

WALTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 3, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Hinton, Michelle Trammel, John Pringle, Timothy Kemp, Wesley Sisk, Josh Ferguson & Chris Alexander

MEMBERS ABSENT: All members were present.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICIAL: Kristi Parr and Tracie Malcom

Chairman Tim Hinton called the meeting to order.

Timothy Kemp opened with prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: John Pringle made a Motion to approve the minutes of March 6, 2025, with a second by Timothy Kemp. The minutes were approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CU25-0095-Conditional Use for outside storage-Applicant: John B Crouch/Owner: EDK Realty Holdings LLC located on 2424 Lance Ct/Map/Parcel C0070005F00-District 2.

Presentation: Brad Crouch who lives at 5040 Northside Drive in Atlanta represented the case. As far as the business he is doing it is similar to the business that was there before. He is doing something in a similar manner and would like to request outside storage. He has a landscape business and will be storing material and rocks in different bays and maybe some equipment outside. He is not changing the zoning and no configuration of the property.

Josh Ferguson said he saw in the letter that he operates an Environmental Service Business and will be using the warehouse for storage. Mr. Crouch stated that they do have a Stormwater Management Business. They do swales, clean out catch basins, water run-off, underground and detention pond repair.

Chris Alexander asked if they stored any debris on the property and Mr. Crouch said no and if there was then they would use a roll-off container and take it to the land fill to be disposed of but no long-term storage.

Speaking: No one

Recommendation: Chris Alexander made a motion to recommend approval as submitted with no conditions and was seconded by Josh Ferguson. The Motion carried unanimously.

2. Z25-0082-Rezone 4.30 acres from A2 to OI for a residential care facility-Applicant: Anna White/Owners: Timothy & Anna White located on 1370 Snows Mill Rd & Hwy 83/Map/Parcel C1650003A00-District 6.

Presentation: Anna White and Ashley Ramsey represented the case. They have a girls home in Snellville, Georgia since 2020 that houses 6 girls, but they were just approved for 2 more and they are running out of space there. Their plans is to have a residential care facility for girls that have been in abuse, sex trafficking, physical and sexual abuse. They provide therapy, group therapy and one on one therapy. Ms. Anna White said she has a master's in social work and has a family counseling degree. Her daughter, Ashley Ramsey, oversees the home in Snellville and they would like to upgrade the home on Snows Mill Road like the one in Snellville. They also plan to put farm animals on the property and use them for farm therapy, maybe some chickens and goats. They have had requests to open up more homes like this from the State and they work with DFCS Caseworkers. They just had a Caseworker call, and they have 7 girls in the office and 5 in a hotel room waiting on a place to go.

Ashley Ramsey said that she is proud to say that they have some that finish high school, go to college and join the armed forces. They have some that do dual enrollment, and they are very proud of these girls because they come from traumatic situations. They had a girl that came, and she was on a 7th grade level and in 6 months' time she is on track to graduate. This home will keep them off the streets. They offer resources on how to handle teenagers, budgets, and parenting classes. They will not have that many cars coming and going. They will be putting in a camera and there are 2 to 3 staff members on site at all times 24 hours a day. They haven't had to call the police because their staff has the resources to handle teenagers. The staff members help the girls with their schoolwork. The girls enjoy going to church on Wednesdays and Sundays and 2 girls have been baptized. This type of placement will differ unwed mothers, diseases. Ms. Anna White said she has adopted girls, and they are in the military and in college. She has had letters of recommendation that she has sent in for the Board to read.

Tim Hinton said this is sort of like a personal care home and they are licensed by the State and inspected by the State. Mr. Hinton said he was not sure about the zoning OI and animals and asked Tracie Malcom with Walton County Planning & Development, if this was allowed and she stated that she checked on this and the animals would be allowed in OI.

Timothy Kemp asked about how many animals and Ms. White said maybe 10 to 15

chickens and their girls would like to sell the eggs and this will be basically give the girls revenue for themselves and engage them with the community. This will also be good therapy for the girls. They would like to start out with 10 chickens and maybe some bees but no more than 15 chickens. There will be no horses or cows.

Timothy Kemp asked was the schooling done on site and Ms. Ramsey stated that they do school on site through Georgia Cyber Academy, and they do use Walton County Schools for tutoring. They do school on site due to safety issues.

Timothy Kemp asked about the maximum number of girls, and he was told 6 but would be the maximum. If they have a 12-year-old then they have girls 12 to 14 years old and if they have a 14 year old then they go have girls 14 to 18 years old. They also take into consideration whether there is a sibling group.

