September 15, 2026
DAWSON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DAWSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

The Dawson County Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Jason Hamby

Neil Hornsby gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Jason Hamby.

Members present: Jason Hamby, District 1 Chairman; John Maloney, District 2; Shelton Townley, District 3; and Neil Hornsey, District 4 Vice Chairman.

Staff present: Richard Batten (Planning Manager), Richard Osborne (Director of Community Development), and Leah Prichard (Zoning Administrator).

Chairman Jason Hamby requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2026 minutes as prepared. Motion passed by a vote of 4-0. (Maloney/Townley)

Chairman Jason Hamby requested a motion to approve the agenda, as presented by staff. Motion passed by a vote of 4-0. (Hornsey/Maloney)

Chairman Jason Hamby announced We will first hear from the applicant. We will then hear from those speaking in favor of the application, followed by those speaking in opposition. Each individual wishing to address the Board will be allotted three (3) minutes in accordance with the zoning regulations. All speakers are required to sign in and state their name and address for the record. Speakers must address the Planning Commission and not other members of the public. Any individual speaking in favor of or in opposition to an application who has made campaign contributions in excess of $250.00 to any local elected official is required to complete a Disclosure of Campaign Contribution Form.

New Business:

VA 26-42: Avery Adams with Image Manufacturing Group has submitted an application requesting a variance from the Dawson County Land Development Code, Article IX, Chapter 129-224(b)(1), which states that "Only one wall sign shall be permitted per tenant space with the following exception: in the entertainment overlay district, the maximum number of wall signs allowed per tenant space shall be three". Please note that this specific property is not located within the entertainment overlay district. The applicant is requesting to allow for an additional wall sign on the side of the building (true north). The subject property is zoned C-HB (Commercial Highway Business) and are located at 215 Market Place Blvd., Suite 200, Dawsonville, Georgia 30534 (Parcel No. 107 318 017).

Chairman Jason Hamby deferred to Richard Batten. Mr. Batten explained the request for a second wall sign

for First Watch, which recently renovated an existing building. The proposed sign would be located on the north side of the building facing Dawson Market Way, while the existing sign faces Georgia 400. Mr. Batten explained that the previous sign ordinance allowed multi-tenant buildings to have wall signs on each street frontage, but the current ordinance permits only one wall sign. Mr. Batten also noted that Starbucks, which shares the building, has signage on two sides. Mr. Batten stated that the request would not be out of character with the previous signage or surrounding businesses.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak on behalf of the application. Cary Renn of 4358 Sandy Beach Drive Buford, GA 30579. Mr. Renn explained that the previous sign ordinance permitted signage on multiple tenant-facing elevations, while the updated ordinance limits each tenant to one wall sign. Due to the building's location and multiple customer-facing elevations, the additional signage would improve visibility and assist customers in locating the business. Mr. Renn stated that the request was not intended to create excessive signage but to maintain visibility consistent with the previous ordinance and surrounding commercial development. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Renn confirmed that First Watch currently occupies the former Mod Pizza location and explained that the original signage proposal included two signs but that the ordinance changed during the approval process.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in favor of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby closed the Board for discussion.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked for a motion.
Motion to approve the request was passed 3-0 (Maloney/Townley)

VA 26-43: LaToya Moten with Christian Brothers Automotive Corporation has submitted an application requesting three (3) different variances from the Dawson County Land Development Code.

Article IV, Chapter 121 - 102(3)(b), which states that the required front setback is 40' and the required side setback is 25'. The applicant is requesting to reduce the required front setback down to 10' and the required side setback down to 10' to allow the Dumpster enclosure to sit closer to the property lines.

Article VI, Chapter 121 - 174 (a)(4), which states "A parking lot pavement setback of ten feet from any public street right-of-way and 20 feet from any exterior property line shall be provided, except where access points and interconnections to other parcels have been approved." The applicant is requesting to reduce the required 20' parking lot setback to 5' on all sides of the property.

Article II, 109 - 24 (a)(1), which states "In a landscape strip at least 20 feet in width adjacent to any street right-of-way abutting the property and running the length of the entire property frontage." The applicant is requesting to reduce the required 20' landscaping strip down to 10' on both adjacent streets right of ways. The subject property is zoned C-HB (Commercial Highway Business) and are located between North 400 Center Lane and High 400 North. (Parcel No. 113 087)

Chairman Jason Hamby deferred to Richard Batten. Mr. Batten explained the request for three variances for a proposed automotive maintenance facility for Christian Brothers Automotive Corporation on approximately 0.68 acres of undeveloped property along Georgia 400, between AutoZone and El Jinete Mexican Restaurant. Mr. Batten explained that the requested building setback reduction for the dumpster enclosure is a common request and appropriate for the site, as it would allow the dumpster to be located away from the building and out of sight. Regarding the requested parking lot pavement setback and landscape strip reductions, Mr. Batten noted that the neighboring properties were developed under previous ordinance requirements that have since been updated. Mr. Batten explained that the proposed 10-bay automotive maintenance facility would be relatively large for the size of the property. The requested pavement setback reduction from 20 feet to 5 feet represents a 75% reduction, which Mr. Batten considered highly unusual. The requested landscape strip reduction from 20 feet to 10 feet represents a 50% reduction and would essentially negate the updated landscaping requirements. Mr. Batten stated that while developing the proposed facility without these variances would be difficult, much of that difficulty results from the size of the proposed development in relation to the size of the property.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak on behalf of the application. Noah Chapman of 3475 Corporate Way Suite A Duluth, GA 30096. Mr. Chapman explained that the property is located near the intersection of Highway 53 and Georgia 400 and that changes to the development ordinance since the property was originally platted have made the parcel difficult to develop under current setback and landscaping requirements. Mr. Chapman stated that the requested reductions would be consistent with the setbacks and landscaping of the surrounding developments and would not place the proposed building or parking areas any closer to Georgia 400 than neighboring properties. Mr. Chapman also provided background on Christian Brothers Automotive Corporation, stating that the company operates more than 300 locations nationwide and provides general automotive repair services, excluding major engine and transmission rebuilds, bodywork, and painting. In response to Board questions, Mr. Chapman confirmed that the proposed facility would consist of 10 service bays and approximately 30 parking spaces.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in favor of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby closed the Board for discussion.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked for a motion.
Motion to approve the request was passed 3-0 (Townley/Maloney)

