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## NEWS



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Wednesday, May 25, 2005

# Proposed ponds worry aviators

***BY KATHRYN BASSETT***

AUBURN — The issue of geese control could make or break the future of the proposed Diamond Lake Estates subdivision south of the DeKalb County Airport.

After a three-hour hearing Tuesday night, the DeKalb County Plan Commission continued its hearing on the subdivision until June 15. On that date, developers must present a plan for controlling geese on ponds at the site, the commission agreed.

Stuart M. and Tamra S. Stier want to develop a 64-lot subdivision on 160 acres along C.R. 64., about a quarter-mile east of C.R. 427. The subdivision plan includes two 3-acre ponds and one 1.5-acre pond, the Plan Commission heard.

The average home price in the development will be \$300,000, the commission heard. While the primary plat is for 64 lots, future plans call for expanding the development to 94 lots, said project engineer Mike Kline.

Brad Stump, treasurer of the DeKalb County Aviation Board, and airport manager Russ Couchman spoke at Tuesday's hearing.

The DeKalb County Aviation Board is reviewing plans to establish rules of airport land-use compatibility. Stump said wildlife attractors, such as ponds, are major concerns.

Couchman described an aircraft-bird collision as potentially "catastrophic." He told the commission, "The issue I have is the concern with the added wildlife hazard."

Kline said he thinks the issue can be handled.

"I don't think that a pond necessarily equates you are going to have geese," he said.

Kline said the Stiers are willing to draw up stringent residents' association rules that would help keep geese away from the ponds. He introduced Jeffrey Ling, president of Flock Fighters commercial nuisance bird control, to testify.

Ling said every site in DeKalb County is habitat for birds. However, he said, the geese can be



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controlled.

Plan Commission attorney David Kruse said, "It sounds as though this control of geese is a deal-breaker for some Plan Commission members."

Plan Commission member Mark Strong said he wants to see a plan that will convince him that bird control can be accomplished. If not, he would be supportive of dry ponds at the subdivision, he added.

The Stiers said they do not want dry ponds because the development's lakes are what would make it so attractive.

The DeKalb County Board of Zoning Appeals also will weigh in on the issue of the lakes. It is scheduled to hear the Stiers' request for a special exception for two of the artificial lakes on June 6 at 7 p.m.

The Plan Commission also listened to the airport's concerns about the density of homes in the northeast corner of the development.

Stump said he feared residents in the new development could complain about airport noise in the future. He suggested that noise-remonstrance waivers should be signed by all residents in the development.

The Stiers said they are willing to work with the Plan Commission to address those concerns and notify potential property buyers about airport noise.

Kline said his clients have worked to comply with all the airport's rules and regulations that currently are in place.

"We feel we have complied with everything we knew about when this was submitted," he said. "I just feel we have done everything we can."

Some neighbors fear the development will generate heavy traffic and dust on gravel roads.

"It's going to be more than a few extra cars," said Alyce Schnelker.

The plan calls for paving of C.R. 64 at the development. Schnelker said it would "help considerably" if C.R. 27 also were paved from C.R. 62 to C.R. 68.

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