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
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Damon Rahn, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Mrs. Elizabeth Helmly, and Mr. Phil Kieffer met in work session 4:00pm on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 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, Mr. Edward Newberry – County Attorney, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy County Clerk, Ms. Chelsie Fernald – Planning Manager, Ms. Jennifer Rose – Planner I, Ms. Kimberly Barlett – Senior Planner, Mr. Xerxes Sabb – I.T. Support Specialist, Mr. Tre Wilkins – Project Manager, and Mr. Jonathan Hulme – County Engineer

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Neal Kessler.

I - CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the session to order at 4:05pm

II- WORK SESSION TOPICS

DISCUSSION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, APPENDIX C - ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE III - GENERAL PROVISIONS, SECTION 3.4 – BUFFERS (1):

County Manager Callanan initiated the discussion on buffers, intertwining with the Ebenezer Historic Overlay District discussion, specifically noting the requirement for a minimum 30-foot setback from the street. These regulations, including setbacks and lot sizes, are intended to be sufficient in achieving the desired aesthetic for the Ebenezer district, eliminating the need for more complicated design standards.

DISCUSSION OF THE EBENEZER HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT (2):

Planning Manager Fernald explained that Effingham County staff held a charette and a community meeting to gather public input on the Ebenezer Historic Overlay District ordinance. The district, encompassing areas along Ebenezer Road from Brookstone subdivision to Ebenezer Creek, is intended to maintain a rural look and prevent

commercial or high-density development. Key measures include a proposed minimum 30-foot setback from the street, restricting certain uses like home businesses, and limiting residential zoning to R-1 districts, which requires a minimum half-acre lot size. The board decided to finalize the ordinance and send a copy to residents.

DISCUSSION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR A TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE (3):

Planning Manager Fernald and the Board discussed the proposed tree protection ordinance that aims to establish consistent and enforceable guidelines for the preservation, removal, and replacement of trees on development sites. It will require a certified arborist to conduct a survey before any tree removal or land disturbance and will mandate that developers plant a minimum of two replacement trees per acre. The ordinance provides exemptions for dead or hazardous trees but proposes costly mitigations for removing healthy ones. It also seeks to address the issue of developers clear-cutting lots before seeking rezoning by potentially implementing a minimum time frame between the two actions to allow for buffer reestablishment.

DISCUSSION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, R ZONING DISTRICTS (4):

This item will be discussed at the upcoming retreat.

III – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At 5:06 pm, there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Damon Rahn, Chairman

Stephanie D. Johnson, County Clerk

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OCTOBER 7, 2025