

Public Comments

A public forum was held during the May 1st City Council meeting. The subject of the forum was the application request from Dollar General for the rezoning of a parcel of land (#C1810043C00) on Queens Cemetery Road from (A) Agriculture to (B1) Business. There was also a request for a variance in the parking lot to reduce the number of parking spaces from 48 spaces to 38 spaces. The meeting was attended by 34 residents of Good Hope, the City attorney, representative of Sullivan Wickley, The Mayor, City Council and the City Clerk.

Mayor Guthrie welcomed the group. He explained the rules of the forum, which stated that anyone that wanted to speak would have a chance. They will sign in at the podium, state their name and address and would be given three (3) minutes to speak. There would be no questions answered as that was the purpose of the Public Hearing on April 10th. This forum is intended for the residents of Good Hope to state their case concerning the request of Dollar General.

Of the citizens and others present, twenty (20) people spoke. Fifteen (15) expressed concern regarding the building of a Dollar General while five (5) expressed positive reasons in favor of the Dollar General. Below is the list of those that chose to speak and a brief synopsis of what they had to say.

Darrell Matheny - 247 Queens Cemetery Road

Concerns were of Safety, Security, Noise, No Police Force in Good Hope, Property Values
Why not build on land already zoned commercial, 140 people affected. Had a map of the area but after further review it was found to be inaccurate.

Ted Chapman – 122 Queens Cemetery Road 15 years

Concerns are -We will lose the small community feel, why does Walton County need another Dollar General. Do we sacrifice what we have for convenience? What about the lights.

Katie May – The Preserve 1 year

Concern was that Dollar Generals attract undesirable people.

Rob Rojas – Representative of Sullivan Wickley - Dollar General

Said Dollar General is ready to approve all recommendations requested by the P&Z committee
Channel Lettering, Dumpsters, 3 side brick, 25 ft. buffer to shield the project from the surrounding area, lights will be placed in a downward position, will employ 8-10 possible Good Hope citizens.

Michelle Vines – 222 Queens Cemetery Road

Concern is that her husband travels and they moved here where she feels safe. Will lose that security with a Dollar General so close to the neighborhood.

Wade Edmondson - Queens Cemetery and Owner of Good Hope General, Life Long Resident
Concerns are that the dumpsters are an eye sore, Crime and wants to keep Good Hope country.

George Prather – 156 Hwy 83 born here in 1937 Father born 1880 in Good Hope, both former Mayors.
Pointed out that History shows that Good Hope was a bustling town with a school, several businesses and a couple of stores. Said people talk about keeping Good Hope like it is, what about how it was. He

complimented the council and P&Z on the job they do and told each to vote their heart.

Wayne Gedansky – 14 S Hwy 83 Glass Building Owner 32 years Lives in High Shoals
Said change was inevitable but did our sleepy town really want to start that change with a Dollar General? Showed a picture of the Dollar General on Hwy 138 with trash all around. Said the grass was never maintained, retaining ponds are an eye sore, crime is rampant in Dollar General stores. Had those that were in attendance to raise their hand if they were against the Dollar General. A little over half the people raised their hands.

Abbie Bennett – 3794 Hwy 83 Lives outside of Good Hope City limits
Said she likes to camp and frequently shops at Dollar General. Said they are nice even the ones outside of major cities. Would like to see one built in Good Hope.

Jason Laughinghouse - 116 Queens Cemetery Road 8 months
He and his wife have not been here long and this is their first home. They are planning to raise a family but don't want a Dollar General right across the street. Didn't see any signs advertising the rezoning meeting and is worried about crime.

Becky Brewer - 204 Queens Cemetery Road 27 years in the community
Showed a photo of a fence the Dollar General in Oconee County. Said she spoke with a lot of people and most didn't know about the possibility of a Dollar General being built in Good Hope. She said they are an eye sore, Crime rates go up, she said she obtained the 911 calls from the Monroe Store and there were calls about juvenile problems, suspicious people or cars, hit and runs in the parking lot and domestic violence. She also said the store in Madison was in disarray inside and out.

Eleanor Prather – 156 Highway 83 57 years
Said she has raised her family and now her grandchildren are being raised in Good Hope. She shops at Dollar General and she is not a criminal. Said she has never noticed the filth being talked about. Would love to have a Dollar General to pick up items like a card, milk and bread. She said we have good people in Good Hope and the store will be a reflection of those that shop there.

Keeli Laughinghouse - 116 Queens Cemetery Road
She is originally from Monroe. Doesn't want to live across from a Dollar General and is afraid that they won't be able to sell their house.

Mary Prather – 370 Pleasant Valley Road
Said she shops at Dollar General. Some are clean and others not so much. The store is a reflection of the people that shop there. She thinks a Dollar General in Good Hope will complement the community.

Wayne Kerry - Not from Good Hope
Loves this town. Said you can always build but once it's built you can't take it away. The Winder store was violent. Is afraid a store in Good Hope will make bad changes for the town.

Wayne Cox - 1694 Queens Cemetery Road 65 years
Said ditto what Wayne Kerry said

Gwen Smith - 253 Highway 186

Wanted to know who the mayor was and talked directly to him. Said Dollar Generals are clean when they are built but get worse as time goes by. Grew up with the Loganville Guthrie's. She has lived in Atlanta and then lived in Stockbridge. Said her daddy built stores but never built one in residential areas. Said she never saw any signage announcing the planning and zoning hearing.

Rhonda Matheny – 247 Queens Cemetery Road

Would like a Dollar General in Good Hope if it wasn't right in their neighborhood. Worries about herself and her neighbors.

Debbie Lowe – 110 Queens Cemetery Road

Concerned about the trash. Said there is a similar situation in her neighborhood that the City has not rectified so how will they handle the trash at the Dollar General.

Mike Lamar – 412 Rabbit Run

Concerned about the traffic bottlenecking at the church and said retention ponds are awful.