

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, July 28, 2025 – 5:30 PM

GLPC Commission Members Present: Franklin Bailey, Ron Bythwood, George Foreman, Shawanna Griffith, Ed Hightower, James Miller (Vice-Chair), Steve Miller (Chair), Vicki Rountree, Chris Webb, Chip Wildes

Absent: Calvin Graham, Tommy Willis

Staff: Matt Martin, City of Valdosta/Hahira Planning Director, Amy Martin, Senior Planner, City of Valdosta; 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 Steve 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: June 30, 2025

Chairman Miller called for additions, questions, and corrections of the June 30, 2025, GLPC meeting minutes. There being no additions, questions or corrections to the June 30, 2025, GLPC meeting minutes, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Hightower made a motion to approve the June 30, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (9-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3

CU-2025-06

Crossroads Baptist Church
CUP for an expanded church facility in R-15 zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow expansion of a church and its accessory uses in a Single-Family Residential (R-15) zoning district. The subject property consists of two parcels comprising 12.19 acres and is located at 3001 Country Club Drive. This is along the east side of Country Club Drive, between Eager Road and Green Meadow Drive. The property contains an existing church which also includes a private tuition church accessory school (grades K3 – 8). The existing church/school facility received CUP approval in 2010, but is now proposing to expand beyond the limits of that approval.

The subject property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

The CUP request in 2010 (file # CU-2010-07) was approved on 6-10-2010, subject to a submitted master site plan (see attached), and subject to the following two (2) conditions:

- (1) Approval shall be for a church, with an accessory church school grades K3-12 with no more than 250 students, in accordance with the general layout of the submitted site plan. Total additional building square footage on the site shall not exceed 32,000 square feet, and expansions beyond this point shall require re-approval by the City.
- (2) Upon construction of a new building or expansion to an existing building beyond 5,000 square feet, all existing parking lots and street yards shall be brought into full compliance with the LDR. All new development on the site shall comply with the provisions of the LDR at the time of permitting

These past 15 years, the applicant has maintained compliance with Condition #1. Condition #2 was triggered several years ago and saw the addition of the parking lot on the northern part of the property, as well as the installation of some of the required landscaping. Because of the impending widening of Country Club Drive and Eager Road, the City has agreed to allow delay of the required street yard landscaping until after those road projects are completed. Now the applicant has revised their overall master site development plan (see attached) to include some additional buildings and expansions beyond the CUP limits, which will bring the site building total to more than 88,000 square feet. It also features an increased school enrollment from 250 to 350 students. Thus the need for a new CUP review and approval. The applicant's attached letter of intent describes these changes in a little greater detail.

The existing church and its school are situated in a residential area on a significant amount of acreage with still room to grow. The overall facility growth under the terms of the current CUP approval has been steady, and the church has established a positive track record. The original CUP conditions were based on consideration of potential impacts regarding traffic generation, particularly from the school during peak hour traffic flows. The concern of these impacts were for the abutting 2-lane roadways which were already becoming burdened with traffic. Now, the

widening of these roadways to 4-lanes is finally underway, and soon the carrying capacity of these roadways will become much greater. Therefore the concern of excessive traffic generated by this facility is now much less than before, and additional reasonable expansion of this facility should be allowed to continue.

Although the size of the 12-acre site itself will ultimately be the limiting factor in the facility's maximum growth, staff believes there should be one more checkpoint in the continued growth of the facility – before reaching its ultimate buildout size. There is still some uncertainty in the final outcome of the roadway improvements and how they will alleviate the growing traffic congestion in the area. There is also a need to assess the actual impacts this larger school facility will have on the abutting neighborhoods in terms of noise and lighting. Therefore, this approved continued expansion of the church/school facility should be generous but not unlimited.

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) Approval shall be granted for a church, with an accessory church school grades K3-12, in accordance with the general layout of the submitted site plan, with no more than 400 total students and no more than 100,000 square feet of total building floor area. Expansions beyond this point shall require re-approval by the City.
- (2) Upon construction of a new building or expansion to an existing building beyond 2,000 square feet, all existing parking areas and street yards shall be brought into full compliance with the commercial site landscaping provisions of the LDR in accordance with an approved landscape plan. However, installation of street yard landscaping along Country Club Road and Eager Road may be delayed until final completion of the impending road widening projects.
- (3) This Conditional Use approval shall supersede and replace the previous Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approved in 2010.

Commission Bailey asked if enrollment is capped at 400, which grades will be affected. Mr. Martin explained that would be up to the applicant to decide. Commissioner Hightower asked if they exceed that capacity, they will be required to come back. Mr. Martin said the cap was raised in anticipation of growth. The applicant anticipates only having 350 students in ten years.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Bill Kent, Project Engineer – 2214 N Patterson St.

