

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE
Monday, April 27, 2026 – 5:30 PM

GLPC Commission Members Present: Franklin Bailey, Ron Bythwood, George Foreman, Calvin Graham, Ed Hightower, John McCall, James Miller (Vice-Chair), Steve Miller (Chair), Vicki Roundtree, Brian Touchton, Chris Webb, Tommy Willis

Absent:

Staff: JD Dillard, Lowndes County Planner; Trinni Amiot, Lowndes County Zoning Administrator; UnDrea Dimock, Lowndes County Planning Technician

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 Ron 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: March 30, 2026

Chairman Miller called for additions, questions, and corrections of the March 30, 2026, GLPC meeting minutes. There being no additions, questions or corrections to the March 30, 2026, GLPC meeting minutes, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Bythwood made a motion to approve the March 30, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Willis second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (10-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3

LP-2026-01	304 and 402 Long Pond Road, Lake Park, GA
Current Zoning:	R-1 (County Single-Family Residential)
Proposed Zoning:	R-15 (Lake Park Single-Family Residential)

Ms. Alexandra Arzayus presented the case in which The City of Lake Park is petitioning for a rezoning upon annexation request for 1.12 acres from R-1 (Single-Family Residential, County) to R-15 (Single-Family Residential, City) located at 304 and 402 Long Pond Road, Lake Park, GA. History includes The City of Lake Park annexing a county island due to the Calvary Baptist Church

request for a recombination plat of all the church's parcels. The request was initiated by the City of Lake Park to annex approximately 1.12 acres consisting of two tracts currently located within a county island and to apply City of Lake Park Zoning Classification R-15 (Single-Family Residential) upon annexation.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the public hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor or opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Roundtree to recommend approval. Commissioner Graham second. Ten voted in favor, none opposed (10-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4

REZ-2026-11 Webb Fish Farm & Blackwater Development, 4130 Old Bemiss Rd, 4.8 ac
Current Zoning: R-1 (Low Density Residential) and R-10 (Suburban Density Residential)
Proposed Zoning: C-G (General Commercial)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject properties from R-1 (Low Density Residential) and R-10 (Suburban Density Residential) zoning to C-G (General Commercial) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to repurpose the old Webb Fish Farm buildings and allow for new commercial opportunities on ~4.8ac. The subject property possesses limited access via a crossing of the Cater Parrot Rail Network onto Old Bemiss Road, a County maintained local road, though new local roads and access points are proposed onto Bemiss Knights Academy Road. The property is within the Urban Service Area, and Suburban Character Area, which recommends C-G zoning.

This property has historically been agricultural in nature and use, until 2006 when the County changed it to R-1. The Webb Family chose to rezone the majority of the land to E-A (Estate Agricultural) per REZ-2006-25, though the ~5acres encompassing the fish farm buildings was excluded, and has remained R-1 since. In 2015, an eastern portion of the property was rezoned to R-10 as part of Knights Landing Subdivision, Phase 1, then again in 2018 for Phase 2, and again in 2021 for Phase 3 and beyond. For reference, the minimum buffer area between C-G and R-10 is thirty (30) feet, and includes 4 shade trees and 25 shrubs per 100 linear feet, but may be reduced to fifteen (15) feet with 3 shade trees and 19 shrubs per 100 linear feet with the installation of a 6' to 8' opaque fence. Supplemental Standards for certain uses in C-G may increase the minimum buffering requirements at the time of development.

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, lot sizes, and zoning patterns, the availability of County Utilities, the current and proposed access, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-G zoning with the following conditions:

1. No Alcohol Package Stores, Cemeteries, Clubs, Lodges, Meeting or Event Facilities, Car Washes, Gas Stations, Hotels, Motels, or Vehicle Sales Lots, shall be allowed; and
2. Any vehicular ingress/egress off of Old Bemiss Road shall require the property owner/developer to pave the street from that ingress/egress to the nearest paved street. The property owner/developer will also be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, railroad crossing improvements, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above.

Commissioner Miller inquired if the intent was to use the existing buildings with Mr. Dillard, and he was informed yes for commercial use.

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 – 701 N. Patterson Street.

