

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, August 25, 2025 – 5:30 PM

GLPC Commission Members Present: Ron Bythwood, George Foreman, Calvin Graham, Ed Hightower, James Miller (Vice-Chair), Steve Miller (Chair), Vicki Rountree, Tommy Willis

Absent: Franklin Bailey, Shawanna Griffith, Chris Webb, Chip Wildes

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), Alexandra Arzayus, SGRC Planner

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 James Miller 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: July 28, 2025

Chairman Miller called for additions, questions, and corrections of the July 28, 2025, GLPC meeting minutes. There being no additions, questions or corrections to the July 28, 2025, GLPC meeting minutes, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to approve the July 28, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Graham second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3

REZ-2024-06	Horace Ave., 1735 Madison Hwy & Horace Ave., 0126B 013, ~3.0 ac.
Current Zoning:	CON (Conservation) & C-H (Highway Commercial)
Proposed Zoning:	CON (Conservation) & C-H (Highway Commercial)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in the existing boundaries of the CON (Conservation) and C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning to newly proposed boundaries of CON and C-H zoning¹. The main motivations in this case are to bring the current commercial use of the property into compliance and for speculative future commercial use. The property is currently owned by Budd Billboards LLC and represented by the Budd Company. The business operator on the subject property is L and G Diesel Service.

The subject property possesses road frontage on Madison Hwy and Horace Ave, an improved State Maintained Arterial Road and an unimproved (dirt) County Maintained Local Road. The subject property is also within the Valdosta Regional Airport (VLD) Overlay, and is depicted as Park/Recreation/Conservation (90%) and Community Activity Center (10%) on the Comprehensive Plan Character Area Map. The subject property is within the Urban Service Area but is not close to Lowndes County Water and Sewer. The closest water and sewer are from the City of Valdosta (City Limits Adjacent to the West and South). There is also an Atlanta Gas and Light line along Horace Avenue. The property owners do not want to annex into the City of Valdosta and would like to use well and septic to serve the property.

Within the VLD Overlay, the property is in the Conical Surface Zone, Horizontal Surface Zone, Runway Protection Zone, Transitional Surface Zone, Approach Zone, and Noise Contour Zone. Section 4.02.03 (attached) lists supplemental design standards and restricted uses within these zones.

Part of the northern property line is along Mud Swamp Creek. Around 95% of the property is within the flood plain² and ~30% has potential wetlands³. The involvement of FEMA and EPD with the Flood Plain and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) with the wetlands are factors in the development of the subject property. At this point, the applicants have not applied for a flood plain related application with FEMA or for a jurisdictional wetland determination with the ACOE. Previous owners of the property may have impacted the wetlands depicted in the National Wetland Inventory.

Currently, the property is not zoned for the use, and the office is an un-permitted portable storage building. The building is fed with unpermitted power and has been retrofitted with a bathroom that appears to have been connected to an unpermitted well and septic system. The compliance history includes complaints and staff conversations that stretch back to February 2024. Most of the Staff time since then has been spent working with the property owner and operator addressing issues related to the flood plain, wetlands, and rezoning. This past July, after receiving additional complaints, staff increased its involvement due to the growth of the operation to 50+ vehicles (dominantly semi-trucks) and a lack of substantial progress on the permitting of the subject property. (PRE-2024-11 Notes, 7/18/25 Status E-mail, and Timeline Attached).

Additionally, although the TRC does not believe that conditions of approval are necessary for the following information, it should be noted for future reference that: the supplemental standards for the proposed use will apply – ULDC Section 4.03.11, the minimum buffer area between the Commercial use and the R-10 (East) CON zoning (North) is 60 feet, which may be decreased by 50% and the buffer landscaping decreased by 25% with the installation of a 6' to 8' opaque fence, the regulations for the VLD overlay will apply to the development of the subject property, and staff recognizes that communication has been limited and would welcome members of the developer's professional team to weigh in on the proposed development of the subject property (Engineer, Surveyor, Environmental Consultant, etc.).

Staff analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning powers 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 of the property, the environmental sensitivity of the site, and the VLD Overlay Standards, and therefore recommends:

A. Tabling:

The Commission could consider tabling of the request until a time appointed.

1. A Jurisdictional Determination has been issued by the ACOE.
2. A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR⁴) has been issued by FEMA/EPD.

