

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, July 8, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans and Commissioner Smith were not in attendance.

Chairman Bill Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Orenstein

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Orenstein

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of June 23, 2025 and the regular session meeting of June 24, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

The minutes were presented for the Budget Public Hearing held June 23, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

The minutes were presented for the special called meeting, for the budget adoption on June 30, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2025-10 Cain Property, 6261 US HWY 41 N, ~21ac, R-21 to PD-R, Well & Septic

County Planner, J.D. Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from medium density residential (R-21) to a rural planned development (PD-R). The general motivation in this case is for the subject property to be developed into a new RV park. The character area is rural residential, there are no utilities for the county in this area. There are wetlands on the property and the applicant has proposed delineation of those, but they have not been approved yet. Mr. Dillard stated that there are sixty-six (66) spaces for rv's. Mr.

Dillard stated this site plan has not been fully engineered and Mr. Dillard mentioned the three notes on the site plan. The TRC and Planning Commission recommend approval of this request, per the site plan. Commissioner Orenstein asked regarding the spaces on the map, Mr. Dillard answered those are the proposed spaces. No one spoke in opposition. Rodney Tenery, 2621 US Hwy 84 East, spoke in favor of the request on behalf of the applicant and offered to answer any questions. Chairman Slaughter asked for clarification of Commissioner Orenstein's question. Mr. Tenery answered it will be an improved surface as the existing park on the south, not paved spaces, but crushed asphalt. Commissioner Orenstein asked the size of the spaces shown on the site plan. Mr. Tenery answered he didn't know, it is larger spaces, possibly 35 x 80. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the rezoning request per the site plan, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2025-11 Langdale Capital Assets, Coleman Road, ~719 ac, C-C, R-1, & CON, to M-1 & CON, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning on the subject property from C-C (Crossroads Commercial), R-1 (Low Density Residential) and Con (Conservation District) to M-1 (Light Manufacturing) and CON (Conservation District). This case is for the subject property to be developed into a large warehouse-type campus. The difference between M-1 (Light Manufacturing) zoning and Commercial zoning is the size of the buildings allowed. The TRC recommends approval of the request with the following conditions:

1. There shall be no access to Briarberry Drive and Quail Hollow Circle from the subject property.
2. Should a change in use occur where additional transportation and/or water/sewer infrastructure upgrades are required, the Developer will be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the infrastructure improvements.
3. All lots shall front interior roads.
4. A 200' undisturbed buffer shall be required along the Northern and Southern property lines abutting current Residential Zoning District boundaries.
5. Any lighting located on the property shall be shielded and directed to avoid direct illumination of adjacent properties zoned Residentially.
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 discernable at any abutting property line zoned residentially.
7. Correctional Facilities, Transitional Care Facilities, and Kennels with Outdoor Runs shall not be allowed.

The Planning Commission voted to recommend approval with the above seven conditions (4-3). Commissioner Orenstein asked regarding the buffer, if the wetlands showing the 200-foot buffer pertains to lots, if he could encroach on this wetland area, most of the houses have more than a 200-foot buffer. Mr. Dillard responded that, based on the 2021 flood maps, this is a potential 24-acre site, more or less, that could be undevelopable based on wetland areas.

Chairman Slaughter asked regarding conditions, the access from Briarberry and Quail Hollow, would the #4 condition take care of the #1 condition if you have an undisturbed 200-foot buffer. Mr. Dillard answered that is correct, if the undisturbed was changed to landscape buffer instead of undisturbed buffer. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked for the concerns of the three who voted against this rezoning at the Planning Commission meeting, Mr. Dillard answered no exact concerns were mentioned, there were general concerns for the overall development of tract 2 being developed. Commissioner

Wisembaker asked if there were any concerns regarding the condition of Coleman Road. Mr. Dillard responded additional traffic concerns. Commissioner Orenstein asked if the parking would be dictated by the size of the building as well as the use. Mr. Dillard responded yes that is correct. Chairman Slaughter asked to verify if the parking is covered under the permitting process. Mr. Dillard answered yes.

