

WALTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
November 6, 2025

MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Tim Hinton, John Pringle, Josh Ferguson and Chris Alexander

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Wesley Sisk, Michelle Trammel and Timothy Kemp

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS:

Charna Parker, Kristi Parr and Tracie Malcom

Chairman Tim Hinton called the meeting to order.

Josh Ferguson opened with prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

John Pringle made a Motion to approve the minutes of October 2, 2025.

Seconded by Chris Alexander

Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. CU25-0321 – Conditional Use on 1.47 acres for a place of worship for Buddha study & meditation – Applicant/Owner: Paula Kim Nguyen – property located at 3550 Bay Creek Church Road & Bay Creek Drive – Map/Parcel N044A032 – District 1**

Presentation: Paula Nguyen represented the case. She is asking permission to use her place for meditation and bible study which is very quiet on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. She stated that on Sunday people come to pray and do meditation there are approximately 5 to 10 people and the maximum would be 20 people.

She said not many people know about meditation.

Public Comment: Brian Hammock who lives at 2700 Bay Ridge Drive stated he has concerns because this is Bay Creek Estates which is a residential subdivision. He is

opposed to this and requests the Board to deny. He stated that this is not about religion but traffic. He stated that there are zoning principles and he is concerned about respect for public health and property values. He stated Walton County has a Land Use Map and rezoning and conditional use will not be correct.

Lisa & Darren Ashcraft who lives at 2799 Bay Creek Drive stated that their property borders their property. They have a 34 year old special needs daughter. They bought their property 23 years ago. She stated that their daughter has medical and behavioral issues and her bedroom is closest to this house. Their daughter does not like change. Ms. Ashcraft stated that her husband had to take early retirement to care for their daughter.

Rebuttal: Ms. Nguyen and her sister's husband, Kirk Pletcher came back for rebuttal. He stated that this is not a rezone but a conditional use. Mr. Pletcher stated he lives in Commerce, Georgia but comes here to meditate. He stated that this is not a rezoning but a conditional use and as far as traffic, this property is on the corner. The people don't come at one time and they have a meal and then the people leave. He understands the concern of the neighbor but they are not putting a sign and there is not going to be 200 people. He stated it would be like somebody coming for a dinner party. As far as people with disability, there is no noise, no chanting or beating of drums. The applicant has put money into the property to improve it and they have done planting and agriculture gardens.

Tim Hinton asked about covenants and if they had expired and someone stated that the covenants had been renewed.

Ms. Nguyen stated when she bought the property it was very quiet and they do meditation, no music and it is not a temple. It is for people to come for mediation. This is a nice peaceful place. They have room for parking and sometimes not all the people are there at the same time. This is no different than people having parties on Sundays and there is more noise there than hers.

Yum Nguyen who lives at 1936 Beach Wood Boulevard stated that as far as the next door neighbor it breaks her heart and she is respectful of the fact they are trying to maintain what they know and protecting their daughter who has special needs. She said that the neighbors think this is a hostile use but that is not true. This is just a house like family coming to visit. She has fixed the house up and has tried to add character and curb appeal. They have a garden and have planted a lot of trees. There is not much traffic and the people can park on the property and there is nobody parking on the street. This is only on Sundays where people get together to meditate and enjoy a meal together and she comes from Gainesville to enjoy the meal.

Recommendation: Motion by Josh Ferguson to recommend denial due to this property being in a single family residential neighborhood and the proposed use is not allowed but Walton County does not enforce covenants with a second by John Pringle. The motion

carried unanimously.

2. **Z25-0327- Rezone 2.28 acres from A1 to R1 to create a buildable lot – Applicant/Owner: Kim Crowe – property located at 3707 Tom Brewer Road – Map/Parcel C0470010 – District 2**

Presentation: Kim Crowe represented the case and her address is 1490 Bradley Gin Road. She purchased this property and would like to split it into 2 lots. The house will be on 1 acre and she needs the zoning changed to R1 so she can build a house on the other 1.28 acres.

