



GLPC AGENDA ITEM # 4

NOVEMBER 29, 2021

Conditional Use Request by Serenity Springs File #: CU-2021-06

Serenity Springs, represented by Stephanie Hughes, is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Personal Service Shop in an Office Professional (O-P) zoning district. The subject property consists of 0.41 acres located at 2717 Windemere Drive, which is along the east side of the road about 200 feet south of Eager Road. The property contains a small office complex (5,610-sf) with 5 tenant spaces. The applicant is proposing to convert unit "B" (about 800-sf) into a "flotation therapy" facility that consists of a small office space and a large storage room for spa chemicals, as well as two rooms that each have one personal flotation tank. There would be only one primary staff person on site who would see up to 2 persons at a time for a 2-hour timeslot (1-hour for actual flotation, 1-hour for each room for cleaning and preparation for the next client). The applicant is proposing minor interior remodeling only, with no exterior changes to the building or site. More information about "flotation therapy" as well as letter of support for the applicant's proposal, are attached.

The subject property is located within an **Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC)** Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

The subject property is part of a small row of parcels along Windemere Drive which contain small professional offices. The surrounding area is dominated by offices and institutional type uses, as well as high-density residential development nearby. The applicant's proposed space is within an existing professional office building which has adequate but not an abundance of parking. Fortunately, the proposed use is very small in scope (only 800-sf, or 1/7 of the building) and it will only have up to 2 clients at a time, each on a 2-hour turnaround. Therefore, this proposed use will generate comparatively very little traffic or parking demand, and it will hardly be noticeable within the much larger office building. However, an expanded and much larger facility could overload the existing parking availability of this particular site, and there should be some upward limit on the overall size of the allowed use.

Staff Recommendation: Find consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommend approval to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Approval shall be granted for a Personal Services Shop in the form of a flotation therapy facility in O-P zoning, within a total gross floor area not to exceed 1,900 square feet.
- (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after 2 years from the date of approval if no Business License for the approved use has been requested by that date.

Planning Analysis & Property Information

Applicant:	Serenity Springs (Stephanie Hughes)		
Owner:	Dawn Rodgers		
Request:	Conditional Use Permit for a Personal Service Shop (flotation therapy)		
Property General Information			
Size & Location:	One (1) parcel consisting of 0.41 acres located along the east side of Windemere Drive, about 200 feet south of Eager Road		
Street Address:	2717 Windemere Drive		
Tax Parcel ID:	Map 0111D Parcel 048	City Council District:	5 <i>Councilman Carroll</i>
Zoning & Land Use Patterns			
		Zoning	Land Use
Subject Property:	Existing:	O-P	Professional offices
	Proposed:	O-P	Professional offices, salon
Adjacent Property:	North:	O-P	H&R Block office
	South:	O-P	Vacant land
	East:	O-P	Bank
	West:	R-P	Langdale Place (retirement home)
Zoning & Land Use History:	This parcel has been zoned O-P for more than 30 years. The existing building was constructed about 2007 as a 5-tenant professional office building		
Neighborhood Characteristics			
Historic Resources:	There are no designated historic resources on or near the subject property.		
Natural Resources:	Vegetation:	Urban forest	
	Wetlands:	No existing wetlands on or near the property	
	Flood Hazards:	The property is located well-outside the current FEMA designated 100-year floodplain	
	Groundwater Recharge:	No significant recharge areas in the vicinity	
	Endangered Species:	No known endangered species in the area.	
Public Facilities			
Water & Sewer:	Existing Valdosta water & sewer services along Windemere Drive		
Transportation:	Windemere Drive (local street)		
Fire Protection:	Fire Station # 5 (N Oak Street Ext) = approximately 1.3 miles to the north Nearest fire hydrant is 200' to the north at the intersection with Eager Road		

Comprehensive Plan Issues

Character Area: Neighborhood Activity Center

Description: A neighborhood focal point with a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open spaces uses easily accessible by pedestrians and bicycles..

Development Strategy: Each neighborhood center should include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents' day-to day needs. Residential development should reinforce the center by locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments, and condominiums. Design for each Center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses. Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear. Direct connections to greenspace and trail networks should be provided. The pedestrian-friendly environment should be enhanced by adding sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trails/bike routes linked to other neighborhood amenities such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, and schools..

