Effingham County Georgia
Planning and Zoning Services

EFFINGHAM COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes
April 14, 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
- Neal Kessler, District 4
- Walter Boykin, District 3
- Lyndsay Smith, District 5
- Troy Smith, District 1

Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present:

- Kimberly Barlett, Planning Board Clerk
- Jennifer Rose, Planner I
- Pamela Melser, Director of Development Services
- Michael King, Assistant County Manager

V. INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mr. Neal Kessler.

VI. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

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

VII. AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion: To approve the agenda.
Made by: Mr. Neal Kessler
Seconded by: Mr. Walter Boykin
Vote: Unanimous

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes from the March 10, 2026, meeting
Made by: Mr. Walter Boykin
Seconded by: Mr. Neal Kessler
Vote: Unanimous

IX. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Ms. Deena Moore, Mr. Bryan Banner, Mr. Ritchie Dickie, Mr. Sonny Cooler, Ms. Debbie Cooler, Ms. Irma Glass, Mr. Dietmar Lutte,

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. (5/5/26)

PUBLIC HEARING (1)

Applicant: Margaret Sitton as agent for Heather Sitton requests to rezone +/- 0.70 acres from AR-1 to B-2 to allow for permitted uses in B-2. Located at 2744 US Hwy 80. [First District] [Map # 355B Parcel 7]

Request
Planner I Rose explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **0.70 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to B-2**

(General Commercial) to allow for redevelopment of the property with a **low-intensity office use**.

If the Board elects to approve the rezoning request, staff recommends the following condition:

1. **Prohibition of Equipment and Outdoor Storage**
   No cranes, rigging equipment, heavy machinery, commercial vehicles (other than standard passenger vehicles), materials, or supplies shall be stored, staged, or operated on-site.
2. **Prohibition of Industrial Activity**
   The property shall not be used for any industrial, manufacturing, repair, maintenance, or equipment servicing activities.
3. **Traffic and Operational Limitations**
   The use shall remain low-intensity, with no high-volume customer traffic or commercial delivery operations beyond typical office use.
4. **Access Management**
   Access to US Highway 80 shall be limited to the existing driveway location unless otherwise approved by **GDOT**. Any modifications to access shall require applicable state approvals.

Board Action:
Motion: To recuse Mr. Troy Smith
Made by: Mr. Walter Boykin
Seconded by: Mr. Neal Kessler
Vote: Unanimous

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of: No one present

Speaking in objection:

Mr. Sunny Cooler states he lives next door to the property and is interested in knowing what type of business it is, what will happen to the current home, and whether it will cause minimal disturbance.

Ms. Debbie Cooler is interested in whether a sign will be placed on the property for the business.

Planner Rose explained the business operations.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding zoning classification, traffic, and buffers.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Approve
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** 4 to 0

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Bring Mr. Troy Smith back to the board
- **Made by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by**: Ms. Lyndsay Smith
- **Vote:** 4 to 0

PUBLIC HEARING (2)

Applicant: Ritchie Dickey requests to rezone +/- 2.5 acres from AR-1 to AR-3 to allow for permitted uses in AR-3. Located at 4169 Ga Hwy 119 North. [Third District] [Map # 405 Parcel 26]

Request:

Planner I Rose explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **2.5 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5-acre minimum lot size) to AR-3 (Agricultural Residential; 2.5-acre minimum lot size)**.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Mr. Ritchie Dickey would like to subdivide this property so his son can inherit it.

Speaking in objection: No one present

Board Action:

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

PUBLIC HEARING (3)

Applicant: Bright Auto World requests to rezone +/- 8.61 acres from B-3 to HI to allow for permitted uses in HI. Located at 109 Commerce Court. [Fifth District] [Map # 466C Parcel 4]

Request:
Planner I Rose explained that the applicant is requesting to **rezone** approximately 8.61 acres from **B-3** (Major Commercial) **to HI** (Heavy Industrial) to bring an existing vehicle storage and export operation into compliance with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance.

If the Board elects to approve the rezoning request, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. All loading, unloading, and operational activities shall occur on-site. No vehicles, equipment, or materials shall be staged, loaded, or unloaded within public roadways, rights-of-way, or on adjacent properties.
2. A **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)** shall be required.
3. All outdoor storage areas shall be **fully enclosed with security fencing**.

4. No vehicle dismantling, salvage processing, or hazardous material handling shall occur unless separately approved.
5. Hours of operation shall be limited to **Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**.

Public Comment:

Mr. Neal Kessler had questions about the buffers.

Speaking in favor of:

Ms. Irma Glass is in favor, she explained that the same type of business is being operated at the surrounding parcels.

Mr. Dietmar Lutte stated that they are good neighbors and that they keep things clean and move things along.