Mr. Langdale explained that Southern Forrest Holdings has purchased multifamily projects in surrounding areas and has renovated those properties. He noted that two additional properties are currently under renovation and that there are plans to renovate the buildings at this site. The buildings will be renovated for a mix of storage and office uses. Mr. Langdale stated that the company is not opposed to restrictions and indicated that ideal tenants for the development would include uses such as lawn care services or bookkeeping offices. He also noted that the three additional lots on the east side of the property could be used for small office spaces or potentially a daycare. Mr. Langdale explained that the developer plans to acquire and complement nearby residential development and is supportive of commercial uses adjacent to residential areas, provided buffering is in place. Buffering is planned for both current and future phases of development. Regarding access and infrastructure, Mr. Langdale stated that the company does not wish to pave Old Bemiss Road and would prefer to maintain it in its current condition. He indicated that the developer would like to pave the road along the southern portion of the property. He also stated that the existing dirt access will not be used for permanent access but may be used as a construction entrance. Road construction will be completed by Black Water. Mr. Langdale also outlined concerns related to infrastructure requirements, particularly the request to not require paving of Old Bemiss Road.

Commissioner Hightower inquired about who would possibly own the development and Mr. Langdale explained that Southern Forrest Holdings would be the owner.

Commissioner Willis asked if Old Bemiss was a dirt road and Mr. Langdale informed him yes.

No further questions for Mr. Langdale.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Scott Alderman – 5273 Bethany Drive

Mr. Alderman thanked Lowndes County for their thoroughness working with this rezoning matter and stated that in detail that the fish farm has been vacant for several years and considered dilapidated. He explained that this rezoning and purchase will remedy current matters, the property will be put to use, and that he supports the zoning change.

No further questions for Mr. Alderman.

No one spoke in opposition.

Questions for staff included clarification of the conditions. Confirmed both, condition one and revised condition two.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Willis to recommend approval of one and revised condition two. Commissioner Graham second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (10-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5

REZ-2026-12 4909 Bemiss Rd, ~2.4ac
Current Zoning: R-21 (Medium Density Residential) and R-1 (Low Density Residential)
Proposed Zoning: C-G (General Commercial)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject properties from R-21 (Medium Density Residential) and R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to C-G (General Commercial) zoning to develop a child care learning facility. The subject property possesses road frontage on Bemiss Road, a State Highway, and is within the Urban Service area, Bemiss Corridor Overlay, and Neighborhood Activity Center Character Area, which recommend C-G zoning.

Adjoining properties are currently owned and operated as religious facilities, parsonages, or single-family homes, while new developments just beyond are for higher density residential and commercial.

For reference, the minimum buffer area between C-G and E-A/R-A/R-1 is thirty (30) feet, and includes 4 shade trees and 25 shrubs per 100 linear feet, but may be reduced to fifteen (15) feet with 3 shade trees and 19 shrubs per 100 linear feet with the installation of a 6' to 8' opaque fence. Existing trees, which are four (4) inches DBH or larger, and shrubs may be counted toward meeting the requirements for landscaped buffers, landscaped parking areas, and tree retention. Supplemental Standards for certain uses in C-G may also increase the minimum buffering requirements at the time of development.

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, lot sizes, and zoning patterns, the availability of County Utilities, the Corridor Overlay

Standards, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-G zoning with the following Condition:

1. No Alcohol Package Stores, Clubs, Lodges, Meeting or Event Facilities, shall be allowed

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– 2214 N. Patterson

Mr. Kent stated that he is working with the Department of Transportation regarding driveway access to the property.

No further questions for Mr. Kent.