Conditional Use Review Criteria

The following criteria shall be applied in evaluating and deciding any application for a Conditional Use Permit. No application for a Conditional Use Permit shall be granted by the City Council unless satisfactory provisions and arrangements have been made concerning each of the following criteria, all of which are applicable to each application:

(1) Whether or not the proposed use is consistent with all the requirements of the zoning district in which it is located, including required parking, loading areas, setbacks and transitional buffers.	
Applicant:	Yes. .
Staff:	Yes, the proposed use is consistent with the requirements of O-P zoning
(2) Compatibility of the proposed use with land uses on adjacent properties, including the size, scale and massing of buildings and lots.	
Applicant:	Yes..
Staff:	Yes. Most of the surrounding properties are dominated by offices and institutional uses.
(3) Adequacy of the ingress and egress to the subject property, and to all proposed buildings, structures, and uses thereon, including the traffic impact of the proposed use on the capacity and safety of public streets providing access to the subject site.	
Applicant:	Yes..
Staff:	Yes, existing ingress and egress to the property is adequate.
(4) Adequacy of other public facilities and services, including stormwater management, schools, parks, sidewalks, and utilities to serve the proposed use.	
Applicant:	Yes.
Staff:	Yes. All public facilities are adequate to support the proposed use.
(5) Whether or not the proposed use will create adverse impacts upon any adjacent or nearby properties by reason of noise, smoke, odor, dust, or vibration, or by the character and volume of traffic generated by the proposed use.	
Applicant:	No.
Staff:	No impact.
(6) Whether or not the proposed use will create adverse impacts upon any adjoining land use by reason of the manner of operation or the hours of operation of the proposed use.	
Applicant:	No.
Staff:	No impact.

(7) Whether or not the proposed use will create adverse impacts on any environmentally sensitive areas or natural resources (wetlands, floodplains, etc..).	
Applicant:	No.
Staff:	No impact.

Supplemental Standards of the LDR Applicable to the Proposed Use

None that are applicable.

Development Review Comments

The following comments are provided by the reviewing departments and are only intended to provide the developer with useful information for planning purposes. This list should not be considered all-inclusive as additional items may appear during the plan review process.

Fire:	< No comments received >	Landscape:	No comments
Building Plan Review:	< No comments received >	Utilities:	< No comments received >.
Public Works:	< No comments received >.	Engineering:	< No comments received >
Police:	No issues or concerns	Health Dept:	< No comments received >

Attachments:

- Letter of Authorization
- Zoning Location Map
- Future Development Map
- Aerial Location Map
- Floorplan
- Flotation Therapy info (4 pages)
- Letters of Support (3 pages)

LETTER of AUTHORIZATION

To: Greater Lowndes Planning Commission
Valdosta City Council

Regarding property located at 2717 Windemere Drive _____
(street address) (Tax Map/Parcel #)

I / We the owner(s) of the above described real property in the City of Valdosta, Georgia, do hereby authorize Stephanie Hughes to act as agent on my/our behalf, in submitting an application requesting a **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)** for a Float Center on my/our property, and to represent me/us in all public hearings and other matters with the City of Valdosta relating to this application.

Dawn Rodgers
Signature(s)

Dawn Rodgers
PRINT name(s)

10/19/2021
Date

NOTARY PUBLIC

State of Georgia, County of Lowndes

Sworn to and subscribed to me on this 18th day of October 2021.

My commission expires 12/4/2021.

Luanne Bryant Smith
Notary Public

(seal)



