

Gulf Shore Manor Neighborhood Plan October 6, 2020 Meeting Summary and Survey Summary

Mario Obstbaum, DVM, president of the Gulf Shore Manor Property Owners Association (GSMPOA) opened the meeting with a statement “I want to reassure everyone about the foundation of our plan. First and foremost it is to affirm and document in the Walton County Land Development Code the beach access and easement use rights of all property owners in Gulf Shore Manor. Other provisions that we propose to draft into the plan are based on protecting the integrity of our historic beach community as a Residential Preservation Area of single-family residences while maintaining the individuality and lifestyle we all currently enjoy. The plan is not meant to enforce rules and covenants as a homeowner’s association. In fact, not having an HOA is one of the things that makes our neighborhood so desirable and can be an asset. Yet, if we do not have a plan or framework in place and a way to communicate our vision for future development to Walton County, then we stand to lose the character that drew us here in the first place. The plan is made by all of you, for all of you. We want you to feel free tonight to ask questions and offer solutions.”

This meeting was attended in person by approximately 10 attendees and online via Zoom with 54 attendees.

Kristen Shell, AICP Planning Manager with the Walton County Planning Department then continued with a discussion of the Gulf Shore Manor survey results. Discussion focused on the survey questions that did not yield clarity in terms of differences of opinion. Question # 2 pertaining to building height changes was clear in that most respondents did not favor any change in allowable building height. Similarly Question # 3 also indicated that respondents preferred maintaining the current building setbacks.

RE-PLATTING NORTH of CR 30A

Discussion of Question #4 was lengthy. Approximately 35% of the respondents favored not allowing any re-platting. Another approximately 39% indicated that re-platting may be permitted but only for the purposes of wetland preservation and only if this resulted in less than or the same number of residential units (no increase in units). There were 47 responses in favor of re-plats (24.3%). Discussion ensued related to the requirements for wetland protection through the regulating agencies (FDEP and USACE), flooding, and what would be possible today under a re-plat scenario as well as housing types that would be or could be permitted. Ms. Andrea Ward, P.E. with the Planning Department discussed the current Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are an option within Section 5.06.01 A of the Walton County Land Development Code as a possibility for inclusion into the Neighborhood Plan as mandatory for new builds. Variations of this such as only requiring this for (Initial County Problem Areas) ICPAL areas were also discussed. Planning staff agreed to work on options centered on these BMPs. There was some agreement among attendees that maintaining the current single family detached development pattern with the current setbacks is

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desirable. One option discussed is to permit re-platting with the caveat that the current single family detached development pattern remains and that no additional units are permitted.

LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS

Approximately 54% of the survey respondents indicated that additional lighting restrictions within the neighborhood were not desirable, while 45% indicated they would like to see additional lighting requirements. Discussion centered around the County's current requirements for new development requiring Development Orders and current requirements related to the County's wildlife lighting ordinance (turtle lighting). It was clarified that the County currently only reviews single family residential lighting for compliance with the wildlife lighting ordinance within the zone located 700 feet inland from the Gulf of Mexico. It was also clarified that street lights were optional and at the request of the neighborhood/homeowner through the utility company.

Consensus appears to be forming that the neighborhood plan should contain lighting requirements which are optional or included for guidance only. These requirements would not be enforced by the County.

BEACH ACCESS PARKING

- Neighborhood Only Parking – dedicated parking spaces limited for use by GSM property owners and their guests at the beach accesses was discussed. Staff indicated that this would be difficult at the TDC maintained parking facilities given that these have been funded with TDC revenues.
- Locals Only Parking (Mobility Planning)- Question # 11 on the survey were 57% of the respondents supported a free locals-only parking option for full time Walton County residents as part of the Mobility Planning process. Concerns were voiced that this would only apply to full time Walton county residents and many GSM property owners are not full time residents of Walton County or have their primary residences elsewhere.
- Working with TDC on future improvements through the NP process, a process whereby the neighborhood could be noticed and have input on future projects was discussed for inclusion into the NP. Almost 97% of survey respondents favored this idea found in survey question # 19 where a sign would be posted and a 300 ft radius property owner notice would be conducted.

