

Commission approves

Variance on Cumberland

Johna Strickland Rush
johna@tribune-georgian.com

People wrote. People called.

People attended the Camden County Planning Commission meeting last week, standing along the walls as the chairs filled.

Some asked the commission

to approve a hardship variance to allow 87.51 acres zoned con-

servation preservation on Cumberland Island to be divided into 10 lots.

"This is a step toward what we want to do," Glenn Warren said. "Yeah, we want to build some residences for ourselves, for our own families. There are residences down there now."

Others asked the commission to deny the request.

"We have a wilderness unlike any other and every extra bit of development we allow and make a pathway for just damages that wilderness in a way that we can never get back," Camden resident Jessica Warren said.

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Thursday, December 15, 2016

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Variance

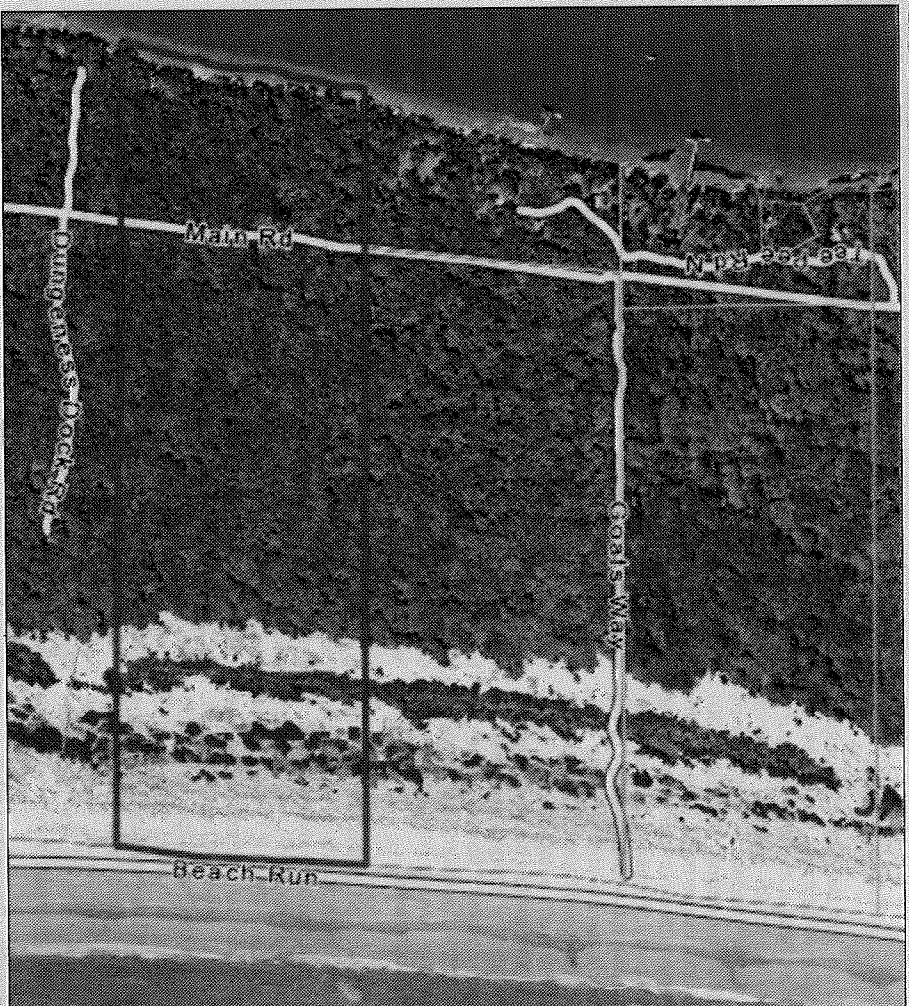
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After hearing from both sides at the Dec. 7 meeting and receiving about 1,000 comments by mail, phone and email, the five planning commission members voted unanimously to approve the variance. Commission members had little discussion, mostly asking questions of planning director Eric Landon who recommended approving the request.

"This condition was created by the applicant, the way I see it," commission chair and county commissioner-elect Ben Casey said. "They bought the property knowing the zoning, how it was. Evidently they've already got property on the island. I don't see necessarily the hardship that they have. That's just my opinion."

The commission's decision can be appealed by either side within 30 days, passing the request to the board of county commissioners for a decision.

The Candler and Warren families purchased the property through Lumar LLC in 1998 when it was believed to have been zoned agriculture. The county implemented its current zoning code in 2008. Although much of Cumberland Island is a national seashore, there are still tracts of privately held property such as this one.



Submitted photo

The Camden planning commission recently approved a 10-lot split for an 87.51-acre parcel held by Lumar LLC on Cumberland Island. The property goes from the sound to the beach.

The parcel, which was once owned by the Rockefeller's, stretches across Cumberland Island from the beach to the sound near the National Park Service's Sea Camp dock.

The 10-lot split is one of few actions allowed by right in a conservation preservation zone. A variance was sought because county code stipulates that minor plats must have frontage on a paved road and there aren't any paved roads on the island.

The variance only permits the parcel to be split, with five lots to the east of the main road and five to the west. A zoning change would have to be approved for houses to be built. The land is currently zoned "conservation preservation," a designation in the county's code created to "preserve and control development within certain land, marsh and water areas of this county."

The allowed uses in a conservation preservation zone include public utilities, a fishing supply or bait store, museum, historical site, nature park, wildlife sanctuary, marina or neighborhood recreation center. Accessory buildings for a church, museum or exhibit area or a caretaker residence in a nature preserve or wildlife sanctuary are also allowed by right. Special uses include a