CU-2021-06 Zoning Location Map

Serenity Springs
CUP Request

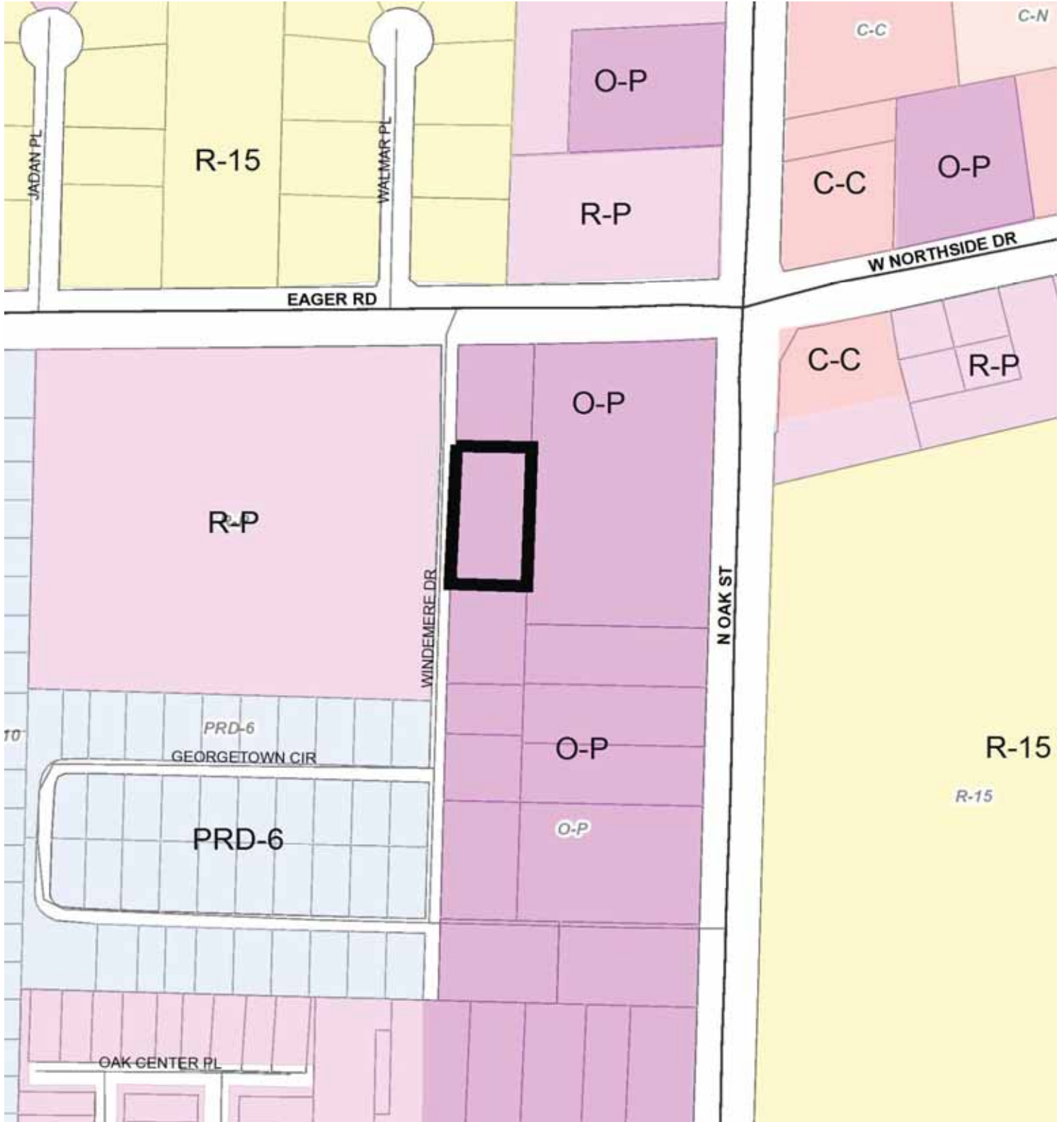
2717 Windemere Drive Unit "B"
Tax Map: 0111D Parcel: 048