Timothy Kemp asked how long the girls will stay and he was told the longest is a year but the minimum is 60 days. The maximum that they have had a girl stay is 1 to 2 years until they find a foster home or a placement.

They were asked about security and Ms. Ramsey said that they would utilize the police, but their staff is trained on how to handle teenagers and no child has been physical to any staff member. They have 2 to 3 staff members on site for safety. It also gives the girls one on one experience with an adult, and they can talk about their emotions, grief etc. Whereas if they are just placed somewhere that they don't know anyone then there is really nobody they can talk to one on one.

Speaking: No one

Recommendation: Timothy Kemp said there is a need for a facility of this nature and he made a motion to recommend approval as submitted and was seconded by Wesley Sisk. The Motion carried unanimously.

3. Z25-0108-Rezone 4.85 acres from A1 to R1 to create 4 buildable lots-Applicant: Alicia Zinner/Owners: Nathan & Alicia Zinner located on 1730 Lee Peters Rd/Map/Parcel C0610082-District 1.

Presentation: Ginny Vanoostrum with Algin Realty represented the case for the Applicants. The Applicants have moved to Florida. They have submitted an application for a R1 zoning and would like to split the property into 4 lots. The intent is to have 3 more lots on this property.

Speaking: No one

Recommendation: Josh Ferguson made a motion to recommend approval as submitted

and was seconded by Timothy Kemp. The Motion carried unanimously.

4. Z25-0109-Rezone 2.58 acres from R1 to A for beekeeping & selling bees/honey-
Applicant: Billy Farmer/Owner: Janis Farmer located on 4878 Jersey Walnut Grove Rd
& Old Hwy 81/Map/Parcel C0540267-District 3.

Presentation: Billy Farmer represented the case. He has been beekeeping for the last 6 years. He is also involved in education as well as raising bees. He raised his own queen bees and he is a mentor. He operates a Bee Club and teaches about bees each month. He would like to continue raising bees, selling honey and bees and mentoring beekeeping. He would have people come to his house to mentor them on beekeeping. He said that there are countries that have not paid attention to bees. He said beekeeping is something we need to look at because without pollination we wouldn't be here. He said honeybees are 5% or less and if you don't protect honey bees then we are doomed. He said a queen bee will last for 21 days and they will die. There is only 1 queen bee per hive. If we don't pay attention, then beekeepers like himself and those he mentors, then the bees will become extinct. He said that when the Bee Club meets there are usually about 25 to 30 people each month. He gives all beekeepers their first colony of bees to get them started. You ask yourself why God put mosquitos on this earth because they are blood sucking insects, but they also pollinate, and mosquitos are beneficial. He said 1 colony of bees is 25 to 30 thousand bees. He has 10 colonies and has had them for 6 years. He has learned and talked to the UGA folks about beekeeping, and he shares his knowledge with other beekeepers.

John Pringle thanked him and said he understands the need to protect bees.

Mr. Farmer said that he hates seeing construction when they go in and clear the whole land and take all the trees out because agriculture is one source of pollen because nectar is in the trees. He said Red Maple is a good one. He said if we keep going this route and take out all the pine trees then you need to replace them with red bush, holly bush, cherry trees so that some agriculture is left.

Speaking: Non one

Recommendation: John Pringle made a motion to recommend approval as submitted and was seconded by Timothy Kemp. The Motion carried unanimously.

5. Z25-0110-Rezone 81.00 acres from A1 to R1OSC for a residential subdivision-
Applicant: Carter Engineering Consultants Inc/Owner: Grady Thompson Enterprises
LLLP located on Nicholasville Rd/Map/Parcel C0850083-District 5.

Presentation: Logan Moss with My Home Communities lives at 1110 Tallis Street in Bogart, represented the case as well as Joshua Scoggins who is an Attorney for the developer. He stated that they would like to develop 81 acres with a 62-lot subdivision. He has already reached out to some of the Board of Commissioners and the reality is that this land will be developed one way or the other. Jacob Prather is the owner of My Home Communities, and he is from Walton County and takes pride in what they do. He said water quality issues, soil erosion and wildlife are always an issue. They are doing 0.66-acre tracts which come out to 1.3 acre density. He said the Code would allow 81 lots and you will get 10 times more water quality.