B. Approval with Conditions:

If the Commission is ready to move forward, then they could consider approval with conditions. The current set of draft conditions are as follows:

1. Regarding the CON / C-H zoning boundary:
 - a. The C-H zoning boundary and its allowed uses shall not extend beyond the delineated wetland boundary as approved by the ACOE.

Or, if that boundary is not known at the time of LCBOC consideration, then

- b. The C-H zoning boundary shall extend from the southern end of the property along Horace Avenue to 55' off of the southern-most GIS wetland boundaries.
2. Any vehicular ingress/egress off of Horace Avenue while it is unimproved 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. The paving shall be complete before the issuance of any Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is granted on the subject property

3. Per GA EPD Floodplain Management, a guardrail shall be installed around the perimeter of anything stored on the property to a height two (2) feet above the flood zone.
4. A sign and/or billboard shall not be permitted on the property until the commercial use is brought into compliance.
5. Any lighting located on the property shall be shielded and directed to avoid direct illumination of adjacent residentially zoned properties.
6. Any loudspeakers, paging systems, or electromagnetic interference generated on or by uses of the property shall be designed, installed and used such that they are not discernible at any abutting residentially zoned property line.
7. The following list of uses shall not be allowed on the subject property:
 - a. Care Homes
 - b. Transitional Care Facilities
 - c. Agricultural and Farm Operations
 - d. Chicken Coops
 - e. Kennels
 - f. Adult Entertainment
 - g. Animal Care Facilities
 - h. Child Care
 - i. Lodging
 - j. Lounges, Bars, and Nightclubs
 - k. Research and Experimental Laboratories
 - l. Schools & Universities
 - m. Truck Stops
 - n. Telecommunications Towers

C. Deny

Commissioner Foreman asked if the Public Notice signs had been removed by staff. Mr. Dillard stated they had not. Further discussion for staff involved questions about the property being in a flood zone, the number of allowed vehicles, and code enforcement issues.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Jamie Parks, Applicant Representative – 3361 Cedar Rd.

Mr. Parks stated the property owner wants to get the property into compliance so that the tenant can get back to work. Chairman Miller asked if the owner was willing to pave the road. Mr. Parks said yes. Commissioner Rountree asked how much paving was necessary, to which Mr. Parks answered not much.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Discussion among the Commissioners involved more comments about the history of Code Enforcement issues. Additionally, Commissioner Hightower asked Mr. Dillard if the current tenant can still operate with its current zoning if the issues were brought into compliance. Mr. Dillard answered affirmatively.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend DENIAL of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Willis second. Six voted in favor of recommending denial of the request, one opposed (6-1) (Rountree). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4

REZ-2025-14 Dinkins, 6533 Lake Alapaha Blvd., 0259 029A, ~1.0 ac.
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 of the subject property from C-C (Crossroads Commercial) zoning to R-21 (Medium Density Residential) 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 zoned C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) 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, and the changing conditions within the neighborhood, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-21 zoning.

Chairman Miller asked if the water/well issues in that area have been addressed. Mr. Dillard explained that construction of two additional wells has begun for the area. Commissioner

Hightower asked about the time-frame for completion of the wells project. Mr. Dillard stated the hope is that the wells will be online within a year.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Tony Dinkins, Applicant – 6015 Red Oak Pt.

Mr. Dinkins introduced himself and stated he was available to answer any questions. Additionally, he inquired about the ability to utilize the existing well on the property. Mr. Dillard explained that connection to County water will be required.

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 as presented by staff. Commissioner Foreman second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5

LP-2025-01 Lake Park Church of Christ/Steve Magee, 610, 614, 618 Sheavette Rd.,
0221A 063B, ~8007 sq ft
Current Zoning: R-15 (Single Family Residential)
Proposed Zoning: R-10 (Single Family Residential)

Ms. Arzayus presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on a ~8,007 sq ft portion of the subject properties from R-15 (Single Family Residential) to R-10 (Single Family Residential) zoning. The purpose of the request is to eliminate the split zoning on the subject properties which was created when the applicant re-subdivided 3 legal lots of record from a portion of the parent parcel (0221A 063A) from the current location of the Lake Park Church of Christ. Due to the dedication of right of way, the applicant wanted to shift the property lines north, creating the split zoned lots. The Lake Park Council reviewed this plat, and stated that the lots needed to be one consolidated, contiguous R-10 zoning district before final plat approval.