Zoned: O-P



** Map NOT to scale

Map Data Source: VALOR GIS November 2021



CU-2021-06 Future Development Map

Serenity Springs
CUP Request

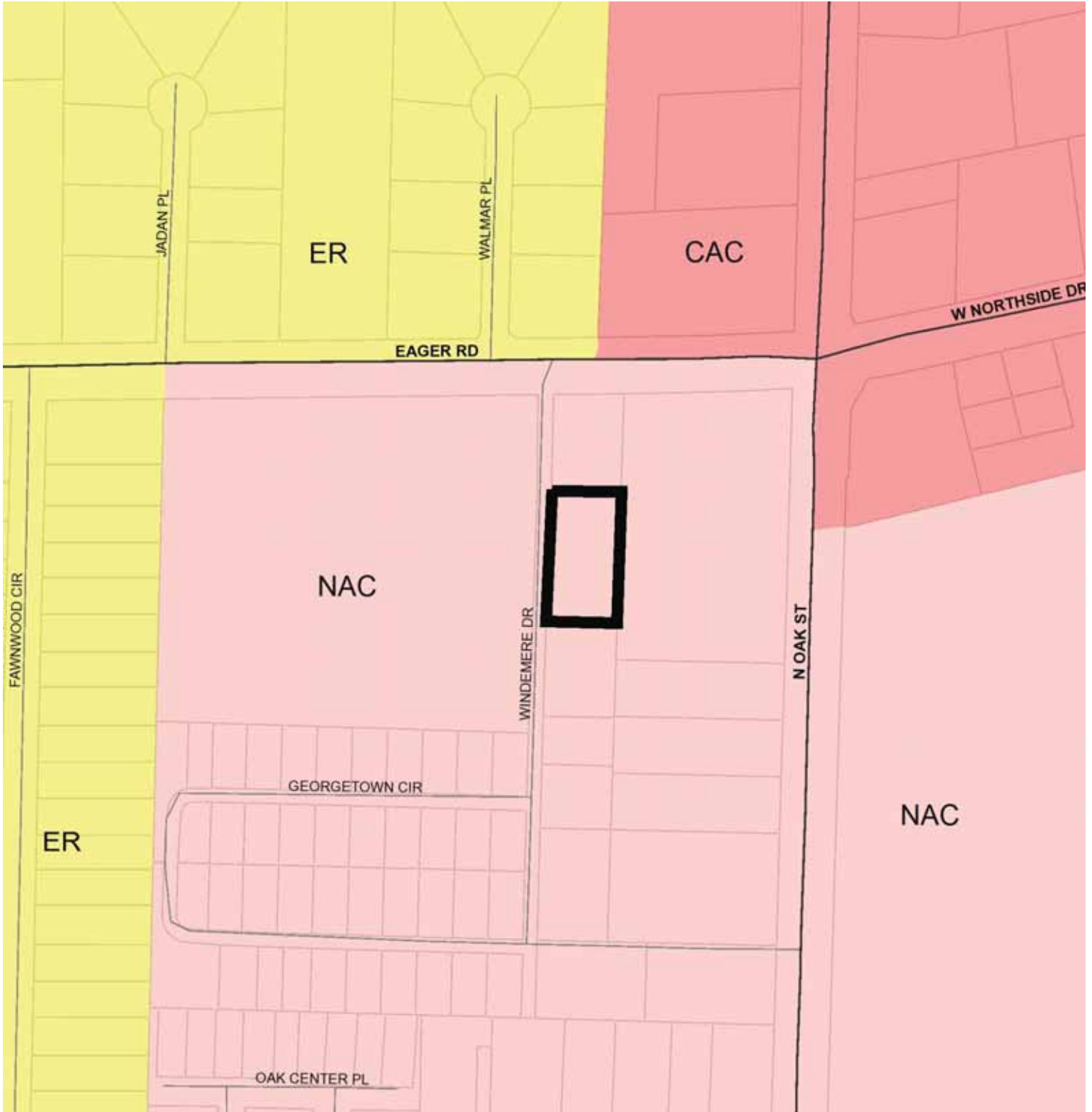
2717 Windemere Drive Unit "B"
Tax Map: 0111D Parcel: 048

Character Area: NAC



** Map NOT to scale

Map Data Source: VALOR GIS November 2021



CU-2021-06 Aerial Location Map

Serenity Springs
CUP Request

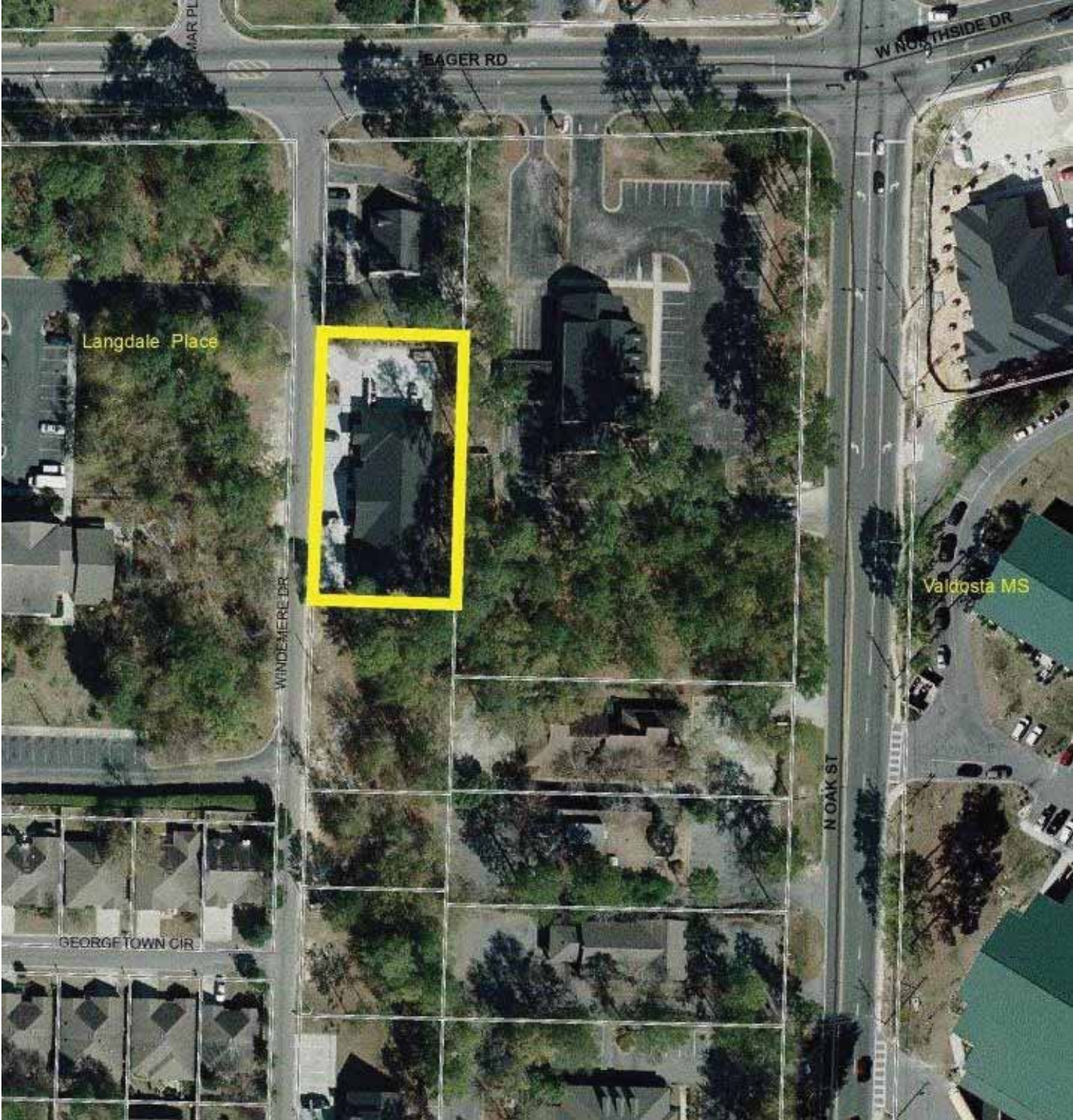
2717 Windemere Drive Unit "B"
Tax Map: 0111D Parcel: 048

