Effingham County Georgia
Planning and Zoning Services

EFFINGHAM COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2026
804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Ga 31329

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jake Patrick at 6:00 p.m.

IV. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

- Jake Patrick, District 2
- Walter Boykin, District 3
- Troy Smith, District 1
- Neal Kessler, District 4

Staff Present:

- Pamela Melser, Director of Development Services
- Michael King, Assistant County Manager
- Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
- Ashley Marin, Planning Board Clerk

V. INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Chairman Mr. Neal Kessler.

VI. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present and led by Neal Kessler.

VII. AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion: To approve the agenda
Made by: Mr. Walter Boykin
Seconded by: Mr. Troy Smith
Vote: Unanimous

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes of the July 14, 2026, meeting (excluding Mr. Neal Kessler from the vote)
Made by: Mr. Walter Boykin
Seconded by: Mr. Troy Smith
Vote: Unanimous

IX. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Ashley Shuman, David Bowers, Belinda Bowers, Karen Bridnley, Jim Brindley, Carmen Dickerson, Robert Dickerson, Sandra Podd, Lindsay Podd, Daniel Shuman, David Roberson, Laura Roberson, Scheldon Paulk, Shannon Patrick

X. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Jake Patrick stated that all items presented during this portion of the meeting will be presented at a future Board of Commissioners Meeting as a Public Hearing. (09/01/26)

PUBLIC HEARING (1)

Applicant: Ashley Shuman, requests to rezone +/- 2.00 acres from AR-2 to AR-1 to allow for permitted uses in AR-1. Located on 192 Hurley Smart Road. [Third District] [Map # 381 Parcel 19]

Request
Senior Planner Barlett explained that the applicant requests to rezone approximately +/-2.00 acres from AR-2 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-1** to recombine the 2-acre parcel with the adjoining 2-plus-acre parcel. The recombination would result in a

single parcel of approximately 5.28 acres, allowing the combined property to meet the minimum lot size requirements of **AR-1.**

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Ashley Shuman- When the property was bought in two parcels. They are looking to combine them to minimize tax bills as the main reason.

Speaking in opposition: No one present

The Board discussed the matter and agreed it was straightforward.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approved
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Troy Smith
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (2)

Scott Kessler requests to rezone +/- 8.29 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. Located on 4386 Midland Road. [Second District] [Map # 397 Parcel 4 & 5]

Request:
Senior Planner Barlett explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **+/-8.29 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)** to **AR-2** to allow for the property to be divided into smaller family lots. The applicant also intended to convey approximately two acres to his children while retaining flexibility for future family needs and property line adjustments.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Scott Kessler- Wants to split the tract to give his daughter land. The property has 20-foot access at Millan Road, which was originally surveyed in the early 80s. He will be moving property lines to give the 60-foot easement to that property, and that will consume some of his 2-acre lot, which is why he is making it into AR-2.

Speaking in opposition: no one present

The Board discussed that Jake Patrick stated it is his district and does not foresee an issue with it. There's already a lot of surrounding AR-2 there. Especially with family needs and keeping the families together. Kessler stated he would like to see AR-3, but everything is already there. He is all about the compound concept of keeping the family together. It is limited to what can be done with the access.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approved
- **Made by**: Mr. Troy Smith
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

Recuse: Troy Smith from items 3 & 4
Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (3)

Applicant: Herschel Paulk, requests to rezone +/- 1 acre from AR-1 to AR-2 and 4.00 acres from AR-1 to AR-3 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2 & AR-3. Located on 563 Keith Road. [Third District] [Map # 270 Parcel 12]

Request

Senior Planner Kimberly Barlett explained that the applicant requests to rezone approximately +/-5.00 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural

Residential) to **AR-2 and AR-3** to divide the property into two residential lots. Approximately 1.00 acre will be rezoned to AR-2. They will contain the existing stick-built residences, while the remaining approximately 4.00 acres will be rezoned to AR-3 for construction of a new single-family home. The applicant provided a soil study.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Herschel Paulk- He owns both lots that make an L shape. Both lots meet the road frontages and the setbacks. There is an old site where they used to have a mobile home. There is already a septic that is still good, and a well that serves both premises. The only thing that the 4.00-acre lot needs is a well sunk for it. There are wetlands in the back; a survey was done within the last week. He thinks there are 2.78 acres of dry ground at the back of the woods where the wetlands used to be.

Speaking in opposition: No one present

The Board discussed that they would like to see the surrounding zoning in that area. They see a couple of AR-2s up and down the road. They are trying to make sure they are not spot zoning by putting AR-2s in higher-acreage places. They prefer AR-3, but it will not work for that lot.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Walker Boykins
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (4)

Applicant: Thomas Christmas requests to rezone +/- 1.46 acres out of +/- 16.73 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow for permitted use in AR-2. Located at 1235 Corinth Church Road. [Third District] [Map # 311 Parcel 11]

Request:

Senior Planner Kimberly Barlett explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately +/-1.46 acres out of 16.73 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 so that it can be subdivided from the parent tract and conveyed to the applicant's children for future residential use. The remaining acreage would retain its existing AR-1 zoning; the property has a private well and septic and access from Corn Church Road. There are wetlands, and a soil study has been provided.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Thomas Christmas- The intent is to give his daughter and husband a place to live. He has a lot of wetlands on the property and was limited in where he could place the home. Therefore, he placed it in the middle of the property. The original intent was to put it on the side road front, but it was full of wetlands. He stated it was a good idea to give her 1.5 acres to place a mobile home. It shares the driveway. He said he isn't opposed to AR-3, but he realized it will need to be 2.50 acres and will need to be AR-3. He just planted 1,000 pine trees back there, and it will really interfere with his plan to plant all those pine trees. He has 4 other kids and said that at some point they will need a place, so he is trying to accommodate them.