The surrounding zoning districts are R-10 and R-15, both Single-Family Residential. The surrounding uses are single family homes and a church. The proposed R-10 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district is compatible with the surrounding zoning and uses. The purpose of the R-10 zoning is to provide residential areas restricted to single-family uses with a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet.

This zoning request is consistent with the adopted local Comprehensive Plan.

Staff has reviewed this petition and determined that it is in compliance with the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Powers and therefore recommends Approval of the petition by the Lake Park Church of Christ/Steve Magee, for a change in zoning from the R-15 (Single Family Residential) Zoning District to R-10 (Single Family Residential), located on the north side of Sheavette Road, beginning at approximately 1000 feet from its intersection with Long Pond Road to about 600 feet south of the Lake Park Church of Christ.

Commissioner Willis asked for confirmation that only a small portion of the subject property was being requested for rezoning. Ms. Arzayus confirmed. Chairman Miller asked if the church has plans for expansion, to which Ms. Arzayus stated not at this time.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Steve Magee – 4634 Firestone Ln.

Mr. Magee explained that the parcels are currently sitting empty and selling will enable the church to pay off the building debt. Additionally, Mr. Magee stated expansion may be discussed in the future.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Jim Kannberg – 617 Sheavette Rd.

Mr. Kannberg's concerns involved the potential removal of majestic oaks and the minimum sizes of lots and homes.

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 Hightower second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #6

CU-2025-07

Valeria Dwyer (114 Mills Lane)

CUP for a mobile home in R-6 zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow the placement of a mobile home in a Single-Family Residential (R-6) zoning district. The subject property consists of 0.23 acres located at 114 Mills Lane, which is positioned on the west side of the roadway approximately 400 feet north of West Hill Avenue. The parcel is

currently vacant and the applicant is requesting to place a new double-wide manufactured home (1,898 sf) on the property. The home is intended for her personal residential use.

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

The surrounding neighborhood is primarily residential in nature, featuring a mix of site-built and manufactured (mobile) homes. Along Mills Lane, there are a total of seven (7) residences, with the majority being mobile homes located toward the northern portion of the street. The southern portion of the street is characterized by three (3) site-built homes. Directly across from the subject property, on the east side of Mills Lane, is a vacant church building. The broader community, including adjacent areas to the east and west, reflects a diverse range of housing types. Historically, Conditional Use Permits have been granted in this area to allow for the placement of mobile homes on otherwise vacant lots or parcels. This request is consistent with the existing transitional development pattern.

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 for a Class “A” doublewide manufactured home as defined by the LDR, and in general accordance with the submitted site plan and schematic drawings. The home shall be placed at least 30 feet from Mills Lane, on a permanent all-masonry foundation with brick or brick veneer skirting.
2. Conditional Use approval shall expire two (2) years from the date of approval, if no building permit for the manufactured home has been issued by that date.

Commissioner Willis asked if there is a requirement that mobile homes be new. Mr. Martin stated as long as it is Class A, a new or used one can be requested. If used, the City must inspect it prior to permitting. Commissioner James Miller inquired about the skirting requirement. Mr. Martin answered the development code requires skirting be masonry or brick veneer.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Valeria Dwyer, Applicant – 116 Mills Ln.

Ms. Dwyer stated her motivation in the request is to have living more space for herself.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Graham to recommend approval of the request with 2 conditions, as presented by staff. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7

VA-2025-07

SharpeCo Developments, LLC (1515 Hickory Rd.)
Rezone 0.49 acres from R-10 to C-C

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone 0.49 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Community Commercial (C-C). The subject property is located at 1515 Hickory Road, which is an existing single-family home positioned on the south side of the roadway approximately 230 feet east of North St. Augustine Road. Formerly vacant, the home is now owned by SharpeCo Developments is proposing to convert the residence for use as a building contractor's office.

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.

The subject property is situated within a community characterized by a variety of land uses. Along North St. Augustine Road, properties are predominantly zoned Highway Commercial (C-H) to accommodate the numerous businesses that line this busy corridor. Directly across from the subject property are two larger parcels zoned Community Commercial (C-C), reflecting the area's ongoing commercial development. Approximately 180 feet to the east, several parcels are zoned Multi-Family Residential (R-M), further contributing to the diversity of land uses in the immediate vicinity. There is only one other property immediately nearby – to the east - that remains zoned Single-Family Residential (R-10). The proposed redevelopment of the subject property as a business office is not expected to create any nuisance for the surrounding properties. The intended office use is associated with a construction-related business. As such, the office will primarily function as a space for administrative tasks and client meetings scheduled by appointment, rather than as a high-traffic or noisy commercial operation.