2007 Aerial Imagery

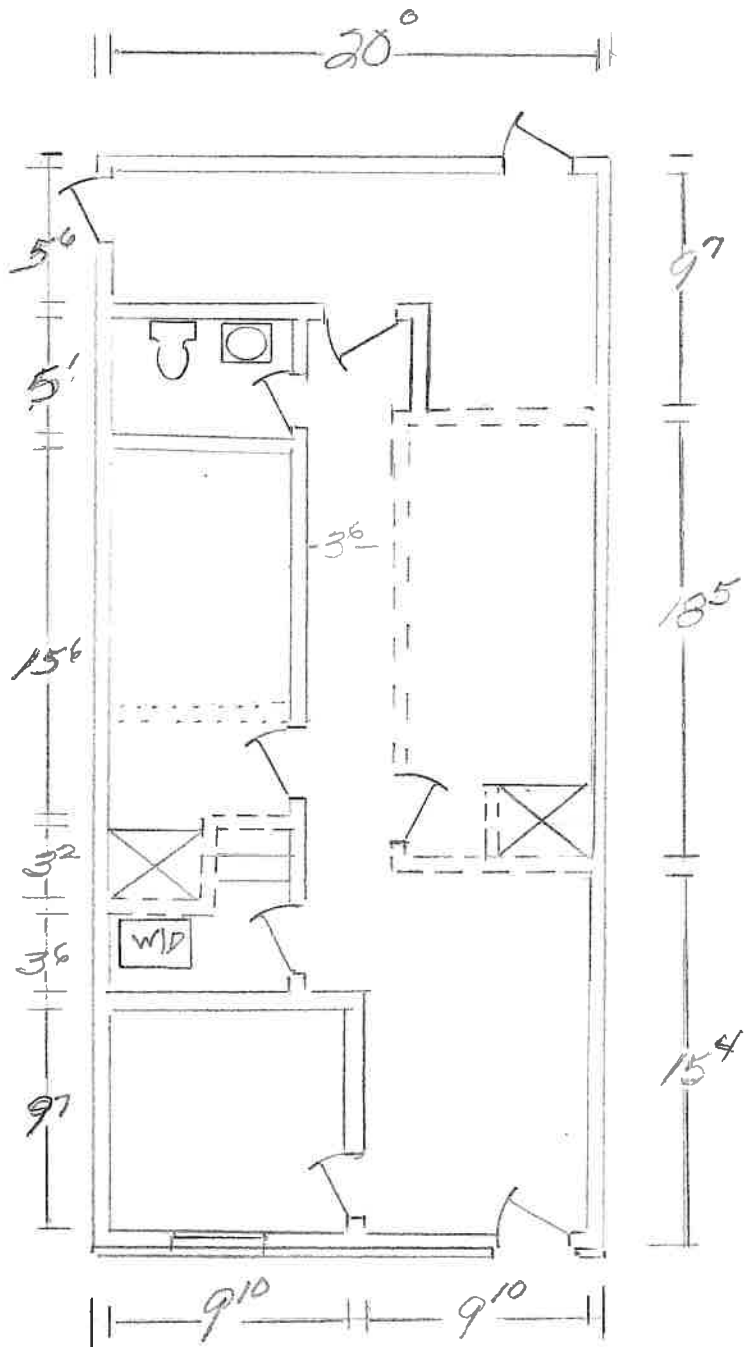


** Map NOT to scale

Map Data Source: VALOR GIS November 2021



2717 Windemere Drive Unit "B"



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The Health Benefits Of Float Therapy