VOTING by PARCEL or TAX ID

A clear majority or 90% of the respondents were in support of proceeding with the development of a NP (next step). The question was raised by at least three property owners that they felt they should be able to vote based on the actual number of parcels they owned rather than by the parcel tax ID number which may include multiple lots with a single vote ability. Current NP guidance in the Land Development Code indicates “respondent” as a percentage of those responding to the ballots. Staff discussed this not really being an issue on this ballot due to the number of favorable votes, low 20% affirmative vote requirement, and the response rate on this particular survey. Staff also indicated that legal would be consulted on this question prior to the next ballot which is to vote on the Plan requiring a 66% affirmative vote.

COUNTY MAINTENANCE OF ROADS

46% of respondents said their road was currently maintained by the county. 12.5% responded they did NOT want the county to maintain their road. 41% or 79 respondents indicated that their road was not currently county maintained but would like it to be and provided a road name. Some of the roads named are already county maintained, so there is confusion. These respondents either did not know a particular road was County maintained or felt the county should improve their road further. A map is available on the neighborhood plan website that was provided by County Public Works showing which roads are county maintained in GSM.

Staff recommends working with Public Works further through the NP process depending on stormwater solution which could possibly help alleviate any stormwater problems with road design and maintenance.

STREET NAMING (QUESTION # 8)

Regarding the changing of street names, 68% of respondents did NOT support renaming of streets in GSM, 17% did support street name changes and 27 people listed a street name to change. During the meeting a comment was made regarding the changing the name of J.P Lane. In general, this item did not have strong support and may have to be done outside of the neighborhood planning process.

TREE PROTECTION (QUESTION # 13)

53% of respondents did not support any regulation to protect trees in GSM. 47% were in favor of saving as many trees as possible outside of the building footprint or just really large trees.

Staff explained that tree protection can be somewhat related to grading and stormwater requirements. Adopting the current stormwater BMPs where minimal fill is permitted would be consistent with more tree preservation. One option is a street tree planting requirement (one per lot).

BEACH ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS (QUESTION #7, 12 and 14)

59% of respondents were in favor of providing for golf cart parking only at the Dothan/Barcelona beach access.

The only comment made was by a property owner in Sea Highlands who was not in favor and stated that Barcelona Avenue south of 30A did not exist. Coordination with the TDC and Public Works when improvements are scheduled was discussed. This could include public notice requirements within the Neighborhood Plan that allow for community input prior to approval by the Board of County Commissioners of projects within the NP area.

72% of respondents were in favor of keeping the Montigo right of way south of 30A in it's current natural, unimproved state. There was no discussion.

BIKE PARKING (QUESTION # 14)

This question asked respondents to rank priority for additional bicycle parking at the four developed beach accesses. San Juan ranked highest, followed closely by Barcelona/Dothan and then Santa Clara. Pelayo was ranked last. 33% of respondents did NOT support additional bike parking at any access. There was no discussion. These results will be shared with the TDC as future design improvements are planned.

FUTURE ROAD CONNECTIONS (QUESTIONS #6, 9 AND 15)

- 76% of respondents were in favor of the county connecting the two sections of Montigo Avenue lying just north of 30A with a pedestrian/bicycle 8 to 12 foot wide path.
- 65% of respondents supported a similar connection between the undeveloped portion Barcelona Avenue lying just south of Shady Pines to developed Dothan lying just north of 30A.
- 66% of respondents supported a vehicular connection between Santa Clara Avenue north of 30A and Shady Pines in order to provide a second road into and out of GSM.
- There were no comments made during the meeting on any of these questions since there was obvious consensus. These would all be included in the neighborhood plan as future road improvement possibilities based on future funding and public input.