Speaking in objection:

Ms. Deena Moore states she owns Deeno's Gymnastics. They were the 2nd business, and it has become more industrial. Trucks block the roadway and business entrances, creating an unsafe roadway for the families who come to their business. She has called the police several times about truck drivers who park anywhere and block traffic. The trucks are unloading cars on the street and driving through her parking lot. Junk cars have been left in her parking lot, and the roads are messed up again. These businesses have had a huge negative impact on their business. She feels they have control over the drivers and that changing the zoning would make it worse.

Mr. Bryan Banner, a founder of Deenos, said the road was repaved, and the asphalt has broken off. The three import and export businesses have truck drivers dropping cars off on the road, cutting cars in half, and threats are made by the drivers.

Ms. Irma Glass states that they have been in business since 2017, that business operations are low, and that they receive maybe one truck a day. She claims the other business is the one that produces

all the traffic. She has called the police on some drivers. She states her business operations are usually over before one o'clock. She states they ship 6 to 7 containers per week.

The Board discussed zoning classification. The concerns of truck traffic and unloading of cars in the street, the safety for the surrounding businesses, the road damage, and the number of truck shipments, vehicles in the unfenced areas, and trucks parking in the public right-of-way, the environmental risks of cars leaking fluids, and the wetlands, the need for a conditional use, and how the county will handle enforcement.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Deny for environmental concerns, truck traffic- heavy industrial in this area
- **Made by:** Ms. Lyndsay Smith
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Vote:** Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING (4)

Applicant: Dietmar Lutte requests to rezone +/- 4.84 acres from B-3 to HI to allow for permitted uses in HI. Located at 323 Commerce Drive. [Fifth District] [Map # 466C Parcel 6]

Request:
Planner I Rose explained that the applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **4.84 acres from B-3 (Major Commercial) to HI (Heavy Industrial)** to align the zoning classification with an existing vehicle storage and export operation.

The purpose of the request is to **bring the parcel into conformity with zoning requirements and facilitate the subdivision of the property into two tracts**.

If the Board elects to approve the rezoning request, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. All loading, unloading, and operational activities shall occur on-site. No vehicles, equipment, or materials shall be staged, loaded, or unloaded within public roadways, rights-of-way, or on adjacent properties.
2. A **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)** shall be required.
3. All outdoor storage areas shall be **fully enclosed with security fencing**.
4. No vehicle dismantling, salvage processing, or hazardous material handling shall occur unless separately approved.
5. Hours of operation shall be limited to **Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**.

Public Comment:

Speaking in favor of:

Mr. Dietmar Lutte explained her has the same type of operations but different parameters. He has established ways to mitigate the problems. First, he has installed cameras that run 24/7, two entry gates- one is inbound and one outbound, which helps to manage the flow of traffic. Inside his gate, four tractor-trailers can fit, and no forklifts leave the premises. He has a sign displayed that says no working, no offloading on the streets. Some of his cars are not running and have been offloaded with a forklift, but they are not dripping oil or other fluids because they have been sitting in a storage yard for many weeks before being brought to him. There is no car cutting. He would like to work to find a solution to the problems. He claims the truck traffic comes from a neighboring business, not his.

Ms. Irma Glass expressed concern about neighboring properties that are in the same line of business, but they are not allowed to operate.

Planner Rose spoke to the zoning concerns.

Speaking in objection:

Mr. Bryan Banner expressed concerns about the acre deliveries being backed up to Hwy 21, with cars stacked higher than the fences.

Ms. Deena Moore expressed concern that this ongoing issue has not been resolved.

The Board discussed zoning classification, concerns about buffers on a small lot, and if rezoned, it couldn't meet the buffers for HI, and set a precedent for a variance against buffers.

Board Action:

- **Motion:** Deny based on blocking the roads being closer to Hwy 21 and buffer requirements
- **Made by:** Ms. Lyndsay Smith
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** Unanimous

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Action:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM
- **Made by:** Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Seconded by**: Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Vote:** Unanimous

Jake Patrick 5/14/26

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

Kimberly Barlett

PLANNING BOARD CLERK

05/13/26

DATE

Signature: Jake Patrick
Jake Patrick (May 14, 2026 06:44:19 EDT)

Email: jakepatrickrealtor@gmail.com

Pbm_04142026

Final Audit Report 2026-05-14

Created:	2026-05-13
By:	Kimberly Barlett (KBarlett@EffinghamCounty.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAb1-I_wwD_L9MroryvyLPxtDKDS2hoIYZ

"Pbm_04142026" History

Document created by Kimberly Barlett (KBarlett@EffinghamCounty.org)
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Document emailed to jakepatrickrealtor@gmail.com for signature
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Signer jakepatrickrealtor@gmail.com entered name at signing as Jake Patrick
2026-05-14 - 10:44:17 AM GMT

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