The number of natural therapies surfacing in the health industry is accelerating and this is a boon for those seeking alternative methods to healing. As conventional medical practices continue to focus on the symptoms and prescribe toxic medications that does nothing to relieve the source of the condition, natural health professionals are bringing back traditional methods of healing and combining some of them with new technology that facilitates a natural healing process.

This current trend has essentially flipped the old saying “out with the old, and in with the new” on its head because people are starting to realize that the “old fashioned” ways of dealing with illness are much less risky and quite often more effective than conventional medicine approaches. In this case, “in with the old and out with the new” might be more appropriate.

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developed flotation tanks in the 1950's and it set off a series of research into sensory deprivation and its effects on the brain and how that translated into other health benefits as well. As a result of the research and noted benefits, float tanks were produced for commercial use and float centres started opening in several countries during the 1980's and continued to grow in popularity. Now, there are hundreds of float centres in dozens of countries all over the world.

Flotation therapy is a way to achieve deep relaxation by spending 60-90 minutes floating in a warm (90-95 F) solution of epsom salts and water that keeps you suspended with absolutely no effort. The contained environment inside the float tank normally has a certain amount of control available to the user, such as minimal lighting and meditative music. For those who want a complete sensory deprivation experience, you can also choose to go pitch black with nothing audible. This allows you to choose an environment the best suits your needs and personality.

What can you expect in a floating session?

Before you begin a floating session, you will be provided instructions by appropriate staff on what to do prior to the session, during, and after so there are no real surprises. This will involve a warm shower prior to the float, stripping naked (you can wear a swimsuit if desired), and entering the tank with ear plugs (to prevent any water entering the ear) and a water "pillow" to ensure you can completely relax.

Once you enter the tank, you do normally have some options. The first one is whether to close the lid on the tank, as claustrophobic individuals may feel a bit anxious with the lid down, even though that would be the ideal recommendation. Keep in mind that it is quite roomy in the tank with dimensions of 7 feet long, 4.5 feet wide, and with 4.5 feet between your face and the ceiling of the tank.

From there, you can choose to keep a soft ambient light on at the foot of the tank and whether you would like some soft meditative music. This is completely up to you and will depend on your comfortability and goals of the float session.

Once you lay back you will immediately find that there is no risk of sinking in the tank or having to work to stay afloat. With approximately 1000 pounds of epsom salts in the water, your buoyancy is guaranteed!

It can normally take up to 15 minutes to get relaxed and comfortable in the tank as you adjust your preferences to this entirely new experience. Once that is set, you can then completely let go, do visualization experiences, or simply enjoy 60-90 minutes of complete silence. It is quite common to fall asleep in the tank, and to wake up feeling completely refreshed.

Since you are lying in the float tank in your own private room (and if you choose, you may be naked) you will be notified of the end of your session by the ambient light coming on in your tank and a soft voice over speakers that indicates your session is complete. If for some reason you are enjoying a deep sleep and this doesn't wake you up, in a few minutes the filter system will turn on and begin agitating the water which will undoubtedly wake you up out of your slumber.

Following the float, it is important to wash the salts off your body and out of your hair using the shower inside your private room. Following that you can get dressed and exit the room to be greeted by staff who will ask how your session went and provide any comments to help you interpret the benefits of your float session.

The health benefits of flotation therapy

The primary benefits with flotation therapy is achieved through sensory deprivation, weightlessness, and magnesium. This is an incredible trifecta to induce relaxation due to elimination of environmental stimuli, reduction of pressure and/or pain, and the remarkable ability of magnesium to lower anxiety and promote muscle relaxation.