Public Comment: None

Recommendation: Motion by Chris Alexander to recommend approval as submitted with a second by John Pringle. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Z25-0332 – Rezone 1.00 acre from A2 to B3 to conform with future land use – Applicant/Owner: Bill Shea – property located at 782 Highway 11 – Map/Parcel C1350044 – District 5**

Presentation: John Shea who lives at 808 McDaniel Street represented the case. He stated that Bill Shea is his father. He would like to rezone this property to highway business. This property abuts industrial and on the side is industrial and it is right below the new bypass. Josh Ferguson stated that he knows where this is and Tim Hinton stated that he rode out to look at the property. He also understands that the Applicant just wants to get the property zoned commercial for the future.

Public Comment: None

Recommendation: Motion by Tim Hinton to recommend approval as submitted with a second by John Pringle. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Z25-0333 – Rezone and Conditional Use on 2.06 acres from A2 to B2 for parking of commercial vehicles and conditional use for outside storage – Applicant/Owner: Jose Alvarez Salazar – property located at 1125 Highway 81 & Guthrie Cemetery Road – Map/Parcel C0520075 – District 3**

Presentation: Jose Salazar who lives at 1231 Sunny Court is asking permission to rezone his property to commercial for his construction business and park his vehicles on the property.

John Pringle asked him how many vehicles and Mr. Salazar stated 3 trucks and parks them there 3 times a week. He state that he stores on lot 3 commercial trucks and a bobcat.

Tim Hinton asked if he was storing concrete or storing for anyone else and Mr. Salazar stated that he was not.

John Pringle asked what entrance was he going to use would it be the one on Guthrie Cemetery Road or Highway 81 and Mr. Salazar stated that he would use whatever entrance they tell him to.

Public Comment: Donald & Teresa Lindsey who live at 1102 Carter Drive which is on the corner of this property. They are speaking on behalf of the neighbors. They are not opposed of any person using their property for what they want to but this property is right across from the new park. He stated that if he put a car lot there then there will be police involvement and this is on the outside of the City of Walnut Grove. He stated that he had high hopes for this property but has seen little progress. It appears this is a violation issue and they are trying to rearrange the property but the violations will be an ongoing issue. This is a focal point for visitors. Walton County is a nice place and do you really want an eyesore across from the park,

Maxine McClendon spoke and stated she does not want trucks parked there.

Racheal Davis who is a Council Member for the Walnut Grove Downtown Authority spoke and stated that she took pictures at 3:00 p.m. today and handed those pictures out. She is opposed of this rezone due to the multi-million dollar park being across the street from this property. She stated that the county current has a future land use map and she would like for them to deny the request because this is in conflict with the future land use map. There is a park close and it is a public enhancement and they really love it. She stated allowing outdoor storage will impact the safety and local businesses. The first impression matters and this is a gateway to our community. She said to turn away this eyesore.

Tim Hinton asked what is the number of residential homes on that state highway and Ms. Davis said she did not know. She stated that if approved you are pushing for commercial growth. She said something needs to be there to support the local park but not a gas station.

Rebuttal: Mr. Salazar came back for rebuttal and stated that his English is not that well but wanted them to know that he bought this property and it was full of trash and he has worked to clean it up and wants it make it look nice. He said he is not going to be here that long that he is going to retire in 2 more years and go back home. He stated he wants to landscape the front and make it look nice. He went on to say that he has taken 17 dumpsters of trash off of the property. He stated that he has been there and nobody complained until now. He stated that the neighbor next door and the neighbor in the back do not care if he parks things on this property. He stated again that he wants to

make the place look nice but right now he is not doing it because he is waiting for a survey.

Kristi Parr with Walton County Planning and Development stated that this was a Code Enforcement case.

