupont - PC member



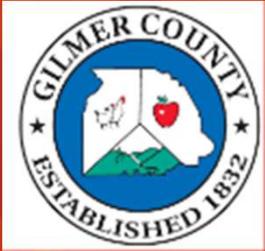
- **Planning Commissioner is: "The first line of defense against mindless visual pollution and destruction of the values of the past."**
Yale Child Psychiatrist Albert J. Solnit
- **Jim was a member of Gilmer County's Board of Land Use Appeals - combined with Gilmer County's Planning Commission in 2015.**
- **Developer for the last 30+ years – has timber products operation & log package company; outdoor advertising company; and water utility company. Helps in understanding needs of applicants.**
- **Provides insight to the development side of planning & zoning to help improve the future of Gilmer County.**
- **Well-rounded Planning Commission benefits the entire community.**



Gilmer County PC



- **Seek to have a diverse set of members**
- **Chairman has experience in Communications/Technology**
- **Vice-Chairman is a Poultry Farmer**
- **Secretary is a small business owner**
- **One Member is a 30+ year real estate veteran**
- **One Member is a developer**
- **Gilmer County considers this our Finest Board**



Know Your Community



- **Have a vested interest in and be a property owner in your community**
- **Concentrate on preserving tradition as well as welcoming change**
- **Be familiar with different areas to help verify whether or not a change to the zoning map would be a good fit**



Know Your Ordinance



- **Be familiar with the sections of the ordinance you use**
- **Back up decisions by ordinance and criteria that applicant must complete to verify request eligibility**
- **Know when and how to control large crowds at the Public Hearing – based on ordinance, Chairman can limit them**
- **Sometimes applicants and neighbors who've shown up at the Public Hearing oppose a request and work things out amongst themselves. Know if/when to allow (consult city/county attorney)**



Know Your Comprehensive Plan



- **Vision for Gilmer County:** *Vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. Excellent quality of life is a result of:*
- **Livability.** Healthy neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, recreation are varied and plentiful
- **Community Character.** Abundant natural resources and rich history contribute to quality of life and economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.
- **Shared Direction.** Public and private sectors work together to proactively plan for growth. Local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are informed about projects and activities planned for and occurring in the community.
- **Future Development Map** should be considered in rezonings



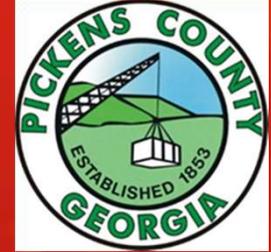
Review Your Packet Info



- **Upon receipt of agenda and packets, visit each site**
- **Go through checklist and re-verify everything meets standards**
- **POA/HOA input may be good for cases**
- **Binding (conditional) site plan may be required**
- **Be open-minded during hearings – cases are for review, not entitlements**
- **Screening of applications happens at Planning & Zoning staff level**
- **Don't be afraid to Table cases**



Meeting Relevance



- **Not “Us vs. Them”**
- **Chairman explains at the onset how the meeting will be conducted**
- **Each hearing done in a respectful and fair manner, no matter the outcome**
- **Feelings don’t constitute decisions - but keep ears open, be considerate**
- **Opposition may come from not having enough info – help educate public**
- **Separate fluff from relevant info and listen**
- **Planning Commission has a responsibility to applicant, the County, and to preservation of natural resources, heritage, tradition**



General Principles



- **Consider Immediate and Overall Impacts**
 - What's important to applicant and/or neighbors?
 - What are general goals of city/county?
- **Consider Unexpected Impacts**
 - Anything we might not expect?
 - Site visits by individual members needed?
 - Past event on lot that might affect future?
- **Watch for Legal Challenges**
 - Hearing advertised 15-45 days prior?
 - Conforms to Future Development Map?
 - Consult local city/county attorney



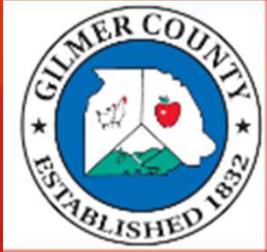


Example Rezoning case



- **Church no longer needs pastor's house (separate lot). Proposed rezoning residential to commercial for therapy clinic**
- **Some neighbors support, some oppose**
- **Surrounding lots zoned residential - with residential and institutional use**
- **Located on arterial road**
- **Future Development Map lists area as transitional (resid. or commercial)**
- **Could be many possible commercial uses if clinic closes. THOUGHTS?**





Example Variance case



- **Intown house (whether in city limits or barely in unincorporated area) is on a smaller, less than 1 acre lot.**
- **Owner wants to build a new structure for man cave / she shed.**
- **Proposed variance to allow structure to be 4 ft from property line – roofline would put structure even closer.**
- **One neighbor opposes it. THOUGHTS?**



Example of what they want to build



Gilmer Co. example conditional/special use



- **Deep South Farm:** Wedding/event venue. Weddings, reception-only events, anniversary parties, family reunions, birthday parties, etc.
- **How many people & cars at events?** 50-250 people – most around 100. 50 to 100 cars per event. Could be higher. Wedding of 250 would be average of 125 cars.
- **Traffic problems?** Some cars arrive early; some an hour before; some just before. People don't leave at same time. This may not back up traffic.
- **Music?** Yes - mostly in the barn for reception and for outside wedding ceremony.
- **When will events end?** Weekends and holidays – music ends no later than 11:00, events end by 11:30. Weeknights end an hour earlier.
- **Alcohol?** BYOB. Off-duty officer present. Stop dispensing 1 hour before event end.