The cool part of being in a sensory deprived state is that your brain no longer needs to pay attention to outside stimuli and can go into a completely relaxed or guided state. Think of a float tank as meditation and relaxation taken to another level. Of course, when you can achieve these higher levels of consciousness, all kinds of things can happen. According to neuropsychiatrist Daniel Amen, M.D.:

"You're not stuck with the brain you're born with. By changing your brain, you can change your life. With simple breathing and awareness techniques it is possible to quell anxiety and panic, calm inner turmoil and fight depression by learning how to short circuit

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Clinical psychologist at South Oaks Hospital, Amityville, New York, found that:

“Flotation REST (Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy) can have an important role at several stages of the pain management process. By reducing both muscle tension and pain in a relatively short time and without effort on the part of the patient, flotation provides a dramatic demonstration of the benefits of relaxation. Relief is immediate and, although temporary, offers promise of further relief from REST and other relaxation-based strategies.”

Most of the patients that utilized flotation therapy in their experiments suffered from chronic pain for longer than six months and floated from one to 16 sessions. Overall, they reported a reduction in pain that averaged 31.3%, with the highest level of relief in the upper back at 63.6%, and the lowest in the legs at 15.3%. It appears to be pretty clear that float tanks help with chronic pain.

The other remarkable benefit of flotation therapy comes from the sheer magnitude of magnesium placed in the water. This miracle mineral will be absorbed transdermally (through the skin) during your float session, and can assist with stress reduction, bone strength, balancing blood sugar, and improving muscle and heart health.

Other notable benefits that can be gained through flotation therapy include:

- > Reduced stress, anxiety, and depression
- > Sports recovery
- > Reduced headaches
- > Increased circulation
- > Overcoming addictions
- > Increased creativity
- > Improved visualization

Keep in mind that flotation therapy is not just for the stressed and ill. High performance athletes can also benefit from float therapy due to improved physical recovery, and enhanced visualization techniques. It is reported that Tom Brady, the 39 year old quarterback for the New England Patriots and 5 time Super Bowl winner, regularly uses float for visualization and recovery.

Entrepreneurs and business owners can also benefit from float therapy by reducing stress and igniting new ideas or solutions for their business. Once one is able to eliminate the outside noise of day to day life, those regions of the brain that harness creativity can be accessed and explored (much like meditation).

Of course, you may not notice these improvements after a single session (but some undoubtedly will). The first session is often one combined with excitement and a little trepidation, and there is a feeling out process on what works best for you. So if you want to fully experience the benefits of float therapy, get that first session in then commit to at least a few more floats before you make any judgements on the efficacy of the therapy.

All in all, there is little to no risk with flotation therapy, and upside is unlimited depending on how deep you can relax and various regions of the mind you can explore that will improve your overall well-being.

To learn more about float therapy and what you can expect, visit [Gravity Float and Wellness](#).

Sources for this article include:

- <https://healingthebody.ca/how-meditation-can-improve-your-mental-state/>
- <https://draxe.com/sensory-deprivation-tank/>
- <https://paindoctor.com/float-tanks-chronic-pain/>

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...medical professionals couldn't help him reverse the effects of his condition. In a natural health transformation and the knowledge acquired in the process, he is now happier and healthier than he has ever been and now educates, coaches, and inspires thousands of others to transform their health through a natural and holistic approach. To date, he has helped his THRIVE Academy participants heal over 20 different chronic disease conditions, primarily related to digestive and autoimmune concerns.

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October 15, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I believe deeply in the floatation therapy we will offer at Serenity Springs Float Center. I discovered this therapy a couple of years ago, and since then I have been driving to a float center in Tallahassee regularly because it relieves my constant chronic pain. I have a severe autoimmune disease, and I have experienced pain 24 hours a day for more than 15 years. When I use floatation therapy, it completely relieves my pain usually for up to a week.

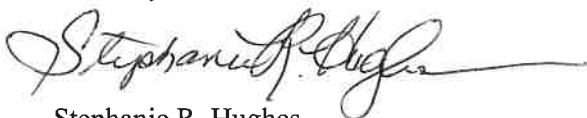
Water is widely known to offer vast physical and psychological benefits. Floatation therapy takes this natural, elemental approach to the next level. The therapy we will offer at Serenity Springs Float Center will employ the tremendous healing powers of water and combine it with the therapeutic properties of magnesium, the calming capabilities of restricted environmental stimulation therapy, and the immense physical advantages of weightlessness.

Floatation therapy is proving to be a therapeutic game changer for people with a variety of health conditions including anxiety, depression, PTSD, migraines, chronic pain, all forms of arthritis, and muscle or bone pain from injury. It is also wonderful for relieving discomfort due to pregnancy and following intense exercise or sports activity. Approximately 47% of people utilizing floatation therapy do so for help treating various medical conditions such as stress, anxiety, and pain relief from injury or chronic pain. Additionally, 44% of people participate in floatation therapy for relaxation. The remaining 9% includes a variety of reasons, including enhanced recovery from sports activity or exercise.

