

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, January 27, 2025 – 5:30 PM

GLPC Commission Members Present: Franklin Bailey, Ron Bythwood, George Foreman, Calvin Graham, Ed Hightower, James Miller (Vice-Chair), Steve Miller (Chair), Chris Webb, Chip Wildes, Tommy Willis

Absent: Vicki Rountree

Staff: Matt Martin, City of Valdosta/Hahira Planning Director; JD Dillard, Lowndes County Planner; Molly Stevenson, Lowndes County Planning Analyst (Clerk)

VISITORS PRESENT:

(Sign-In sheet available in file.)

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Bythwood gave the Invocation. Chairman Miller welcomed everyone to the GLPC meeting and explained that the Planning Commission serves as an advisory (recommending) body to the local member governments regarding land use requests, and the final determination of the requests presented at this meeting will be made by the applicable local governments. Chairman Miller then explained the meeting procedures and announced the dates of the public hearings for the local member governments, as listed on the agenda.

Agenda Item #2

Approval of the Meeting Minutes: November 25, 2024

Chairman Miller called for additions, questions, and corrections of the November 25, 2024, GLPC meeting minutes. There being no additions, questions or corrections to the November 25, 2024, GLPC meeting minutes, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Bailey made a motion to approve the November 25, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (9-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3

REZ-2025-01 Hurtado Property, Bethany Drive, a portion of 0070 063, ~6.4 acres
Current Zoning: R-A (Residential Agricultural)
Proposed Zoning: R-1 (Low Density Residential)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from R-A (Residential Agricultural) zoning to R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to subdivide the property into conforming lots for individual residences. The subject property possesses road frontage on Bethany Drive and Val Del Road, a local and collector County maintained road respectively, is within the Rural Service Area and Rural Residential Character Area, which recommend R-1 zoning.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the availability of County water, the viability of septic systems, and the unique shape of the property, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-1 zoning as depicted on the submitted survey.

Commissioner Bailey asked about utilities provisions. Mr. Dillard stated water is within the 1000' buffer requirement but will require boring under Val Del Rd. Chairman Miller asked how many lots are possible if rezoning is approved. Mr. Dillard stated a maximum of 6 lots would be possible with that acreage.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Lincy Hurtado, Applicant – 15514 US Hwy 122 W

Ms. Hurtado stated she was present to answer any questions.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Matthew Williams, Jr. – 4775 Bethany Dr.
- Susan Colson Allen – 5052 Bethany Dr.

Mr. Williams' concerns related to already present drainage issues and the impact even greater density would have. He also voiced concerns about increased property taxes and that he was originally told the request only involved 2 additional residences.

Commissioners Bailey and Hightower verified Mr. Williams' residence location and if the drainage issues affect him directly. Mr. Williams stated his property floods with the runoff. Commissioner Bailey asked staff what would be required in the plat review process. Mr. Dillard explained that a subdivision of this nature requires a more intense review by engineering which includes stormwater provisions. Commissioner Hightower asked for clarification of utilities. Mr. Dillard stated water would be provided by Lowndes County but each lot would have a septic system. Commissioner Bailey asked if R-21 zoning is possible. Mr. Dillard explained the applicant is only requesting R-1. Chairman Miller asked if there are future plans to subdivide the remnant. Mr. Dillard stated that is not a current consideration and if it were in the future, it would require another rezoning request.

Ms. Allen also stated she is concerned about water runoff and drainage issues, as well as the rural nature of the area being compromised.

Commissioner Graham inquired about plans for improvements to Val Del Rd. Mr. Dillard stated the project is on the next TIA list. Commissioner Willis asked about the time frame for that project. Mr. Dillard explained it will be a multi-phase project over approximately 2 year, 2025-2027. Mr. Dillard was also asked if there had been drainage discussions with Engineering regarding this rezoning request to which he answered not at this stage, except for discussions with individual property owners.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Graham to recommend denial of the request. Commissioner Hightower second. Commissioner Bailey reminded the commissioners that the request deals only with the appropriateness of land use. Eight in favor, one opposed. Motion carried. (8-1)