Mr. Kent explained that the first phase of the expansion would be the multi-purpose room/gymnasium. Chairman Miller asked if the campus would be a singular façade. Mr. Kent stated it would be eventually.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

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

Agenda Item #4

VA-2025-06

City of Valdosta
LDR Minor Text Amendments

Mr. Martin presented the case in which The City of Valdosta is proposing several minor text amendments to various chapters of the Land Development Regulations (LDR). These are mostly housekeeping type amendments, with some more substantive amendments to the regulations for single-family attached “townhouses” as well as multi-family development. These amendments are more specifically described, and depicted in the customary underline/strikeout format on the attached pages.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommends approval of these proposed amendments to the City Council.

Commissioner Bailey inquired about the 4/12 roof pitch. Mr. Martin said it has always been that. Commissioner Bythwood asked why the number was lowered from 25 to 20 in R-M, to which Mr. Martin explained that it is to allow for greater density. Chairman Miller asked if all garages would be rear loading. Mr. Martin stated that when there are garages, they will be rear loading. However, garages are not required. Vice-Chair Miller questioned how changes are being shared with applicants/citizens. Mr. Martin shared that handouts were being prepared, and applicants would be informed through Pre-Application meetings.

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

No one rose to speak in favor of, nor in opposition to the proposed changes.

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

Agenda Item #5

REZ-2025-12 Adair Estates, 4146 Hwy. 122 E., 0045 009, ~1.5ac.
Current Zoning: E-A (Estate 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 E-A (Estate Agricultural) to R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning, in order to bring the lot and its allowable uses into conformity. The subject property possesses road frontage on GA HWY 122 East, a State Route, and is within the Urban Service Area and Agricultural Forestry Character area.

While the Future Land Use map depicts the area as Agricultural and does not recommend R-1 zoning, the surrounding land uses and lot sizes are primarily a cluster of residential parcels interspersed with woodlands and farmland.

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 viability of Well & Septic systems, and the ability to properly apply the standards of the ULDC, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-1 zoning.

Commissioner Bailey asked if any public water and sewer services are available in the area. Mr. Dillard stated they are not. Chairman Miller asked how long the parcel had been that size in that zoning district. Mr. Dillard explained it has been that way since the 1990's at least, if not longer.

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

No one spoke in favor of, nor in opposition to the request.

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

Agenda Item #5

REZ-2025-13 ENCC, LLC, 9353 GA Hwy. 135, 0248 044A, ~1 ac.
Current Zoning: E-A (Estate Agricultural)
Proposed Zoning: C-C (Crossroads Commercial)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to C-C (Crossroads Commercial) zoning, in order to bring the property into compliance for commercial use. The subject property was

previously a part of 9369 HWY 135, and was created by deed in 2017, but has historically been used for various commercial purposes for many years under different owners.

The subject property possesses road frontage on GA HWY 135 and October Lane, a State Major Collector Road and a County maintained local road respectively, is within the Rural Service Area and Agricultural Forestry Character Area, which recommend C-C 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 viability of a Well & Septic system, the historic and proposed use, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-C zoning with the following conditions:

1. Alcohol Package Stores, Cemeteries, Funeral Homes, Mini-storage, Kennels with Outdoor Runs, and Vehicle Sales shall not be allowed.
2. Any vehicular ingress/egress off of October Lane shall require the property owner/developer to pave the street from that ingress/egress to the nearest paved street. The property owner/developer will be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above.

Additionally, although the TRC does not believe that conditions of approval are necessary for the following information, it should be noted for future reference: the minimum buffer area between Commercial and Residential zonings is 30 feet, which may be decreased by 50% and the buffer landscaping decreased by 25% with the installation of a 6' to 8' opaque fence.

Chairman Miller asked if October Lane is a dead end. Mr. Dillard said it is. Commissioner Rountree inquired about the stub-outs on Hwy 135. Mr. Dillard confirmed there are stub-outs. Commissioner Bailey verified that mini-storage facilities would not be allowed. Mr. Dillard affirmed that. Commissioner Hightower asked about the zoning of the properties surrounding the subject property. Mr. Dillard stated the surrounding parcels are zoned E-A (Estate Agricultural) and R-1 9Low Density Residential).

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Jack Langdale, Attorney for Applicant – 701 N. Patterson St.

Mr. Langdale discussed the history of the property, stating it had contained the Riley Church Pews business since the 1970's. The property was divided in 2016 by a previous owner, not by county standards, and it served as the location of a cabinet shop and plumbing company. Mr. Langdale further spoke of the applicant's character. He stated that the requested zoning is appropriate as

it has been utilized for decades for commercial purposes. He also confirmed that the applicant has no objections to the conditions offered.

Commissioner Rountree asked if the intent is to continue to use the driveway off Hwy 135. Mr. Langdale stated the intent is to continue to use Hwy 135 as access as there is plenty of room. Chairman Miller asked if the applicant intends to be there long term. Mr. Langdale affirmed. Commissioner Bythwood inquired about the possibility of expansion. Mr. Langdale stated there is no intent for expansion at this time.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Bailey to recommend approval of the request as presented with two (2) conditions by staff. Commissioner Foreman second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (9-0). Motion carried.

There being no other business, Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Steve Miller, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission

Date