Speaking in opposition: No one present

The Board discussed whether he would oppose doing AR-3. They agree to leave property to their children or enough for anyone in their family. They would like to see 2.5 acres for the AR-3, but there isn't so much property to go around. They don't want to open the door for AR-2 for just one acre down the road in the future, stating they are stuck with approving. Most of the back is wetlands. With

wetlands, you need more than 1.00 acres of dry land, which is why he had to go with more than 1 acre for his daughter. There are a few AR-2s around, but they understand it is for family. They want to add stipulations: a maximum of 5 lots.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

Board Action: Bring Mr. Troy Smith back

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

-**Recuse- Jake Patrick from items 5 & 6**
Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykins
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Troy Smith
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (5)

Applicant: Shannon Patrick , requests to rezone +/- 5.38 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2. Located on Nease Road. [First District] [Map # 374 Parcel 35A02]

Request
Senior Planner, Barlett, explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **±5.38 acres** from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)** to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)**. The purpose of the request is to allow the applicant to subdivide the property into four residential lots. The intention is to construct stick-built homes on each lot for future sale.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Mr. Shannon Patrick stated they would like to bring more affordable housing for first-time homebuyers in the area.

Speaking in objection: No one present

The Board discussed the zoning classification that best suits the area.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Troy Smith
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (6)

Applicant: David Bowers requests to rezone +/- 1.77 acres from AR-1 to B-1 to allow for permitted use of B-1. Located on 659 Blue Jay Road. [Second District] [Map # 432 Parcel 43]

Request:
Senior Planner, Barlett, explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **±1.77 acres** from **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre or more)** to **B-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)** to allow for future commercial development.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Ms. Shannon Patrick is representing the Bowers; due to the development surrounding the property, they felt commercial would be better suited. They are offering a list of uses that are excluded if approved. As a condition of approval, the following uses otherwise

permitted within the B-1 zoning district would be **excluded from the subject property:**

Hotel/Motel up to 75 rooms
Hotel/Motel over 75 rooms
Pharmacy for medical cannabis dispensary or medical marijuana dispensary
Mortician-Mortuary
Automotive sales, service and storage
Boat sales and repairs
Convenience store (no gas pumps)
Gas Stations (less than 10 pumps)
Movie Theaters
Telecommunications Towers
Nursing Homes
Cemeteries
Funeral Homes

Ms. Belinda Bowers stated that after she purchased her home, she was notified that the school would be constructed behind her house. She plans to relocate to a less developed area. She stated that most of her land was bought for the turning lane. She would like to see an educational center or small coffee shop on the property.

Speaking in objection:

Ms. Karen Brindley stated she owned the property bought for the school. She expressed concerns about commercial use in a residential area.

Mr. Jim Brindley explained the proposed access road and expressed concerns that commercial use would set a precedent in the area and increase traffic.

Ms. Kimberly Lopez expressed concerns about commercial use in a residential area and potential uses.

The Board discussed the B-1 classification and uses, the need for goods and services for the community, and the restrictions provided by the applicant.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approved with conditions
- **Made by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Troy Smith
- **Vote:** Unanimous
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Board Action:

- **Motion: Bring Chairman Jake Patrick back to the meeting**
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (7)

Applicant: Guy Davidson, as agent for Joan Akins, requests to rezone +/- 45.5 acres from AR-1 to R-5 to allow for permitted uses in R-5. Located on 557 Goshen Road. [Second District] [Map # 451 Parcel 55]

Request

Senior Planner Barlett explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **+/-45.5 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)** to **R-5 (Single-family traditional neighborhood)** to develop a single-family detached-lot subdivision.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Mr. William Wallace explained the proposed R-5 development for 103 lots and presented the site. Points included zoning, proposed housing examples, utilities, stormwater, amenities, open space, buffers, and wetlands.

Speaking in objection:

Mr. Jimmy Blakey expressed concerns that small lots would destroy the rural atmosphere.

Mr. DJ Robertson expressed concerns about how busy Goshen Road is and too many unfinished road improvements.

Mr. Robert Dickerson expressed concerns regarding traffic and quality of life for residents.

Ms. Jill Anderson expressed concerns about access and hurricanes.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding density and wetland impacts, meeting the ordinance, road improvements, and previously approved lots in the county.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Deny
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** 2 for approval Patrick & Smith), 2 in opposition; no board action taken (tie vote)

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Action:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM
- **Made by:** Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Jake Patrick
- **Vote:** Unanimous

Jake Patrick

9/11/26

CHAIRMAN OF PLANNING BOARD **DATE**
EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

Kimberly Barlett

09/10/2026

PLANNING BOARD CLERK **DATE**

Signature: Jake Patrick
Jake Patrick (Sep 11, 2026 09:35:31 EDT)

Email: jakepatrickrealtor@gmail.com

Pbm_08112026

Final Audit Report 2026-09-11

Created:	2026-09-10
By:	Kimberly Barlett (KBarlett@EffinghamCounty.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA1jQTxGqpY_ILv1N7FPFMjrk38pXyj_gA

"Pbm_08112026" History

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2026-09-10 - 2:03:48 PM GMT

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2026-09-11 - 1:23:18 PM GMT

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