Effingham County Georgia
Board of Commissioners

Damon M. Rahn, Chairman at Large
Forrest F. Floyd, District 1
Roger Burdette, District 2
Jamie Deloach, District 3
Elizabeth Helmly, District 4
Phil Kieffer, District 5

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 29, 2026

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Roger Burdette, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Ms. Elizabeth Helmly and Mr. Phil Kieffer, met in work session 10:00am on Saturday, August 29, 2026 in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers at the Effingham County Administrative Complex located at 804 South Laurel Street Springfield, Georgia 31329.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Manager, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Mr. Jake Zeigler – Communications Manager and Ms. Maraya Durham – I.T. Specialist.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Karen McDonald, Jane Nancy, Michelle Jenkins, Brian Pepe, LuAnn Grath, Raymond Carver, Carrie Weber, Christy Williams, Brian Mallory, Darlene Ainsworth, Nicholas A. Williams, Jacob Carroll, Carey Graham, Katie Vandenhouten, Brett Sanduski, Jimmy Blakey, Jason Blakey, Al Levy, Scott Zink, Andrew Young II, Thomas Tucker, Sid Abraham, Andy Hutson, Trey R. Minick, Lori B. Minick, Linda Hodgson, Harrold, Wheeler Jr, Ron Williamson, Warren Myers, Sharee McKenzie, Denise Payne, Christina Webster, Dennis Telfer, Sue Telfer, Crystal Hayes, Erica Biezenbos, Angel Ratcliffe, Ashley Swartz, Raymond Malloy, Leonidas C. Smith Jeffrey, Kal-el Jeffrey, Manjusha Sheobaran, Lindsey Hoffman, David Dillie, Rachael Gosetti, Nicole V, Rosanna Lak, Melanie Brewer, Kenny Lak, Karen McDonald, Carrie Weber, and John Smith.

I - CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Kieffer called the session to order at 10:01am

II- ROLL CALL

Damon Rahn, Chairman - *Absent*
Forrest Floyd
Roger Burdette
Jamie Deloach
Beth Helmly
Phil Kieffer, Vice Chairman

III- INVOCATION

Commissioner Burdette offered the invocation.

III– PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge was led by Commissioner Burdette.

III – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice Chair Kieffer stated comments shall pertain to the agenda items only. Should you wish to make remarks, clearly state your full name into the microphone before commencing to speak.

IV- DISCUSSION OUTLINE

The session provided residents with a comprehensive look at Project Camellia to include the following:

1. **History of IDA**
2. **Site Concept Plan**
3. **Site History**
4. **Zoning History**
5. **Project Camellia Timeline**
6. **PILOT Information**
7. **Permitting Process**
8. **Water**
9. **Noise**
10. **Power**
11. **Traffic**
12. **Taxes & Benefits**
13. **Project Zero**
14. **Questions/Comments**

County Manager Callanan began the work session presentation detailing the governance framework, zoning history, environmental protections, and economic impacts associated with Project Camellia (OpenAI data center).

The meeting proceeded to the public Q&A portion, with County Clerk Johnson managing the timer. The Board extended the time beyond the scheduled 30-minute allotment to accommodate public input after the presentation finished early. Speakers were granted three minutes each, proceeding in sequence from the sign-up list.

Speakers: Raymond Carver, Carrie Webber, Nancy Wamslee, Kenneth Lak, Karen McDonald, John Smith, Harold Wheeler Jr., Nicole V., Rosanna Lak, Melanie Brewer, Denise Payne, Nicholas Williams**,** Carey Graham**,** Katie Vandenhouten, Brett Sanduski and Jacob Carroll expressed concerns with DBC Decibels, Zoning vs. Residential Growth, Traffic & Infrastructure, Environmental & Buffer Limits, Contractual Enforcement via Bonds, Transparency & Document Access, Emergency Response & Staffing Shortages, Natural Gas Deregulation & Utility Spikes, Lack of Early Notice & Moratoriums, Tax Indemnification & IDA Millage, Flaws in the Development of Regional Impact (DRI), Air Quality & Utility Impacts, Hazardous Waste & BESS Safety,

Property Values & Regional Moratoriums, Public Transparency & NDAs, Industrial Realities & Economic Trade-Offs, Tax Terms & Decommissioning Bonds, Property Line Impacts & Noise Studies, Table of Permitted Uses (TPU) & Steering Committee, Backup Power & Emissions, IDA Land Sale & Local Revenue, Wastewater & Chemical Contamination, Fire, Explosion, and Safety Hazards, Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Health Risks, Call for Heightened Restrictions, Request for Visual Plans, Local Vendor Opportunities, Power, Water, and Resource Allocation, Environmental & Neighborhood Impacts, IDA Independence & Board Oversight, Privacy & Surveillance Systems, Environmental & Aquifer Safeguards, Preservation of Historic Cemetery, Claw back Penalties & Contractual Enforcement, Backup Power & Redacted Contracts, Homeowner Relief Funds, Public Document Accessibility, Project Scale & Disruption, IDA Accountability & Tax Levies, Water Allocation & Infrastructure Costs.

Andy Hudson expressed appreciation to the board, staff and attendees for sharing information and encouraged being intentional on about how the data center comes to fruition.

The Board reflected on the day's feedback, county leadership, explained economic motivations, and outlined how the plan moving forward. Leadership committed to hiring technical specialists and announced plans to host a public panel featuring OpenAI representatives to directly address fire suppression, safety protocols, and operational details.

III – ADJOURNMENT

At 2:35 pm, being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Damon Rahn, Chairman

Stephanie D. Johnson, County Clerk

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026