No one spoke in opposition.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Graham to recommend approval with one condition. Commissioner Bythwood second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (10-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #6

CU-2026-02 421 Cowart Avenue, in Valdosta, GA
Current Zoning: (C-H) Highway Commercial

Ms. Amy Martin presented the request on behalf of Hedgecock Investments, LLC for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow the construction of a freestanding warehouse building within a Highway Commercial (C-H) zoning district. The subject property consists of approximately 0.40 acres located at 421 Cowart Avenue, situated along the east end of the road approximately 200 feet north of Janet Street. The property is currently vacant. The applicant proposes to construct a one-story, 4,320-square-foot freestanding warehouse building to store equipment indoors for their “Powerhouse Outdoor Equipment” business located nearby at 2122 Bemiss Road. The subject property is within the Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed site plan includes a single point of access from a paved driveway, one ADA-accessible parking space located near the main entrance, and four additional unpaved parking spaces, for a total of five spaces. The north side of the building includes a 10-foot by 12-foot roll-up door to allow vehicles to back in for loading and unloading. Landscaping is proposed around the building to improve site aesthetics. Currently, Powerhouse Outdoor Equipment stores a significant amount of merchandise outdoors at its Bemiss Road location, which has been noted as visually unappealing. Rather than constructing an addition at that location, the applicant is proposing to use the subject property to expand overall storage capacity. A freestanding warehouse is

classified as an industrial use in the Use Table and is among the more intensive uses permitted within the C-H zoning district. As such, a Conditional Use Permit is required to allow for case-by-case review. She also noted that C-H zoning is typically located along major corridors, whereas the subject property is situated along a local street approximately one to two blocks from a major roadway, making the existing zoning pattern somewhat atypical. The surrounding area is not characterized as heavy commercial or industrial. The proposed structure is a pre-engineered metal building with concrete batten siding on two sides and metal panel siding on the remaining sides. The design is relatively plain and reflects an industrial appearance, which contrasts with the surrounding professional office and nursing home uses along Cowart Avenue. A more office-like or institutional design would be more compatible with the area. The primary concern with the request is that the intensity of a freestanding warehouse use is not consistent with the surrounding land use pattern along local streets. While the use itself may be relatively passive, concerns remain regarding the applicant's ability to maintain properties in a compliant and visually acceptable manner. She concluded that approval of the CUP, even with conditions, raises concerns and may represent an inappropriate encroachment of a more intensive use into this interior area.

Chairman Hightower inquired about how they plan to enter. Ms. Martin answered, from Cowart. Commissioner Hightower asked if the adjacent property was in use. Ms. Martin stated that it was vacant. Commissioner Miller stated that the list provided had significant points to be considered and inquired about their level of importance. Ms. Amy Martin and Mr. Matt Martin listed as follows.

1. Conditional Use approval shall be granted for a singular storage building only, not to exceed 4,400-sf GFA. This building shall only be used for accessory storage associated with the commercial business located at 2122 Bemiss Road (currently PowerHouse Outdoor Equipment).
2. There shall be no outdoor storage of any vehicles, equipment or materials whatsoever at any time.
3. There shall be no signage on the property, other than one or more small incidental signs on the building, as approved by the Zoning Administrator.
4. Hours of operation for all loading, unloading, and other business activity on the site shall be limited to 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday only. Loading and unloading activities shall occur only within the subject property, without any usage of Cowart Avenue or access through adjacent properties.
5. A minimum 6' solid opaque fence shall be installed along or within 10' of the entire western property line. The site shall retain a minimum 10' landscaped street yard along the north property line (along Cowart Avenue) as well as a minimum 10' buffer yard along the western property line. These landscaped areas shall retain the existing natural undisturbed vegetation.
6. Exterior building walls facing the north, east and south shall consist of concrete batten siding. The west wall may be metal siding that is a dark finished color such as dark green. All street-facing facades shall include one or more architectural accents such as a window or faux window, or other design trim or element to interrupt the large blank wall appearance.
7. The approved landscape plan shall include foundation landscaping in the form of

decorative shrubs and ground cover as approved by the City Arborist, along the eastern (front) building façade to soften the visual impact of the building.

8. Any exterior lighting shall be directed downward and away from adjacent properties.
9. Conditional Use approval shall expire two (2) years from the date of approval, if no building permit for the proposed building has been issued by that date.

List: 1, 2, 3, 4 optional, 5, 6, 7 optional, 8 optional, and 9.

Commissioner Miller asked if option one limits future use of property. Mr. Martin explained that it would, but it would be open to any C-H zoning and that it would need to follow standards.

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 – 2214 N. Patterson

Mr. Kent was present to answer any questions that the commissioners had. Commissioner Hightower asked if the conditions were suitable with applicant. The answer provided was yes by applicant. Mr. Kent provided the intent of the building use, which was to move equipment out of the elements.