Agenda Item #4

REZ-2025-02 Hamilton Green, Phase II, 4618 Bemiss Road, 0145D 007A, ~1.12 acres

Current Zoning: C-G (General Commercial)

Proposed Zoning: P-D (Planned Development)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject properties from C-G (General Commercial) and P-D (Planned Development) zoning to P-D zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to develop an additional 12-units of townhomes and amenities for the Hamilton Green neighborhood. The subject property possesses road frontage on Bemiss Road, a State Highway. The property is within the Urban Service Area, Bemiss Corridor Overlay, and Neighborhood Activity Center Character Area, which recommend P-D zoning.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land use, lot sizes, and zoning pattern, the availability of County utilities, the existing approved site plan and therefore recommends approval of the request for P-D zoning as depicted on the proposed site plan.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Matthew Inman, Project Engineer – 4560 Val North Dr.

Mr. Inman stated the original plan was for this portion to be commercial zoned but the developer determined it is not feasible and there is more interest in residential options. He also stated there will be 9 additional parking spaces for overflow and visitors, more amenities and the stormwater runoff will be handled by way of a larger detention pond.

Commissioner Bailey asked if access is directly onto Bemiss Rd. Mr. Inman explained there is a decel lane and median cut as well as other access vis the side road.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Willis second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

Agenda Items #5

REZ-2025-03 Thomas Linville, 4888 Break Thru Road, 0218 021A, 019, 020B, and 020A, ~16.3 acres

Current Zoning: R-1 (Low Density Residential)

Proposed Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to combine the properties into conforming lots for use agriculturally. The subject property possesses road frontage on Break Thru Road and Johnston Road, both locally maintained County roads, is within the Rural Service Area and Agricultural/Forestry Character Area, which recommend E-A zoning.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the lack of availability of County Utilities, the viability of well and septic systems, and the unique shape of the property, and therefore recommends approval of the request for E-A zoning as depicted on the submitted survey.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- David Shoe – 4867 Break Thru Rd.
- Brant Waller – 4946 Break Thru Rd.

Both Mr. Shoe and Mr. Waller's concerns were primarily concerning what types of uses would be allowed if rezoned, and if there a violation occurred, what would be the recourse? It was explained that if violations occurred, the Sheriff's Department and /or Code Enforcement would be the proper avenues.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Bailey to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Willis second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

Agenda Items #6

REZ-2025-06 River Run Farm, 6490 River Run, Naylor, Ga, Map/Parcel# 0259-029C, 27.12 acres

Current Zoning: C-C (Crossroads Commercial)

Proposed Zoning: R-21 (Medium Density Residential)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on a portion of the subject property from C-C (Crossroads Commercial) and CON (Conservation District) zoning to R-21 (Medium Density Residential) and CON (Conservation District) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to develop the property residentially. The subject property possesses road frontage on Lake Alapaha Blvd, a locally maintained County Road, is within the Urban Service Area and Suburban Character Area, which recommend R-21 zoning.

Historically, the property has been split zoned C-N (Neighborhood Commercial), R-15 (Medium Density Residential), and F-H (Flood Hazard) since its conception in the late-eighties.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the availability of County water, the viability of septic systems, the location of the wetlands and flood plains, and the unique shape of the property, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-21 zoning as depicted on the submitted survey.

Commissioner Bailey asked if the Alapaha Subdivision water system is currently a well system. Mr. Dillard explained 2 new wells are currently being dug on Good Hope Rd. and will include nanofiltration.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Larry Sanders, Applicant – 6490 River Run

Mr. Sanders made himself available for any questions. Additionally, he stated that he is currently in discussions with the county. He intends to create homes that exceed the building standards and codes. He also stated he has spoken to neighbors who are supportive of the request.

Commissioner Bailey asked if there will be a penetrating road built. Mr. Sanders affirmed, saying otherwise a landlocked parcel would be created which is not allowed. Chairman Miller inquired about

Restrictive Covenants and Mr. Sanders stated there will be and that each lot will have a minimum of 120' road frontage and 1900 sq ft homes.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Lance Newton – 6120 Nature's Way
- Danny Blackmon – 5974 Nature's Way
- Bennie Kennedy – 5809 Live Oak Dr.