Gilmer Co. example conditional/special use





Gilmer Co. example event venue opposition



- **NOTICE:** An event venue intends to operate in area you live in unless you act Now.
- You may have seen the Deep South Farms sign. Their intention is to host events of up to 300+ people and allow for outdoor sound systems and alcohol catering.
- **What does this mean for you?** Lots of cars would clog local roads - you or emergency vehicles may be blocked from getting home and/or accidents. Outdoor sound systems disruptions. Alcohol may create drunk drivers and rowdy people.
- Residents complained months ago - now Deep South Farms needs a conditional use permit. Protest this events venue that will disrupt your peaceful community on April 16 at 5:00 PM at Gilmer County courthouse, commissioners room.



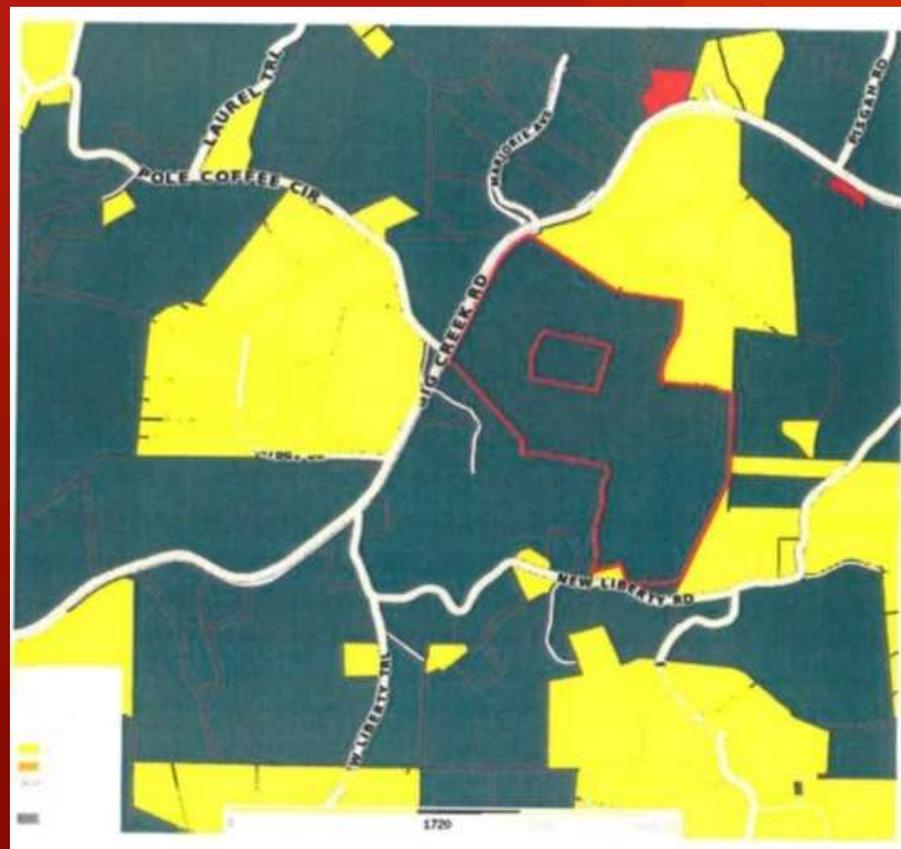
Gilmer Co. example conditional/special use II



- **Proposed motorcycle facility:** Place to have fun in a safe, enjoyable atmosphere
- **Internal traffic flow:** Separate entry and exit areas
- **Alcohol:** No alcohol – property manager on duty
- **Hours:** Saturdays 10:00-5:00 and Sundays 1:00-5:00
- **Restrooms:** Port-a-johns at 1 per 10 guests based on crowds
- **Other amenities:** Picnic and play areas
- **Buffers:** Willing to install evergreen buffer/screening trees



Gilmer Co. example conditional/special use II





Gilmer Co. example Moto facility opposition



- Don't want Granny to live beside a motorcycle facility for the remainder of her life.
- Pollutes area, damages property, creates noise, negatively impacts property values.
- Holden Farms nearby – noise and lights will negatively impact the life of the farm.
- Lovely, quiet area - property owners should not have their quality of life disrupted!
- Abomination to the environment, wildlife habitats, overall beauty of the area.



Questions?

Thank you!