Recommendation: Motion by John Pringle to recommend denial with a second by Josh Ferguson. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Z25-0334 – Rezone 13.13 acres from B2/A2 to B3 for commercial vehicle parking facility and Variance to permit use of the existing driveway as the access of Highway 78 – Applicant/Owner: E L K Holdings, LLC – property located at 3149 Highway 78 and Old Broadnax Mill Road – Map/Parcels C0440007A00 and C0460034D00 – District 1**

Presentation: Andrea Gray, Attorney At Law, whose office is at 300 East Church Street, represented the case on behalf of E L K Holdings, LLC. The request is to rezone 13.13 acres from B2/A2 to B3 for commercial vehicle parking facility and Variance to permit use of existing driveway. The request started with 30.26 acres but Applicant downsized so as not to abut Horseshoe Road. This property is Highway Corridor. This request is consistent with the existing Future Land Use Map. She went on to say that the parking spaces will be 75 ft. long and 12 ft. wide and will be clearly marked for boats, RV's and trucks. The property will be fully fenced and there will be an automated gate code for access. She stated that the access point will realign with Broadnax Mill Road which will be a straight access and will go out at the traffic light. There will be no view of this from Horseshoe Road. She drove down Horseshoe Road and you can't see truck parking at all and this was quite a distance minimizing view from residential. They will be putting up an opaque fence and will be completely steel painted panels and will be durable and will last for decades. In the front on Highway 78 they will be planting trees. This is not a truck stop and there will be no auto repair, no sleeping in trucks and there will be a gated access and nice organized parking.. They will follow all requirements of the Walton County Ordinance.

Public Comment: John Jessup who lives at 2834 Horseshoe Road spoke and stated that we are not opposed to this project but they have concerns. Mr. Jessup handed out a print out and stated that their main concerns are increased traffic at the interchange of Highway 78 and Broadnax Mill Road traffic light especially during rush hour, school bus traffic, teenage drivers and this could create more congestion. They would like to keep this from becoming like another truck stop. They would request future upkeep to avoid the same eyesore as the one just west on Highway 78. They would like for this to be limited to the current request with no expansion in the future. Other concerns were to minimize the appearance, noise and light pollution of the existing property owners, the negative impact of heavy equipment to our county roads and safety concerns to the nearby property owners. They would like a complete traffic study of intersection, including a signal and turn analysis; right only turn out of parking lot or restricted hours of when

tractor trailers and other big trucks could use the traffic light at the intersection; address concerns raised by the Walton County School Board as it relates to traffic safety and other impacts; design the parking lot and/or add needed dirt berms and other landscape items such as evergreen trees, decorative shrubs and even a privacy or no-see through fence screens so that vehicles in parking lot cannot be seen from Horseshoe Road and Old Broadnax Mill Road; provide something in zoning or other legal agreement to not allow any other acreage to be rezoned as commercial or light industrial; no refrigerated trucks and no sleeping in trucks; and fix/improve the roads to handle current and increased heavy weight vehicles.

Tim Hinton asked if the county does traffic studies and Charna Parker with Walton County Planning and Development stated that we do not. Mr. Hinton stated that any state highway is out of our hands and we don't have any protocol for state highways.

Andrew Davis whose property is at 2580 Highway 78 stated that Ms. Gray mentioned business. He stated that he was there before all the businesses around. He has been at this location for 32 years. At his location the elevation is 5 ft. above the cornfield and any fence of any size you will be able to see. He talked to Ken Jones about a 15 ft. berm. He stated that all trees are fine and that he and Ken are friends. His request is berm, fence and plantings and stay off 5 ft.

Deborah Miller who lives at 2989 Horseshoe Road stated she loves the neighborhood and she moved from Decatur for quiet. She has no problem with this but what will happen in the future because you don't know what they will do with the rest of the property.

Patricia Diaz who lives at 2941 Horseshoe Road stated that she has a problem and concern with the entrance on Old Broadnax Mill Road because this would be an entrance and exit. She stated that buses go out that road and if you are talking about big truck then she does not want that because she does have kid that ride the bus. She asked if hours of operation can be requested and also the roads will not be able to handle large trucks because right now the buses are having a problem. She stated trucks will not be able to make that turn.

Mike Russell who lives at 2606 Summit Court stated that he is concerned about traffic and noise and it is going to be a mess. He stated that in the morning it is so loud and so much noise and he knows you cannot control noise but you can the traffic.