Mr. Newton voiced concern about additional development beyond the proposed 9 lots, ditches being filled causing water runoff, and water quality concerns.

Commissioner Willis asked what the total potential density could be on 15 acres in R-21 zoning. Mr. Dillard stated 30 lots are possible strictly speaking, but once infrastructure is installed, that number would be lower. Commissioner Bailey asked for clarification about the 2 new wells on Good Hope Rd. Mr. Dillard reiterated that the wells have been approved, the County Utilities and Engineering departments are currently discussing drainage and power pole relocation with Georgia Power. He also stated the wells are planned to service the Lake Alapaha Subdivisions, but the completion date has not yet been determined.

Mr. Blackmon's question concerned the timing of the wells completion.

Mr. Kennedy voiced concern about water flow volume with regard to fighting fire.

Commissioner Hightower reminded the commissioners that the main objective is to consider the appropriateness of the request. Commissioner Wildes voiced concern about the surrounding natural habitat.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Wildes to recommend approval of the request with 1 condition – There shall be a maximum of 9 lots. Commissioner Bythwood second. Mr. Sanders stated he was not amenable to the condition. Six voted in favor, three opposed. Motion carried. (6-3)

Agenda Items #7

CU-2025-01 Marian Leonard (112 W Moore Street)
CUP for an Art Studio in R-P zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for an Art Studio in a Residential Professional (R P) zoning district. The subject property consists of 0.23 acres located at 112 West Moore Street, which is along the north side of the street, about 100 feet east of the intersection with Jeanette Street. (This is the same applicant and property which received rezoning approval late last year from DR-10 to R-P) The property currently contains a 2-story single-

family historic house (2,039-sf) and a rear yard detached accessory garage with a small upstairs apartment (260-sf). The applicant is proposing to convert the existing downstairs (1,129-sf) of the house to an Art Studio, while retaining the upstairs primarily as a residence for a family member and/or tenant, and utilize the rear yard accessory building primarily as storage. (refer to Letter of Intent for more details). The applicant is proposing no physical changes to the site. The existing paved driveways in the front yard are proposed for art studio usage, while the unpaved parking in the rear yard is proposed for residential usage by the owner and/or tenant.

The subject property is located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within the local Historic District, as well as the Brookwood North National Register Historic District.

The subject property is part of the historic neighborhood area directly to the north of the VSU main campus, whereby most buildings along this street are classified as a “contributing historic resource” to both the local and the Brookwood North NRHP historic districts. Over the past 20+ years, both VSU and the VSU Foundation have been acquiring properties along this street and converting most of them to office type uses. This in addition to the private sector conversion of other properties to offices, has transformed this character of this street from residential to that which is now dominated by offices. These are some of the rationale that supported the recent rezoning of this property to Residential Professional (R-P), to allow the possibility of either residential or professional office type uses. Interestingly, the applicant’s proposal combines both on the same parcel; a professional art studio in combination with a single-family residence. The existing land use pattern along West Moore Street has already transitioned to this same mixed pattern, and the applicant’s proposal fits in very well.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommends approval to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Conditional Use approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only, as owner or proprietor, for an Art Studio in R-P zoning in conjunction with a single-family residence on the same premises
- (2) There shall be no on-street parking, and all parking in the front yard shall only be on paved surfaces as approved by the City Engineer and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).
- (3) Conditional Use approval shall expire two (2) years from the date of approval if no City business license has been issued to the art studio by that that date.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- John Leonard, Property Owner – 2610 Winding Way

Mr. Leonard stated the property is currently being used as an art studio. Clients are by appointment only with only one at a time, so parking is not an issue.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend approval of the request as presented with 3 conditions. Commissioner Bailey second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

Agenda Items #8

CU-2025-02 Perma-Fix of South Georgia (1612 James P Rodgers Circle)
CUP for a Solid Waste Transfer Station in M-2 zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Solid Waste Transfer Station in a Heavy Industrial (M-2) zoning district. The subject property consists of 3.56 acres located at 1612 James P Rodgers Circle, which is on the north side of the road at the very end of the cul-de-sac. The property contains an existing warehouse and office buildings related to ongoing solid waste transfer operations on a portion of the property. The applicant recently received approval from Georgia EPD to resume hazardous waste "10 day Transfer" operations which had been discontinued about 7 years ago. They are now proposing to have assistance from a 3rd party vendor, and they are seeking City approval in order to complete their overall approval process. Please refer to Letter of Intent for more details.