No further questions for Mr. Kent.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- David Frazier – 571 W Hwy 37

David Frazier explained that the equipment storage would be beneficial due to the current stage of storage inventory wrapped outside. Mr. Frazier considers its current stage to be unsightly and that it would benefit against the elements.

Commissioner Roundtree asked if Mr. Frazier had considered a storage facility on the property and if Cowart had enough square footage. Mr. Frazier explained that if there was a unit currently on the property, it would not be sufficient for the amount of inventory. He stated that Cowart was sufficient. Commissioner McCall asked if unloading and loading would be continued and it was explained by Mr. Frazier that the process would include unloaded crates at the new location.

No further questions for Mr. Frazier.

Speaking in opposition to the request:

- Demaris Bradford – 2518 Rolling Rd.

Ms. Bradford explained that surrounding properties are medical related and that an industrial warehouse would be detrimental to her property. She voiced her concerns stating that the building would be unsightly and does not match what is currently there.

No further questions for Ms. Bradford.

Discussion among commissioners in regards to conditions and what they addressed.

Commissioner Bailey asked if metal on all three sides could be changed to concrete on all four sides. Mr. Frazier was willing to do so.

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend approval with nine conditions and all siding to be concrete. Commissioner Bailey second. Nine voted in favor, Commissioner Graham opposed, (9-1). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7

VA-2026-03 510 & 512 North Barack Obama Blvd, in Valdosta, GA
Objective: Amend previously approved “Planned Development”
Current Zoning: Office Professional (O-P) and Single-Family Residential (R-6)

Mr. Matt Martin presented the request on behalf of Jonathan Irvin requesting to amend a previously approved “Planned Development” which was approved by City Council on August 10, 2023 (file # VA-2023-12). The approved development is for a mixed-use Child Daycare & School facility in O-P and R-6 zoning, and it is located at 510 & 512 North Barack Obama Blvd. This Planned Development was approved with seven (7) conditions of approval and the facility is currently operating. The subject property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The existing O-P zoning is a grandfathered-in non-compliant zoning classification in this Character Area, and the R-6 zoning area is compliant. The applicant is requesting a minor amendment to condition #1 of the previously-approved planned development to remove the restriction that approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only. This would allow the currently approved mixed-use Child Daycare and School facility to be sold or transferred into the name of a subsequent operator or owner. The requested change to condition #1 is shown in strikeout format as follows. This approval shall replace and supersede the applicant’s previous approval under file # VA-2021-11. Approval shall be granted ~~in the name of the applicant only~~ for a mixed-use Child Daycare & School facility on property that is split-zoned Office Professional (O-P) and Single-Family Residential (R-6). The majority of the “Daycare” facility shall remain on the O-P portion of the site in accordance with the submitted master plan. Total indoor gross floor area of all buildings on the site shall not exceed 20,000 square feet. All of the neighborhood characteristics, policies and planning considerations from the previous Planned Development approval three years ago, still remain valid and applicable today. Since the time of the previous approval, the facility has been fully developed according to the approved plans. The applicant has generated a good track record in operating this mixed-use facility without any noted complaints relating to its compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore, the added safeguard in attaching the proposed use to a particular applicant, no longer seems necessary as long as the other applicable conditions of approval remain intact. In reviewing this particular amendment request,

staff finds the proposed amendment to be consistent with the overall intent of the original Planned Development approval, subject to its specified conditions of approval. However, because the facility is now fully developed and operating, some of the previous conditions of approval are either fully complete or otherwise no longer relevant, and can also be deleted or amended as part of this new Planned Development request.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the public hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Jonathan Irvin – 4831 McGoggle Rd.

Mr. Irvin stated that he was present to answer any questions.

No further questions for Mr. Irvin.

No one spoke in opposition

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Bythwood to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Bailey second. All voted in favor (10-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #8

VA-2026-04 4255 N Forrest Street Extension
Current Zoning: Residential Agricultural (R-A) (county)
Proposed Zoning: Residential Professional (R-P) (city).

Agenda items eight and nine were addressed concurrently.