Mike Cannizzaro who lives at 2831 Carter Lane stated he bought the property about 18 years ago because of the Little Flat Creek. He stated that his concern is environmental. He is worried about 200 trucks of diesel oil, antifreeze and gas leaking into the creek and what are you go to do about the water system because some people have wells.

Dale Davis who lives at 3099 Old Broadnax Mill Road stated that the fence will back up to his yard. He is concerned about the quality of life. He stated that the noise and dust and he is 61 years old and this is his first home and he does not want the noise.

Rebuttal: Andrea Gray came back for rebuttal and stated that she appreciated input from the neighbors and there are good folks in the area including her client. She stated that they are going to a really nice entrance and that there is not going to be 200 trucks coming or going every day. People think that this is a truck stop but it is not that. Traffic Wise there is not much traffic there. Trucks are already using this and she went out with John Allman who is in charge of the Road Department. Mr. Allman stated that trucks going to the right in and right out would be sufficient and he is happy that they are aligning of the entrance with the existing road but GDOT approves Highway 78. She stated that a traffic study is not warranted because this is a lower intense use. This is not on Bay Creek Road or Horseshoe Road and the entrance will be well marked and the county can police that. As far as Mr. Andrew Davis they are fine with the 15 ft. buffer and berm and are happy to work with his request. Ms. Gray stated that right now the balance of the property is A2 and if the Applicant decides to have other property rezoned then he would have to come back and do this same process. There will be an automated gate as well as a clearly marked entrance. As far as the noise there will no idling trucks and people cannot live or sleep in the trucks. As far as contamination the EPD regulates that and to also point out that this is an industrial area and not a residential area and you can do commercial on a State highway.

Recommendation: Motion by Josh Ferguson to recommend approval with the following conditions:

1) Approval of this application shall include approval of a variance to permit the use of the existing driveway as the access to Highway 78 2) A security fence, 8 feet in height, shall be required around the entire perimeter of the project site. Fencing along the frontages of Old Broadnax Mill Road and Highway 78 shall provide an opaque screening, constructed of R-panel steel material colored grey or brown. The remainder of the fencing, along interior property lines, can match the exterior fencing or at the applicant's choosing, may be constructed of black vinyl-coated chain-link material, 8-feet in height. A digital automated access gate, as noted in the applicant's letter of intent shall be required and operational at all times 3) Property frontage along Highway 78 shall be landscaped with evergreen trees such as Thuja 'Green Giant', Nelie R. Stevens Holly, Little Gem' Magnolia, or Cryptomeria Japonica. Trees shall be planted in a double staggered row, spaced appropriately for the species used. A minimum of 3 different species shall be used 4) Overnight stay on property shall be strictly prohibited 5) All parking spaces shall be clearly marked as shown on the amended site plan. Parking surfaces shall be maintained free of weeds or vegetation. Property shall be kept free of all trash and debris 6) On-site washing and repair of vehicles shall be prohibited 7) Junked, wrecked, salvaged, or inoperable vehicles shall not be stored on-site. Storage of vehicle parts or any other material shall be prohibited 8) All lighting shall be directed inward to the site and shall be downward directional and full cut-off shielded. Any additional Walton County lighting requirements shall be met 9) Berm installed adjacent to Eastern property line of 2580 Highway 78. Opaque fencing and landscaping to continue from Highway 78 along this property line as well with a second by John Pringle. The motion passed unanimously.

6. **OA25-0335 – Amendments to the Walton County Land Development Ordinance as per Amendment sheet dated 10/1/205.**

Presentation: Kristi Parr with Walton County Planning and Development presented the amendment for storm water detention facilities. This is for detention ponds that are in default of not keeping maintenance. A notice is sent to the Homeowners Association to repair and if not then the county will repair it and a fee will be charged.

Josh Ferguson asked if there would be a time limit given to the Homeowners Association to fix the detention pond.

Public Comment: None

Recommendation: Motion by John Pringle to recommend approval with a second by Josh Ferguson. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Hinton – Chairman



W.C. Planning Commission

Tracie Malcom, Executive Secretary



W.C. Planning Commission