The subject property is located within an Industrial Activity Center (IAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within the middle of the very well established "Azalea City Industrial Park" which contains a wide variety of heavy industrial uses.

As described in the applicant's letter of intent, this property has a long history of operating as a trucking terminal for solid waste transfer as well as other similar industrial activities, including uses that involve the handling of hazardous wastes. Before 2009, all of this was considered a "permitted use" under the City's M-2 zoning regulations. With the adoption of the LDR in 2009, a new line item for "Solid Waste Transfer Station" was added to the zoning Use Table, which requires this use to have CUP approval in M-2. As a result, the existing transfer station use of the property became a "grandfathered legal non-conforming use" in 2009. Then in 2013 the site suffered a tragic fire which caused the immediate closure of part of the facility, with environmental cleanup and monitoring activities being triggered. The burned portion of the facility was permanently removed. However, the other transfer operations on site still continued, including the 10-Day solid waste transfer operation, which was voluntarily terminated by the applicant in 2018. As a result, the grandfathering of that portion of the operation expires a year later in 2019. Now, the applicant is proposing to resume such operations under a new State permit, and this is triggering the need for CUP approval.

About a year ago, the applicant received approval from Georgia EPD to resume the short-term storage (10 days max.) and transfer operations of hazardous waste at this site. The applicant is proposing to lease the property to Veolia as a tenant for this operation. Many years ago, this site received hazardous waste in separate containers, whereby some were opened so that the contents could be consolidated (mixed) together before shipment to their final destination. (this part of the operation is what triggered the tragic fire in 2013) Now, the applicant is proposing to receive containers and leave them unopened, and then simply have them sorted for re transfer via truck to their final destination, with the mandate that they be stored on site no more than 10 days. Final destinations include disposal sites in other states – depending on the specific type of material. Again, please refer to Letter of Intent for further details.

This property has a long history of industrial uses, including solid waste transfer and related operations. If it were not for the adoption of the LDR regulations in 2009, the applicant could fully re-institute this prior use of the property as an ongoing Permitted Use. However, this change of regulations is a good thing so that the City can re-evaluate the potential impacts of what could otherwise be an unfettered intensive industrial use with unlimited scale, or perhaps located in an inappropriate location. In this particular case, the overall scope of the use is relatively small and the size of the property is somewhat limiting --- to no greater than what has existed on the property in the past. The location of the property deep within a heavy industrial area is as ideal a location as could be expected, and the proposal does not represent a change to what has existed on this site for many years in the past. The transfer and handling of hazardous wastes is strictly regulated and monitored by the State, as it should be, and the applicant (and its vendor) are well-accustomed to these regulations and State oversight. Staff is supportive of the applicant's proposed use so long as the hazardous waste containers remain unopened and all State permitting regulations and procedures are followed.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommends approval to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Conditional Use approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only, as owner of the property, for a Solid Waste Transfer facility in accordance with all applicable State and Federal permitting requirements and procedures of operation and handling as it relates to hazardous waste and other materials. Any facility reuse or expansions within the site, will also be subject to full City plan review procedures and approval by both the Building Official and the Fire Marshal.
- (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after one (1) year from the date of approval if there is no City business license issued to the applicant or their tenant by that date.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Kevin Schmuggerow, Representative of Applicant – 8302 Dunwoody Pl., Suite 250

Mr. Schmuengerow emphasized the fire that occurred previously involved a different product. The proposed use is strictly solid waste transfer. He also stated the proposed conditions are acceptable to the applicant. Additionally, the GA EPD approved resumption of activities in 2023 and stressed that hazardous waste may only remain on any site for a maximum of ten days.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Robert McLeod and Johnathan Maneer, Power House Diesel Generators – 1616 James P. Rodgers Dr.
- Ms. Gretchen Quarterman – 6565 Quarterman Rd.