Given the property's proximity to North St Augustine Road and the community commercial uses located directly across the street, as well as the broader pattern of mixed-use development in the area, this rezoning request is consistent with the established Community Activity Center (CAC) development pattern. The proposal represents a compatible land use transition that supports the development character of the surrounding neighborhood.

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.

Chairman Miller asked if R-M zoning was previously approved for the nearby proposed apartment development. Mr. Martin stated it has been approved, but not yet developed.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Alex Sharpe, Applicant – 5205 Shiloh Rd.

Mr. Sharpe made himself available to the commissioners to answer questions. Chairman Miller asked if the purpose is strictly for office use. Mr. Sharpe confirmed.

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. Commissioner James Miller second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #8

VA-2025-08

Andrew Duren (417 Brookfield Road)
Rezone 3.27 acres from conditional C-C(c) to regular C-C

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone 3.27 acres from “conditional” Community Commercial (C-C)(c) to regular Community Commercial (C-C) with no conditions. The subject property is located at 417 Brookfield Road which is along the east side of the road at the Brookfield and Murray Road three-way intersection. The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to develop it as a planned complex of four (4) commercial buildings which total approximately 40,000 square feet. The largest of these proposed buildings (20,000-sf) will be for the applicant’s local flooring company, which will include a showroom, offices, and storage space. The applicant has the property under contract for purchase from the current owner (Staten Plantation LLP), pending the outcome of this rezoning request.

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

This property was annexed and rezoned 21 years ago (file # VA-2004-05) from county C-H, to city C-C(c) after some very contentious public hearings with opposition from nearby residential properties. According to the meeting minutes, the main issues were traffic and the potential range of uses that C-H or C-C might offer. City Council’s solution to this was a unanimous compromise vote to allow C-C zoning, but to place the condition that this property be allowed to

have C-N uses only. [The existing daycare property to the south (Brookfield Academy) was part of that same annexation/rezoning request in 2004, and it was approved with C-C(c) zoning, but that the only use allowed is a daycare center.] Since 2004, the subject property has continued to remain undeveloped, and under the same current ownership. The main hindrances to development would appear to have been the existing 100' GA Power easement traversing the middle of the property, as well as the restrictive zoning conditions. Also since 2004, it should be noted that the range of allowable uses in C-N zoning has slowly changed over the years, particularly with the implementation of the LDR in 2009 and all the Use Table amendments since then. Attached is a copy of the current Use Table comparison for these zoning districts.

The surrounding land use pattern is dominated by a mixture of commercial and high-density residential uses, as well as some still-vacant lands. The surrounding zoning pattern reflects the same general mixture as the land use, with zonings ranging from C-H, to C-C, to R-P, to PRD residential. However, when focusing on just the street frontages along Brookfield and Murray Roads, it is the commercial type zoning and land uses that dominate even more.

The applicant's proposed primary use of the property as a flooring business, is allowed in C-N zoning with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approval, and is allowed as a Permitted Use in C-C zoning. The applicant's choice in this matter was to either request CUP approval, or attempt to rezone the property to regular C-C. Because of the general land use and zoning patterns of this area, the long tenure of this property being undeveloped, and because staff finds the current C-C(c) zoning of the property to be rather awkward, it was staff's recommendation to the applicant that they seek the Rezoning option. Staff is very supportive of this request.

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.

Commissioner Willis asked if the use would be permitted as it is currently zoned and conditioned. Mr. Martin explained that a Conditional Use Permit would be required and by rezoning, more options for other buildings would be available.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Nathan Brantley, Attorney for Applicant – 701 N. Patterson St.
- Adonna Smith, Realtor – 2212 Bridlewood Dr.

Mr. Brantley stated the request to remove the conditions is in order to be able to streamline the process for potential future development/use, particularly with regard to professional office use. Additionally, Mr. Brantley stated the property owner intends to install fencing across the back of

the property. Commissioner James Miller asked Mr. Brantley if the intent is for professional offices. Mr. Brantley stated that is the intent.

Ms. Smith explained the property owners are 6th generation owners and are particular/strategic about who the property will be sold to.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Jacquelin Major – 346 Brookfield Rd.
- Michael Hazard – 351 Sawgrass Dr.
- Anthony Rowe – 317 Crestview Dr.