Josha Scoggins, Attorney at Law, who lives in Cumming, Georgia stated that his father was a beekeeper in Social Circle, and he is from Walton County. He said R1OSC is a good match in order to preserve open space. He is not asking for a Land Use Amendment, and they are using 57% of the entire site and providing 26 acres as open space. The Comprehensive Plan encourages the OSC. They will have a HOA, and the open spaces will be protected. Also, it will protect natural resources. This is the best zoning of any county he has worked with. They will build 2,200-sq. ft. ranch homes and 2,400 sq. ft. 2-story homes. There will be a 100 ft. buffer along Nicholasville Road, and they are requesting no Variances. My Home Communities has been around several years now.

Speaking: Joe Brooks, who lives at 720 Nicholasville Road, has a farm and has 2 major concerns and that is the safety concerns at Highway 11 & Nicholasville Road and with this subdivision there will be additional traffic. He said Bold Springs Road is also a problem with safety. He asked if there was not an impact fee that could be put on a developer to do something about the roads and highways. He also asked about perimeter fencing around the whole subdivision. He said what he would recommend would be 2 acre lots because you will not be able to put a house on this small of a lot. It was also brought up about fencing for the existing ponds/lakes.

Tim Hinton made a comment about traffic and said that we have no control over the traffic, and we got a comment from every department including GDOT. He said everything as far as roads etc. will be done at the site development stage and if not followed then it will go to the Code Office. He said that their concern is the use of the property.

Robert Summers who lives at 1424 Charleston Avenue which is about ½ mile from this zoning request said that the zoning in the county needs to have some consistency and the county needs to grow in a responsible way. He said that the density should be less. He said to take a look at the other developments on Double Springs Road and Bold Springs Road and they are better projects due to the lot size. He understands that land is going to be developed one way or the other. He said that the county needs to be looking at the future when they approve things.

Matt Forthofer who lives at 2869 Fannie Thompson Road spoke. He has lived here for 2 years and before this he lived in Jackson, Barrow and Hall County. He agrees with the gentleman before him that we can't stop progress. He stated he moved here for a rural area. Everyone should be able to sell your property as you see fit but at the end of the day it is about making money. He also knows that any development makes your taxes go up. He said that he would sit on his porch and used to 3 cars might go by and now the traffic is increasing because they cut through this road to go to the elementary school. He would like to see a coordination with GDOT about State Highway 11 and Nicholasville Road. He would like the developer to coordinate with GDOT about these issues.

John Pringle stated that they do get comments from GDOT, and they will have to coordinate with the State. Mr. Forthofer said he hasn't seen a traffic counter on the road for a study. He said at the end of the day the roads are already a danger.

Timothy Kemp stated that growth is inevitable.

Kayla Stone, who lives at 564 James Powers Road, spoke and said she is not going to harp on traffic, but the community is against the development. This area is farmland. She said there have been 35 accidents on the highway and it is up to the county and the state to coordinate the issue of the roads and highways.

Mr. Hinton said that we are not in control of the traffic or the State Highways.

Ms. Stone went on to state she is concerned about the density of the zone, and this is an agricultural rural area which is high density, and we need to look at what is happening across the county and the infrastructure. She said that this is an A1 property which is an agriculture zoning which would be bigger lots. She said you can go down Bold Springs Road, and they have 5 acre lots, and the community would prefer larger lots, and she said she strongly encourages the board to listen to the community.

Michelle Forthofer, who lives at 2869 Fannie Thompson Road spoke. She has been here for 2 years. She wanted to make sure she heard 62 units and what utilities they would be using, and she was told they would be septic and public water because the county does not have sewer.

Tim Hinton said that the minimum lot size is 27,000 sq. ft. and they have to provide for septic and repair area. This is a balancing act to put together a subdivision and he sees the positive of an OSC zoning which covers protecting the wooded area behind the pond and the pond.

Billy Mitchell who lives at 869 John Deere Road spoke and said he was there to represent Grady Thompson Enterprises LLLP that has 7 members which are 3 children and 4 grandchildren. Grady Thompson bought this property in 1958, which was over 65 years ago. He purchased this property and farmed it but right now the highest and best use is not farming it is development. He said that there are several subdivisions in the area that were developed 20 years ago. He said that John Roberts with the US Supreme

Court states that a property owner has the constitutional right to do with his property what he wishes.

Rebuttal: Joshua Scoggins said that at the Development and Permit Stage that GDOT will be weighing in on this development. Mr. Brooks stated that you will not be able to fit a house on these lots, however where he lives, he has a house, a detached garage and a swimming pool and he has bigger setbacks and buffers. He said as far as density is concerned, this is a related term and Walton County does not have the problem of getting a higher density. He knows people don't want to be like Gwinnett, Fulton or Cobb County but a 0.66 acre lot is in a comprehensive plan and is very large comparatively. What you have here is they are concentrating on the development which is taking away from the problems. He said someone asked about the septic and that it will be determined at the development stage. Mr. Scoggins said he grew up here and there is not high density and he graduated from Social Circle High School, and he lives in Cumming, Georgia now but he comes down to this area and this county has better development and houses than any other county he sees.