Mr. McLeod and Mr. Maneer's concerns pertained to the devastation the previous fire caused for the surrounding businesses. They stated that water testing is still required all these years later. Concerned that their intent to expand their own business, adding jobs would pose a threat to life and limb if a tragedy were to strike again.

Ms. Quarterman stressed the importance of the recommendations the GLPC members make, setting the rules about growth in the community while promoting care for the citizens and our earth.

Commissioner James Miller asked Mr. Martin for clarification on the proposed use. Mr. Martin reiterated while this is the same company, the process is different, with strict oversight continuing. This process is similar to a distribution center whereas no containers will be opened on site, they are strictly transferred to trucks and sent elsewhere. Commissioner Bythwood voiced concern about the proximity of the petroleum company across the road and asked about who monitors and enforces the process. Commissioner Wildes stated solid waste/hazardous waste is highly regulated by the EPD. Commissioner Willis stressed the importance of considering the concerns and safety of adjacent property owners and citizens, and also voiced concern about the volume that will be handled. Commissioner Hightower asked for clarification that this will only be a staging area with no mixing of materials. Mr. Martin referred to the Conditional Use Criterion included in the information packets.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Willis to recommend denial of the request. Commissioner Bythwood second. Four in favor, five opposed. Motion failed. (4-5)

Motion by Commissioner Wildes to recommend approval of the request as presented with 2 conditions. Commissioner James Miller second. Five in favor, four opposed. Motion carried. (5-4)

Agenda Item #9

VA-2025-01 James Warren (202 Denmark Street)
Rezone 0.73 acres from R-6 to C-C

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is proposing to rezone two (2) parcels totaling 0.73 acres from Single-Family Residential (R 6) to Community Commercial (C-C). The subject properties are

located in the Little Miami neighborhood at 202 Denmark Street, which is along the north side of the street about 300 feet west of the intersection with Pendleton Avenue. The properties collectively contain an existing nonconforming commercial/warehouse building (11,100-sf). The applicant is proposing the rezoning in order to market for a future commercial tenant.

The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of C-C zoning. This is mostly the same property which received approval of an FDM Character Area amendment last fall, to change the designation from Established Residential (ER) to CAC (file # VA-2024-18). ** Staff was opposed to the Character Area amendments at that time, and remains opposed to this Rezoning request as well --- for many of the same reasons.

The subject properties are part of a residential neighborhood which was one of the unincorporated islands (# 85) that were annexed by the City in 2006. These properties had Cluster Residential (R-C) zoning in the County, which was the County's multi-family residential zoning district at that time. They were given R-6 zoning in the City upon annexation (which was the City's multi-family residential zoning district at that time). With the adoption of the LDR, the City's rules for R-6 changed such that multi-family is no longer a permitted use in R 6.

Despite the previous zonings allowing multi-family development, virtually none of the properties in the Little Miami area developed with multi-family uses, but instead remained as mostly single-family, with some scattered mobile home development occurring while in the County before the time of annexation. There were also a number of existing small commercial or industrial type uses in this area at the time of annexation, and most of these were likely in place before the County's initial establishment of Zoning in the early 1970's. These commercial/industrial uses were already non-conforming uses in the County at the time of annexation, and have remained completely nonconforming ever since. They are now subject to the City's rules for "nonconforming uses", which stipulates that once a nonconforming use is discontinued for a period of at least 12 months, it may not be reestablished. For the subject properties, there is little to no business licensing history and the exact timeline of business usage is uncertain. However, based on Google imagery it appears that the "South Georgia Garage Door" business occupied the premises for a number of years after the time of annexation. However, they have been gone from the site now for several years.

Last fall, the applicant's primary purpose in requesting the Character Area change was to make the properties eligible for commercial zoning, so that the property can be marketed to a wider range of potential uses. The applicant pointed out the subject property being adjacent to the CAC character area to the west. However, this portion of the CAC character area fronts South Patterson Street which is an intensive commercial corridor along a busy 4-lane highway. In the applicant's Rezoning application, there is no statement of the intended/proposed use of the property. It only states that the purpose is to make the zoning of the property consistent with the CAC character area. It should be noted that R-6 zoning is also a compliant zoning district within the CAC character area as well. With the current use of

the property and its relation to C-C zoning being unclear, and there being no stated alternative proposed use of the property requiring C-C zoning, the applicant's Rezoning request is deemed to be SPECULATIVE.

