

MAYOR
Lamar Scroggs

CITY COUNCIL
Martha Collins
Sam Evans
Montie Robinson, Sr.
Todd Wilson



CITY MANAGER
Stan Brown

CITY CLERK
Tangee Puckett

NEWS ARTICLE: Gainesville Times on October 12, 2015

Oakwood OKs townhomes across from Johnson High

Rezoning will allow for building homes where condos were previously planned

Another housing development halted when the recession struck is coming back to life after the Oakwood City Council on Monday approved of rezoning 12.76 acres for townhomes to go up along Poplar Springs Road across from Johnson High School.

Hawthorne Village was originally zoned for 82 condominiums, and much of the infrastructure, including sewer lines and roads, was constructed in 2006 and 2007.

But when the bottom fell out of the economy in 2008 and 2009, developers put a stop to the project.

The site, which is also near Redwine United Methodist Church and less than a half-mile east of Ga. 13, has languished as an “eyesore” ever since. Trees and other vegetation cover the otherwise vacant property.

Brian Rochester, executive vice president of Rochester & Associates, a Gainesville land development firm representing the landowners, said there was lots of enthusiasm about growth in South Hall before the recession hit.

“Pretty much if you built it, they would come and buy it,” he added.

It’s been a struggle ever since, though things are picking up.

For example, Rochester said, several subdivisions, including Sterling on the Lake, Cresswind at Lake Lanier and a development on Mundy Mill Road, are among the fastest-growing sales of homes outside of metro Atlanta.

Inside the perimeter, the economic recovery and housing rebound began about three to four years ago, Rochester said, and 2015 is proving to be Hall County’s time to bounce back.

However, condos no longer fit the needs for Oakwood, Rochester said, and so the move was made to consider townhomes.

“We feel like that was a great approach,” he added.

The zoning for Hawthorne will be changed from residential to planned residential development.

The council approved a condition that requires a homeowners association at the complex, which would limit the number of rentals.

Rochester said the plan is to sell all of the townhomes, with prices likely ranging in the mid-\$100,000s to \$200,000s.

Parking spots will be added to the complex design to accommodate visitors.

“It’s obvious it’s not big enough for parking” on the street, Mayor Lamar Scroggs said.

City Manager Stan Brown said the townhomes will require additional sewer capacity with the increase in units.

Completion of Hawthorne Village is expected in 2018.

But it is not yet clear who the builder will be.

Rochester said it was necessary to get the rezoning approved and other aspects in place before proceeding further.

“We’re kind of in a chicken-and-the-egg” situation when it comes to finding a builder, he added.