Logan Moss came back and said that the size of the houses would be 2,200 sq. ft. ranch and 2,400 sq. ft. for a 2-story house. There will be 15 ft. setbacks, which is ample room to build a home. He said that they are not going to copy and paste the same houses throughout the subdivision. He said that the houses will be ½ million dollar homes due to the cost of the land.

Tim Hinton asked Logan Moss if he was the developer as well as doing the marketing and Mr. Moss stated he was. Mr. Hinton wanted to stress again that traffic is totally out of our control, and we are here for an alternative reason and that is to see what the best use of the property is. He said that he is a realtor by trade, but it is sad to see that a first-time homeowner can't buy because of the price and interest on a home and most live in the parent's basement. He said a 27-year-old can't afford it. There is a proponent to try to make houses affordable because this is bad on first time homeowners when homes cost ½ million-dollars.

Mr. Hinton said that he met Mr. Marlow who is the dad of the adjoining property owner years ago and there are concerns with adjoining landowners. He said that there is a 50 ft. buffer but both parcels on each side of this property that adjoins on each side have cattle and fencing and the fencing is barbed wire or cattle wire. He said that the 50 ft. buffer is adequate.

Mr. Hinton would like to ask the developer or builder once the pins are set and if there are any discrepancies in an encroachment that it be fixed. Logan Moss said that there was a discrepancy, and it has been fixed, and Mr. Thompson was gracious enough to help with this issue.

Tim Hinton asked if there was an entity that is going to be funding this project and Mr. Moss stated a bank. The person funding this project is going to have that developer do a boundary survey based on the metes and bounds of the property.

Recommendation: Tim Hinton made a motion to recommend approval with the following conditions: Before final plat approval the developer shall address any issues of fencing encroachments with adjoining property owners, and they shall be resolved at the expense of the developer. Since there is farmland on each side of the property he asked that they put on the final plat and purchase agreement language from the Georgia Realtors Disclosure Statement as follows: It is the policy of this state and this community to conserve, protect, and encourage the development and improvement of farm and forest land for the production of food, fiber, and other products, and also for its natural and environmental value. This notice is to inform prospective property owners or other persons or entities leasing or acquiring an interest in real property that property in which they are about to acquire an interest lies within, partially within, or adjacent to an area zoned, used, or identified for farm and forest activities and that farm and forest activities occur in the area. Such farm and forest activities may include intensive operations that cause discomfort and inconveniences that involve, but are not limited to, noises, odors, fumes, dust, smoke, insects, operations of machinery during any 24-hour period, storage and disposal of manure, and the application by spraying or otherwise of chemical fertilizers, soil amendments, herbicides, and pesticides. One or more of these inconveniences may occur as the result of farm or forest activities which are in conformance with existing laws and regulations and accepted customs and standards. A statement shall be placed on the Final Plat in order to notify future homeowners of adjacent residential/agricultural properties that could exhibit noises and smells that are typical of a rural/agricultural area. A decorative fence with a blend of trees and shrubs in front of the fence along the right of way. The exception would be for the tree lined area from right of the current gated entrance to the adjacent property line on the right. An entrance sign for the neighborhood installed and was seconded by Timothy Kemp. The Motion carried unanimously.

6. OA25-0126—Amendment-Stormwater Management

Presentation: Kristi Parr, Assistant Director, represented the case. This is an Amendment to the Stormwater Management Article 11 – Part 2 – Section 270 – to add special tax district for maintenance and repair of stormwater retention and detention facility within subdivisions.

Josh Ferguson asked if this would be for existing, and Ms. Parr stated if this is approved it would be for anything going forward.

Correction: This tax could apply to existing subdivisions within the county that have been neglected or improperly or insufficiently maintained and where the HOA has failed to comply with property maintenance.

Timothy Kemp asked so this would be something added for that area and Ms. Parr said it would be the same as the lights that are added to the property taxes and assessments within subdivisions.

Mr. Kemp asked do we know how much the taxes would be, and Ms. Parr stated that we do not at this time.

Josh Ferguson asked so no HOA would be responsible, and Ms. Parr stated that they would be responsible and if the HOA didn't do the maintenance, then we would have this in place that we, as the county would have funding for any repair.

Recommendation: John Pringle made a motion to recommend approval and was seconded by Michelle Trammel. The Motion carried 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