Ms. Major voiced concerns regarding traffic flow, drainage runoff, and the power grid, stating there are already regular power outages.

Mr. Hazard's concerns involved drainage issues, and Mr. Rowe's questions centered around design specifications and regulations.

Commissioner James Miller asked staff if the proposed buffer was above and beyond what is required and Mr. Martin answered affirmatively. Commissioner Willis asked if, with the proximity of the daycare/preschool, can alcohol sales be forbidden. Mr. Martin stated a condition can be added to that effect. Commissioner James Miller asked if alcohol is referenced in the contract. Mr. Martin explained that the site plan shows a maximum density of low traffic. Retail and Food Service sales would require more parking. Commissioner Graham asked if the City has a utilities plan to address correcting the existing drainage issues. Mr. Martin stated he is not aware of such a plan. He also stated that current traffic issues are in large part due to absent property owners and that having the property developed and occupied should help the situation.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Rountree second. Six voted in favor, one opposed (Graham) (6-1). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #9

VA-2025-09

George T. Biles (3832-3870 Bemiss Road)
Rezone 6.17 acres from R-A(county) & R-10(county), to R-P(city)

Mr. Martin presented the case in which George T. Biles and the City of Valdosta are requesting to rezone three (3) parcels of land totaling 6.17 acres from Residential Agricultural (R-A)(county) [5.30 acres] and Single-Family Residential (R-10)(county) [0.87 acres], to all Residential Professional (R-P)(city). The subject properties are located at 3832-3870 Bemiss Road, which is along the east side of the road, about 800 feet north of the intersection with North Forrest Street Extension. (The applicants are also seeking voluntary annexation of the properties, and this

request is being reviewed concurrently under file # VA 2025-10). The properties currently contain two (2) single-family residences, as well as a cell tower and some accessory buildings. One of the small parcels (0.23 acres) is a former utility pump station still owned by the City of Valdosta, but it is in the process of being sold (for the proposed development). The applicant is proposing to later sell the entire property for a proposed multi-family development in the form of a “townhouse style” apartment complex consisting of about 94 dwelling units. (As a point of reference, the maximum allowable residential development for this acreage would be 111 dwelling units in R-P zoning.)

The subject properties are located within an Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of R-P zoning.

The existing land use pattern in this area along Bemiss Road is dominated by mainly commercial uses to the north, but still rural/open land type uses to the immediate south, with a commercial pattern resuming again even farther south (near Mt Zion Church Road). The existing zoning patterns of the area generally follow the same land use patterns. The NAC character area allows for zoning intensities ranging from R-6 at the low end, upward through C-C zoning at the higher end for properties fronting Bemiss Road. Given the adjacent existing commercial land use and zoning patterns to the north, a rezoning of this property to C-C would have been considered compliant and deemed acceptable by staff – even for speculative development. However, in this case the developer and primary applicant are instead choosing to propose a high-density form of residential development, and therefore requesting only R-P zoning instead of commercial. This is considered equally acceptable and compatible with the patterns of the area, particularly when considering the existing rural (R A and E-A) zonings that are still in place on properties to the south along Bemiss Road.

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.

Commissioner Willis asked if the houses are included. Mr. Martin stated they are, as well as the cell tower. Chairman Miller asked if a rezoning request on the adjacent property was recently denied. Mr. Martin said yes.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Matt Inman, Applicant Representative – 2759 Cotton Bay Crossing

Mr. Inman stated the proposal is for 64 residential lots for this initial phase and that detention pond and city water/sewer will be utilized. Additionally, the development plan will include a decel lane off Bemiss Rd. as well as 2 points of ingress/egress.

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 by staff. Commissioner Willis second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #10

VA-2025-10

George T. Biles (3832-3870 Bemiss Road)
Annex 6.17 acres into the City of Valdosta

Mr. Martin presented the case in which George T. Biles and the City of Valdosta are requesting to annex a total of 6.17 acres into the City of Valdosta. The subject properties comprise three (3) parcels of land located at 3832-3870 Bemiss Road, which is along the east side of the road, about 800 feet north of the intersection with North Forrest Street Extension. (This request is running concurrently with the rezoning request # VA-2025-09, and it has been properly noticed to Lowndes County pursuant to State law). The properties currently contain two (2) single-family residences, as well as a cell tower and some accessory buildings. One of the small parcels (0.23 acres) is a former utility pump station still owned by the City of Valdosta, but it is in the process of being sold (for the proposed development). The applicant is proposing to later sell the entire property for a proposed multi-family development in the form of a “townhouse style” apartment complex consisting of about 94 dwelling units. The applicant is seeking annexation so that the property will have access to City utilities as well as other City services.