In general, it is considered highly inappropriate for commercial uses (particularly the intensive ones...) to have their only means of access through a residential area, and therefore such intensive zoning districts in these areas should not be approved as part of any redevelopment proposal. In the City's Land Development Regulations (LDR) it gives general purpose statements for each of the City's zoning districts. For C-C zoning (LDR section 206 16(A)), it states that it "should be located on collector streets where they are convenient by car and on foot to surrounding neighborhoods but will not cause excessive traffic on residential streets."

Staff understands the history of the property with its commercial/warehouse type buildings, and its currently intensive nonconforming usage, but does NOT believe this situation justifies the potential negative impacts such a zoning change could have on the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east and south. If rezoned to C-C, any of the allowable uses in C-C zoning become eligible for the subject property (see attached "Zoning District Comparison Chart"). Staff would certainly encourage redevelopment of the subject properties, and even adaptive reuse of the existing buildings, but believes there are better alternatives --- such as an institutional use (many of which are allowed in R-6 with a CUP approval), or perhaps redevelopment as multi-family (requiring a rezoning to R-M, which is eligible in the CAC character area), which would be generally supported by staff.

Staff finds the request inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends DENIAL to the City Council.

Commissioner Willis asked if the current use will continue. Mr. Martin replied that is a question for the applicant. Commissioner Hightower inquired as to the allowable uses in C-C zoning. Mr. Martin stated retail, restaurants, offices, etc., as well as multi-family housing.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Mr. Billy Nijem, Attorney for the Applicant – 1007 N. Patterson St.

Mr. Nijem reiterated the purpose of the request is to make the long-standing use conform to zoning. The intent is to clean up the property and use it for specialty services that might include a general contractor's office, appliance repair, locksmith or the like. He also stated a Conditional Use Permit is required for many uses in C-C zoning which gives opportunity to limit undesirable uses via conditions.

Commissioner Wildes voiced concern about access through a residential street not knowing what the actual use will be. Mr. Nijem stated speculative use is not forbidden when making the request. Commissioner Foreman asked if the applicant knows what use it will be, to which Mr. Nijem answered

he does not. Commissioner James Miller asked for clarification that historical use is the only reason for the request. Mr. Nijem affirmed, also stating it is not feasible to demolish an 11,000 sq ft building that is not in disrepair.

Mr. Martin stated the request could be argued either way. The current zoning is very limiting and C-C offers a broader range of possibilities.

Commissioner Bythwood asked if anyone from the adjacent church has voiced any opposition. Neither Mr. Martin nor Mr. Nijem have received any calls or contact from anyone. Commissioner Hightower stated maintaining the status quo is not acceptable.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Commissioner Willis stated if we do nothing, it will only get worse. Commissioner Wildes offered that the location will limit the use so there is no need to dictate or condition what cannot go in.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Wildes to recommend approval of the request. Commissioner Hightower second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

Agenda Item #10

VA-2025-02 Courley LLC (1021 West Gordon Street)
Rezone 2.06 acres from R-6 to R-M

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone two (2) parcels totaling 2.06 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Multi Family Residential (R-M). The subject properties are located at 1021 West Gordon Street, which is along the south side of the street between the intersections with Hutto Street and Diana Place to the north. The properties are currently developed with an abandoned single-family residence on the larger parcel, while the smaller parcel is vacant. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing residence and redevelop the entire property with an apartment complex consisting of up to 36 dwelling units.

The subject property is located within a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of R-M zoning.