ZA 26-19: Wanda Stephens has submitted an application to the proper authorities requesting a Land Use Amendment and rezoning of 2.35 surveyed acres from RA (Residential Agriculture) to RSR (Residential Sub-Rural) to allow for a compliant sell of property. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Lanier Future Land Use/Character Area Map. The subject property is located at 145 Dogwood Way, Dawsonville, 30534 (Parcel Numbers: L05 011 001).

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak on behalf of the application. Wanda Stephens of 611 White Pine Drive Dahlonega. Mrs. Stephens [redacted]ained that she and her husband, Terry, purchased the 2.35-acre property under the assumption that it [redacted]a buildable lot. However, the property is currently

zoned RA (Residential Agriculture), which requires a minimum of five acres. Mrs. Stephens requested rezoning from RA to RSR (Residential Sub-Rural) to allow the property to be buildable and consistent with the zoning of adjoining properties. She stated that the property previously had two homes and a septic system. In response to Board questions, Mrs. Stephens explained that the homes had been demolished after she purchased the property through foreclosure. She stated that one home was partially constructed around 2008 and that the previous home may have been located within the footprint of the newer structure.

Chairman Jason Hamby deferred to Richard Batten. Mr. Batten explained that Mrs. Stephens intends to develop the property for a single-family residence to be sold. Staff noted that the current RA zoning does not allow for construction of a single-family home due to the property's acreage and because it does not qualify as a grandfathered lot of record. Staff further stated that rezoning the property to RSR (Residential Sub-Rural) would be consistent with the designated land use identified in the current Dawson County Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in favor of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby closed the Board for discussion. Mr. Hornsey asked Mr. Batten for clarification regarding the requirements for a property to be considered grandfathered. Mr. Batten explained that a property may qualify as a lot of record if it was established prior to changes in the zoning ordinance and no modifications have been made to the property boundaries. He stated that qualifying properties may be grandfathered under the previous minimum lot size requirements rather than the current five-acre minimum for RA zoning. Mr. Hornsey then asked what changes had occurred to the subject property, and Mr. Batten confirmed that the property lines had been modified.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked for a motion.
Motion to approve the request was passed 3-0 (Hornsey/Townley)

ZA 26-21: Farid Kapadia of Citytec Design LLC has submitted an application to the proper authorities requesting a Land Use Amendment and rezoning of 3.63 surveyed acres from C-PCD (Commercial Planned Comprehensive Development) to C-HB (Commercial Highway Business) to allow for the construction of a new Hampton Inn (Hotel). The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Georgia 400 Mixed Use Future Land Use/Character Area Map. The subject property is located between Blue Ridge Parkway and Highway 400 South (Parcel Numbers: 107 319 011, 107 319 012, and 107 319 013).

Chairman Jason Hamby deferred to Richard Batten. Mr. Batten explained that the subject property consists of three parcels that were originally part of a larger development rezoned approximately 20 years ago under the C-PCD (Commercial Planned Comprehensive Development) zoning district. He noted that the property is surrounded by existing restaurants and apartments and that the representatives involved in the original master plan are no longer associated with the ongoing development of the area. Mr. Batten stated that, based on the current development plans and proposed hotel use, rezoning the property to C-HB (Commercial Highway Business) would be appropriate.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak on behalf of the application. Ben Vaughn of 20 W. Main Street Forsyth, GA 31029. Mr. Vaughn explained the request to rezone approximately 3.63 acres, consisting of three parcels along Georgia 400, from C-PCD (Commercial Planned Comprehensive Development) to C-HB (Commercial Highway Business) to allow for the construction of a hotel. He explained that the C-PCD zoning district has been removed from the current zoning ordinance and that the proposed C-HB zoning would be more appropriate for the intended development and consistent with surrounding commercial uses. Mr. Vaughn stated that the proposed hotel would consist of approximately 48,000 square feet, 85 guest rooms, common areas, and 95 parking spaces. He provided information regarding CityTec's previous hotel developments and presented the proposed building elevations, site plan, landscaping, parking layout, and surrounding zoning districts. He also referenced comparable hotels in the area and noted that the proposed development would generate additional tax revenue for Dawson County. In response to Board questions, Mr. Vaughn explained that CityTec owns, designs, and constructs hotels but does not operate them. He confirmed that the proposed hotel would be sold upon completion and that a buyer had already been identified.

Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in favor of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition of the application. There were none.
Chairman Jason Hamby closed the Board for discussion.
Chairman Jason Hamby asked for a motion.
Motion to approve the request was passed 3-0 (Maloney/Hornsey)

Planning Update:

There were none.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36p.m.

Jason Hamby, Chairman — Date: 10-20-26

Attest: Cathi Coggin — Date: 10-20-26