The subject property is currently located within a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. There is currently no proposed change to this Character Area designation as a result of annexation.

The subject property is contiguous to the Valdosta city limits on three (3) sides and it is fully eligible for annexation into Valdosta. There are existing City utilities adjacent to this property along Bemiss Road, as well as within the adjacent commercial and residential developments. In many ways, this can be considered as infill development along Bemiss Road. Pursuant to State law, notification of this proposed annexation has been given to Lowndes County and no objections have been raised.

Staff finds the annexation request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommends approval to the City Council.

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

There were no additional citizens wishing to speak in favor of nor in opposition to this 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 Willis second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #11

VA-2025-11

Stoker Development LLC (310 Eager Road)
Rezone 1.80 acres from R-15 to R-6

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone 1.80 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Single-Family Residential (R-6). The subject property is located at 310 Eager Road which is along the north side of the road, about half way between Jadan Place and Walmar Place. This is also directly across the street from the Langdale Place housing complex. The property currently contains an existing single-family residence (1,453 sf). The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing residence and redevelop the property as a conventional Townhouse complex with up to 17 dwelling units along a private road right-of-way.

The subject property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of R-6 zoning.

****** This is the same request (same applicant, same property) that was submitted by the applicant in 2020 for rezoning to R-6 (file # VA-2020-06). That request was recommended for denial by the GLPC (9-1 vote) and was later denied by the City Council on August 6, 2020 (6-0 vote). The only difference in the proposals is that in 2020, the applicant was proposing a mixed-residential development with a total of 15 dwelling units as part of a Planned Development request (if the rezoning to R-6 was approved). Now, the applicant is proposing an all townhouse (single-family detached) development consisting of 17 dwelling units. However the applicant's conceptual site plan does not comply with all the "conventional" development standards for Townhouse development (mainly unit width, and private street design), and this proposed density can only be achieved through either a Planned Development proposal (separate request) or through a series of Variances approved by ZBOA. Most significantly of these, the minimum lot width for R-6 townhouses is 24' and the applicant is only depicting 22' on their site plan, and the access to each lot must be through a conventional right-of-way.

Density and infill development discussion. The subject property is a classic example of a proposal for infill development. Under R-15 zoning, the property has enough land area (78,500 square feet) for up to 5 single-family lots. However, it does not have enough road frontage along Eager Road for more than one lot (each lot must be at least 100' wide and contain at least 15,000 s.f. of land area). The only solution for subdividing this property conventionally under R-15 zoning is to construct a new street (50' right-of-way) along the eastern property line with a cul-de-sac

approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the distance into the lot, and then subdivide lots off of the new street. [see attached schematic drawings as a comparison for R-15, R-10 and R-6 conventional layouts for single-family homes] The main problem here is that the new street right-of-way would consume nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total land area and therefore the new subdivision would yield a total of only 3 lots under R-15. A very similar kind of scenario would apply under R-10 zoning. The property is still not wide enough along Eager Road to have more than one lot (each lot must be at least 80' wide and contain at least 10,000 s.f.), and it must use the same kind of street design to subdivide and develop the property with more than one lot. Because of the smaller lot widths allowed in R-10 zoning, this scenario would instead allow a subdivision with 4 lots along the new internal street. Ironically, in this scenario each lot would average approximately 13,000 s.f. due to irregular lot shapes and net buildable areas caused by the cul-de-sac. Under the proposed R-6 zoning, this scenario dramatically increases to perhaps 8 lots – depending on actual lot design – but probably more comfortably at 7 lots maximum. However, it should also be noted that R-6 zoning allows the additional possibility of duplexes if the lots are at least 9,000-sf in area, and staff can envision a maximum of 6 duplex lots here. It should be further noted that R-6 also allows conventional townhouses as well, and staff can envision up to approximately 14 of these, provided they are without garages and 2-bedroom maximum, and depending on the private street layout.

