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Eyes on the Road: Oakwood to hold hearing on Stringer Road project

Oakwood is holding its third of four required public hearings Thursday as part of an \$800,000 road project related to M. Stringer Road at the King's Hawaiian plant.

The hearing is set for noon at City Hall, 4035 Walnut St., with officials set to discuss project details and costs, benefits to and impacts on low and moderate-income people, and plans to "further" Fair Housing laws.

The hearing is required as part a \$500,000 community development block grant through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Employment Incentive Program.

The incentive program pays for a variety of projects, but those "creating opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons to advance themselves by obtaining employment, greater job security, better working conditions, job training, enhancement of workplace skills and advancement opportunities receive the greatest consideration," states the DCA website.

Oakwood plans to use the grant toward realigning M. Stringer, which juts off H.F. Reed Industrial Parkway.

"This is the post-award public hearing," City Manager Stan Brown said. "At (the grant's closeout), we have to do another public hearing."

The road is under construction with completion set for Nov. 24.

"They're basically taking that road down to a lower grade," Brown said. "When I was over there Friday, they were excavating a lot of dirt."

He has said the road "will be built and designed in a manner where you could carry it all the way to McEver Road."

A \$300,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission also is being sought for the project.

"That has not been awarded yet," he said.

Also, the road's name will change upon completion to Aloha Way, a reference to King's Hawaiian, a California-based bakery that began operating in 2011 at the site with one production line in a 120,000-square-foot building.

A second line began operating in the building this spring, with King's Hawaiian now up to 300 workers.

John Linehan, the California-based company's executive vice president, has said construction of a second 120,000-square-foot building could wrap up this fall. The new building will feature two lines, with one operating initially.

"Some day, when we have four lines running (in Oakwood) and some more office space, we'll probably have about 600 people there," he said in July.