When visiting our center, clients will enter a private room and float for one hour in a therapeutic pod with water heated to body temperature. They will float unassisted in uniquely formulated water. There will be relaxing music and low ambient lighting available, or they can float in darkness and silence. The lid of the pod can be closed, or clients can leave the lid open if that's more comfortable for them. I believe deeply in the benefits of floatation therapy. I know without any doubt that this could help so many people in Valdosta, Lowndes County, and the surrounding area.

I would like to locate my business at 2717 Windemere Dr., Suite B, Valdosta, GA 31602. My mother, Dawn P. Rodgers, is the owner of this property. My husband's business, Hughes & Associates, occupies Suite A. In addition to operating the float center, I also serve as the Office Manager for my husband's business. While this location is ideal for me because of the reasons mentioned, I also feel my business is perfect for the area where this building is located. My business will be quiet, upscale, and extremely low traffic. We can accommodate no more than two clients every two hours, therefore require very little parking. I strongly believe Serenity Springs Float Center will serve to enhance the area for adjacent businesses and nearby residential neighborhoods. I respectfully request approval of my request to locate my business at 2717 Windemere Dr., Suite B in Valdosta.

Sincerely,



Stephanie R. Hughes
Owner-Operator
Serenity Springs Float Center

(229) 292-3798

www.serenityspringscenter.com

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of a new therapy facility that is underway, Serenity Springs Float Center. As a Doctor of Physical Therapy who treats chronic pain patients, I am excited to learn of a new alternative therapy that our community provide. As you know, chronic pain patients can be difficult to treat due to the complexity of issues. Many have both physical and psychological problems that can be challenging to treat. I found in my practice that aquatic therapy works best for patients with chronic pain due to fibromyalgia, cancer diagnosis, osteoarthritis, failed back surgery, etc. I feel the floatation therapy would be a great addition to the aquatic therapy field. It would provide an alternative therapy for patients to use once they are discharged from an outpatient physical therapy setting.

In my own research of floatation therapy, I have come across dozens of articles that support floatation therapy for both its psychological benefits, as well as its physical benefits. I have listed a few below.

I hope Valdosta will welcome this new business as an additional therapy clinic to serve our chronic pain patients.

Stephanie Kurrie, DPT

Kjellgren A, Sundequist U, Norlander T, Archer T. Effects of flotation-REST on muscle tension pain. *Pain Res Manag.* 2001 Winter;6(4):181-9. doi: 10.1155/2001/768501. PMID: 11854763.

Jonsson K, Kjellgren A. Promising effects of treatment with flotation-REST (restricted environmental stimulation technique) as an intervention for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD): a randomized controlled pilot trial. *BMC Complement Altern Med.* 2016 Mar 25;16:108. doi: 10.1186/s12906-016-1089-x. PMID: 27016217; PMCID: PMC4807536.

Kjellgren A, Westman J. Beneficial effects of treatment with sensory isolation in flotation-tank as a preventive health-care intervention - a randomized controlled pilot trial. *BMC Complement Altern Med.* 2014 Oct 25;14:417. doi: 10.1186/1472-6882-14-417. PMID: 25344737; PMCID: PMC4219027.

Zamunér AR, Andrade CP, Arca EA, Avila MA. Impact of water therapy on pain management in patients with fibromyalgia: current perspectives. *J Pain Res.* 2019 Jul 3;12:1971-2007. doi: 10.2147/JPR.S161494. PMID: 31308729; PMCID: PMC6613198.

Valdosta Psychiatric Associates

3541 N Crossing Circle
Valdosta , GA , 31602
229-244-4200 (Phone) 229-244-4995 (Fax)

October 7, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

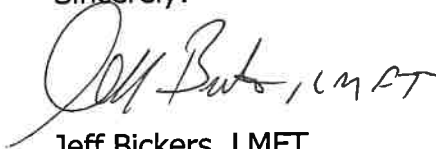
I am writing on behalf of Stephanie Hughes and her interest in opening a Flotation Therapy business in Valdosta. I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who has been practicing since 1990. I have been in a private practice here in Valdosta since 2000.

I know that Flotation Therapy can be considered by some to be a spa like treatment. However, the Flotation Therapy is used as an adjunct to therapy and medications for mental health disorders. It has been used successfully in helping to treat depression and anxiety. There is also value in using this type of therapy for chronic pain patients.

I know that Mrs. Hughes isn't wanting to use this as a spa type treatment. Her interest is helping others that may suffer from chronic pain, depression and anxiety.

I hope this information is helpful as you make a decision on the type of business that she will be conducting. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely:



Jeff Bickers, LMFT
Ga. Lic. #812