Most of these scenarios are intended to illustrate a main point, which is that conventional development (for single-family development) which includes a new standard internal street is “cost-prohibitive” and is wasteful of land, when considering the net result of only a few lots and unimaginative design. Given the property’s characteristics, it is truly a prime candidate for some type of “Planned Development” approach, perhaps with a mixture of residential types – as was proposed in 2020. The only significant questions in all of this however, is DENSITY.

The existing land use pattern along Eager Road is dominated by single-family residential subdivisions of various shapes and sizes. There is no question that the residential land use pattern should continue. In terms of zoning pattern, most all of the properties along the north side of Eager Road are zoned R-15. However, it should be pointed out that this is a little deceiving in that the abutting small subdivisions along Jadan Place and Walmar Place are nonconforming in that $\frac{1}{3}$ of their lots do not meet the R-15 minimum requirements. By today’s standards, they would be zoned R-10 instead. Other nearby developments with a little higher density include those along the south side of Eager Road where there is a mixture of R-15, R-10, and PRD-10 zoning, as well as the Langdale Place development which has R-P zoning. However, the most recent and the most significant development in all of this is the 2013 rezoning of the property about 300' to the west at #316 Eager Road. This property is the exact same dimension and size (1.80 acres) and was successfully rezoned to R-10, and also received a Planned Development approval for 8 dwelling units. Given the actual R-10 nature of the abutting properties to the east and west, using this prior rezoning approval as a benchmark seems like a logical solution and still leaves open the “possibility” of up to 9 dwelling units with a quality Planned Development proposal.

Staff finds R-10 zoning consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval of R-10 zoning instead, to the City Council.

Commissioner Hightower asked for verification that 16 units are being proposed and if R-10 zoning is better suited than R-6 zoning. Mr. Martin stated 16 units are proposed and R-10 zoning would be better suited. Commissioner Bythwood asked if the area is large enough for emergency vehicles to navigate in and out. Mr. Martin explained design standards require it. Commissioner Foreman asked if only one parking space is allowed for a two-bedroom dwelling. Mr. Martin stated two spaces are required. Commissioner Willis asked if this will be considered a Planned Development. Mr. Martin stated a Planned Development would be required for this configuration.

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

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Matt Inman, Applicant Representative – 2759 Cotton Bay Crossing

Mr. Inman stressed that emergency vehicles will have enough room and the parking concerns will be addressed. Additionally, Mr. Inman informed the commissioners that 50% of the adjacent homes are rental properties. Addressing the R-6 vs R-10 question, Mr. Inman stated the density allowed in R-10 would not be cost effective. He further stated the development could be a “feeder” for Langdale Place.

Commissioner Rountree asked if an R-10 Planned Development would work. Mr. Inman stated it would be cost prohibitive. Commissioner Graham stated he likes the concept. Commissioner Willis voiced concern about two-story homes overlooking single-story homes.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Chasity Luke – 303 Betty Jo Dr.
- Mark Heffelfinger – 305 Betty Jo Dr.
- Greg Dimascio – 2807 Jadan Pl.
- Anthony Rowe – 317 Crestview Dr.

Ms. Luke’s concerns involved natural vegetation removal and the single-family character of the area. Mr. Heffelfinger and Mr. Dimascio voiced similar concerns and included concerns about the proposed lot sizes. Mr. Rowe is concerned about maintaining the integrity and value of homes.

Commissioner Foreman asked Mr. Martin if the rendering presented is what is intended to be built. Mr. Martin emphasized the rendering is strictly a conceptual plan. Commissioner Hightower

inquired as to the distance from the subject property's property line to Betty Jo Dr. Mr. Martin answered 128 feet. Commissioner Willis asked if the applicant is amiable to R-10 zoning, and if this is approved and will necessitate a Planned Development, will the applicant have to come back to get the site plan approved. Mr. Martin stated the applicant is not agreeable to R-10 zoning and a Planned Development would require another public hearing and approval. Commissioners further discussed current and future road construction on Eager Rd.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Willis to recommend DENIAL of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Bythwood second. Four voted in favor of the motion to recommend denial, three opposed (Rountree, Graham, Hightower) (4-3). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #12

Reappointment of Commissioner Chip Wildes

Chip Wildes has been reappointed to serve on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission by the City of Valdosta to serve another five-year term.

Agenda Item #13

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Dillard informed the commissioners that the South Georgia Regional Commission in concert with local authorities will be updating the Comprehensive Plan over the next several months and some GLPC work sessions will be utilized for public input.

There being no other business, Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

**Steve Miller, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission**

Date