Ms. Amy Martin presented the request on behalf of Integrity Development Partners LLC requesting to rezone 6.258 acres from Residential Agricultural (R-A) (county) to Residential Professional (R-P) (city). The subject property is currently vacant and is located at 4255 North Forrest Street Extension. This is along the west side of the road, between Georgia Military College and The Porch Community Church. (The applicant is also seeking voluntary annexation of the property, and this separate request is being reviewed concurrently under file # VA-2026-05, the next agenda item). The applicant is proposing to develop the property with a 72-unit apartment complex that utilizes tax credit housing and will be similar in design to the Freedom Heights and Harvest Station developments by the same applicant. 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 R-P zoning. The subject property is adjacent to existing developed areas within the City of Valdosta. The surrounding land use pattern is dominated by mainly institutional uses to the north and south, but still some rural/open land type uses as well. These institutional uses include two churches to the north and east, as

well as the Georgia Military College and Dewar Elementary School to the south and east. To the west are mostly vacant lands facing the Bemiss Road corridor, which are likely to develop with commercial uses in the future. The applicant's proposed development as high-density residential fits in very well with this surrounding mixed pattern. The surrounding zoning patterns of the area generally follow the land use patterns, and range from rural residential to various forms of commercial. The CAC character area allows for zoning intensities that range from high-density residential to commercial. The applicant's proposed R-P zoning fits in the middle of this range and matches the zoning of the Dewar Elementary School. Rezoning the property to R-P would not create an isolated or out-of-place change, but would be consistent with the evolving development pattern of the area.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the public hearing portion of the case

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Steve Brooks – 6048 Johnson Rd.

Mr. Brooks intends to replicate the Tifton location design. He proposed 72 units with either one, two, or three bedrooms. He plans to have occupancy within twenty-four to twenty-six months.

Commissioner Bythwood inquired about parking. Mr. Brooks replied that there would be one parking spot per bedroom.

No further questions for Mr. Brooks.

No one spoke in opposition

There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Roundtree to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Graham second. All voted in favor (10-0). Motion carried.

Agenda Item #9

VA-2026-05 4255 N Forrest Street Extension
Current Zoning: Residential Agricultural (R-A) (county)
Proposed Zoning: Residential Professional (R-P) (city).

Ms. Martin presented the request on behalf of Integrity Development Partners LLC to annex 6.258 acres into the City of Valdosta. The subject property is located at 4255 North Forrest Street Extension, which is along the west side of the road between Georgia Military College and The Porch Community Church. The property is currently vacant, and the applicant is proposing to develop the property with a 72-unit apartment complex. The property is currently zoned R-A in the County and the applicant is seeking R-P zoning in the City. (This separate rezoning request is running concurrently under casefile # VA-2026-04 – previous agenda item). The applicant is seeking annexation so that the property will have access to City utilities as well as other City

services. This annexation request has been properly noticed to Lowndes County pursuant to State law, and no objections have been raised. The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) 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 and future land use and zoning should remain intact and compatible with surrounding properties. The subject property is contiguous to the Valdosta city limits along its south boundary, which makes it fully eligible for annexation. This area in particular is one where city and county boundaries interconnect through multiple subdivisions. Annexing this particular property will not create any isolated County islands, and it will create a more consistent jurisdictional pattern that has been changing over the past 15 years. There are existing city water services adjacent to this property, and city sewer services planned for the immediate future. There is also a new city fire station located 600 feet to the north.

There being no questions for staff, Chairman Miller opened the public hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

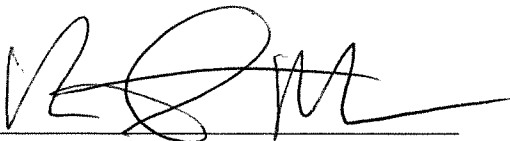
- Steve Brooks – 6048 Johnson Rd.

No one spoke in opposition

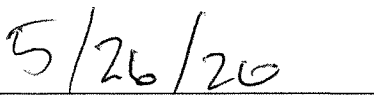
There being no further questions for staff, Chairman Miller closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Roundtree to recommend approval of the request as presented. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion. All voted in favor (10-0). Motion carried.

There being no other business, Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.



Steve Miller, Chairman
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission



Date