The subject properties are part of a mostly high-density residential and institutional neighborhood along West Gordon Street corridor. Significant uses along this corridor include the SL Mason Elementary School and several small churches a few blocks to the east, the Craig Center facility, public housing complex for the Valdosta Housing Authority (VHA), and several private sector multi-family developments adjacent or in proximity to the subject property. Adjacent to the corridor along the many side streets are established single-family residential areas of various development densities. Some of the properties

have been going through redevelopment and these trends have been mostly for multi-family development. All of this is broadly supported by the NAC and Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area designations along the corridor. Vehicular access through the corridor is centered on West Gordon Street which has a "Major Collector" classification and is designed/planned to carry a moderate volume of traffic.

However, most notably in all of this is that the subject property sits directly between an existing new apartment complex to the west (already on R-M property), and a proposed complex to the east (on C-C property) which is being developed by the applicant and is already in the plan review process. If this rezoning process is approved, the applicant is proposing to maybe link these two complexes together in order to facilitate a better site design for both. (see attached site sketch) In terms of architectural style, the applicant is proposing to emulate the design of the existing complex to the west (see attached photos). There is also R-M density development on some of the properties across the street to the north, as well as R-M zoning on vacant properties across the railroad track to the rear of the subject property. All these things together make the applicant's proposed rezoning very logical and consistent with surrounding patterns.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Mr. Tyler Dallas, Attorney for the Applicant - 1007 N. Patterson St.

Mr. Dallas stated he was present to answer any questions and said the developer is in talks about possibly using the same design as the adjacent property's apartments.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Bythwood to recommend approval of the request. Commissioner Bailey second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

Agenda Item #11

VA-2025-03 Alexander Wynn (212 Springhill Street)
Rezone 0.33 acres from R-10 to R-6

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicants are requesting to rezone one (1) parcel comprising 0.33 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6). The subject property

is located at 212 Springhill Street, which is along the west side of the road about 650 feet south of River Street. The property is currently vacant, and previously contained a single-family residence before it was demolished in 2023. The applicant is proposing to redevelop the property with a new residential duplex.

The subject property is located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of R-6 zoning.

The subject property is part of an old remnant residential area that was first developed in the County more than 60 years ago, and then annexed into the City 19 years ago. It is well-situated and ripe for redevelopment of infill residential, but needs some catalyst and encouragement. The surrounding zoning pattern consists of a mixture of R-10, R-6 and R-M zonings. The existing land use pattern of the area is also a mixture of residential densities interspersed with numerous vacant lots. Most notably for the subject property is the abutting large apartment complex (Ashton Park) immediately to the south (zoned R-M), and a large vacant tract across the street to the east (zoned R-6). The applicant's proposal for R-6 zoning and redevelopment of this property as a duplex, fits in very well with both the surrounding zoning and land use patterns. It may also be a catalyst that is needed for future residential redevelopment projects along this street.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Mr. Alex Wynn and Ms. Nicole Richardson, Applicants – 8811 N. 78th Ave., Temple Terrace, FL

The applicants stated they were present to answer any questions. Commissioner Bailey asked if the units would be single bedroom. Mr. Wynn stated they would be two-bedroom units.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Wildes to recommend approval of the request. Commissioner Webb second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

Agenda Items #11 & #12

HA-2025-01 Lemaka Holdings LLC (106 & 108 North Church Street)
Rezone 0.28 acres from R-10 to R-P

HA-2025-02 Lemaka Holdings LLC (106 & 108 North Church Street)
Variances to Section 6-1 of the Hahira Zoning Ordinance

Mr. Martin presented both cases together. The applicant is requesting to rezone 0.28 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to residential Professional (R-P). The subject property is the rear portion of property located at 106 & 108 North Church Street, in Hahira GA. This is along the east side of the street about 250 feet north of the intersection with East Main Street, and immediately south of the Hahira post office. The property is currently split-zoned R-P in the front and R-10 in the rear. The purpose of the rezoning is to make the entire property zoned R-P so that it can be more easily subdivided into two (2) parcels. The applicant is also requesting certain Variances from the Hahira Zoning Ordinance, which is being processed concurrently with this Rezoning request (see agenda item # HA-2025-02 for further details) No exterior changes are proposed for the existing buildings on the property.

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

The subject property currently contains a grandfathered nonconforming small apartment building (6 dwelling units) along with a detached single-family residence on the same parcel --- which together are regarded as one multi-family residential complex with 7 dwelling units. The applicant is proposing to replat the property into two (2) parcels; one for the apartments, and the other for the single-family residence so that they can be sold separately. The proposed Rezoning is necessary in order to help alleviate the nonconforming situation and better facilitate subdivision of the property.

The current split-zoning of the property has existed ever since the City first adopted Zoning more than 40 years ago. The current development on the property (6-unit apt building + detached residence) has existed even longer, and there has never before been any changes to the property which triggered the need for any kind of relief or remedy. The proposed subdivision of the property, with each proposed parcel being split-zoned, highlights the nonconforming use issues on the overall property as well as an overall increase in the "dwelling unit density" calculation of the proposed apartment parcel. Rezoning is recommended (by staff) to help alleviate this density calculation increase, as well as cleanup the Zoning map and rectify this split-zoning situation.

The applicant is also requesting certain Variances to Section 6-1 of the Hahira Zoning Ordinance as they pertain to minimum lot width, front yard building setback, side yard building setback, and the maximum dwelling unit density in an R-P zoning district. The subject property is located at 106 & 108 North Church Street, in Hahira GA. This is along the east side of the street about 250 feet north of the intersection with East Main Street, and immediately south of the Hahira post office. The property currently contains a grandfathered nonconforming small apartment building (6 dwelling units) along with a detached single-family residence. The applicant is proposing to replat the property into two (2) parcels; one for the apartments, and the other for the single-family residence. The proposed Variances are necessary to allow the establishment of the new internal property line being proposed. The applicant is also seeking Rezoning of the rear portion of the property to help facilitate this proposed subdivision as well (refer to previous agenda item) These requested Variances (with Staff discussion of each) are as follows. Variance "hardship" in all of these requests is based on existing site conditions.

(A) Minimum Lot Width in R-P zoning = 60 feet.

The unsubdivided property's total lot width and frontage along North Church Street is currently about 122 feet. The applicant's proposed subdivision would place the existing apartment building on a lot that is about 90 feet wide (OK), but the lot for single-family residence would only be about 32 feet wide. This is being primarily dictated by the location of the existing fence lines, and existing driveway locations. ** This variance should be approved for the southern parcel only, and subject to the proposed subdivision plat only.

(B) Minimum Front Yard Building Setback in R-P zoning = 15 feet.

The current front yard setback for the existing apartment building is only 7 feet, at its closest point. The applicant's proposal is to maintain this existing distance --- based solely on the existing building. ** This variance should be approved, for the northern parcel and its existing building only. Any redevelopment or new building construction/expansions would need to comply with current setback requirements.

(C) Minimum Side Yard Building Setback in R-P zoning = 10 feet.

The current side yard setback for the two existing buildings is only 1 foot, along the current external boundaries (overall north & south property lines) and there is no proposed change to this setback distance. The proposed new internal property line will yield a side yard setback of 6' for each building at their closest points, which is dictated by the existing buildings being only 12 feet apart in these locations. ** This variance should be approved, for both parcels and for their existing buildings only. Any redevelopment or new building construction/expansions would need to comply with current setback requirements.

(D) Maximum dwelling unit density in R-P zoning = 10 units/acre.

Currently as one parcel with 7 dwelling units, the density is 11.48 du/acre. With the currently proposed subdivision creating a northern parcel with 6 dwelling units, the density (for just that parcel) would increase to 13.95 du/acre. ** This variance should be approved for the northern parcel and its existing building only.

Staff finds the requests consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and with Variance review criteria, and recommends approval of R-P zoning for the rear portion of the property as requested, and for approval for each of these requested variances as stipulated above.

Regarding the rezoning request (HA-2025-01), Commissioner Hightower asked if the adjacent corner property would be affected. Mr. Martin stated it will not.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the requests:

- Mr. Mason Barfield, Representing Applicants – 317 N. Hagan Bridge Rd.

Mr. Barfield gave a history of the property.

No one spoke in opposition to the requests.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for motions.

With regard to HA-2025-01, motion by Commissioner Bailey to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Webb second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

With regard to HA-2025-02, motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Foreman second. All in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. (9-0)

There being no other business, Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Steve Miller, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date