Francesca Caldwell, 4641 Rustic Ridge Road, spoke against this request. Mrs. Caldwell stated her property backs up to this property. Mrs. Caldwell lives in the Foxborough neighborhood and is speaking on behalf of the residents regarding this rezoning proposal. Many residents in this neighborhood purchased in this area because it's not in the industrial zoning area. Mrs. Caldwell mentioned a concern is removal of trees, near protected wetlands which manage storm water and preventing flooding; disrupting could increase runoff, higher flood risks and safety hazards. Additionally, Mrs. Caldwell mentioned concerns with increased noise, industrial traffic and visual impact. Mrs. Caldwell stated the neighborhood is not against development, just advocating for responsible growth. A petition was also submitted with approximately thirty (30) signatures against this rezoning.

Windy Scott, 4629 Briarberry Drive, spoke against this request. Mrs. Scott stated her property was purchased over twenty years ago and a concern is woodlands, due to the many trees lost from the recent hurricanes. Mrs. Scott also mentioned the issue of flooding from the trees being removed and the possibility if another hurricane hits our area, the straight-line winds could do more damage to their property. Mrs. Scott asked the commission to please reconsider and preserve the trees.

Joel Deon, 4107 Quail Hollow Circle, spoke against this request. Mr. Deon stated an option mentioned by Mr. Langdale is to possibly have data centers at this location and a concern for Mr. Deon is this could possibly pollute the local waters.

Pope Langdale, 400 Mack Drive, spoke in favor of the request as the applicant. Mr. Langdale stated he respects the residents who spoke in opposition to this request and their concerns and the last thing that his family would do would be to pollute the river, disturb wetlands or harm the neighbors. There is no opposition to the amount of buffer. There has been clean-up taking place on Coleman Road on the land to reduce fire risk. The goal is to be a friendly neighbor and pro community. Additionally, Mr. Langdale stated there would never be anything to harm the neighborhood, county, city, pollute a river or affect endangered species.

Opposition - Rebuttal:

Jeff Ford, 4633 Briarberry Drive, addressed the commission regarding Mr. Langdale's comments. Mr. Ford stated he appreciates Mr. Langdale's desire to be good neighbors, but the concern is that nothing prevents the sale of the property, and the new owner may not be as concerned with being a good neighbor. If the property is sold, then it could be the case that the zoning may need to be changed again. Mr. Ford requested that this remain residential.

Commissioner Orenstein stated this has been a civil contentious case and is a classic example of how you can disagree, but do it civilly. Commissioner Orenstein stated we can't deny the rezoning request for the property owner due to tree loss and high winds. Commissioner Orenstein believes in individual property owners' rights and people being able to do what they'd like to do with their property, as long as there is no negative impact to the neighbors. Chairman Slaughter stated on the tree issue that if they chose to clear-cut the property, there is nothing to stop them, but they're good stewards of the land. Chairman Slaughter stated Mr. Langdale is trying to make the property marketable and also considering the concerns of the neighbors. Commissioner Marshall mentioned concerns about the conditions overlapping.

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the rezoning with the seven conditions as listed below:

1. There shall be no access to Briarberry Drive and Quail Hollow Circle from the subject property.
2. Should a change in use occur where additional transportation and/or water/sewer infrastructure upgrades are required, the Developer will be responsible for the design, any acquisition of necessary right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and construction costs for the infrastructure improvements.
3. All lots shall front interior roads.
4. A 200' undisturbed buffer shall be required along the Northern and Southern property lines abutting current Residential Zoning District boundaries.
5. Any lighting located on the property shall be shielded and directed to avoid direct illumination of adjacent properties zoned Residentially.
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 discernable at any abutting property line zoned residentially.
7. Correctional Facilities, Transitional Care Facilities, and Kennels with Outdoor Runs shall not be allowed.

Second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Beer & Wine License - Mustapha Ndure of Wawa Southeast, LLC DBA WAWA Store #6308 located at 4598 North Valdosta Rd., Valdosta, GA

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated this is for the new Wawa Southeast, LLC DBA Wawa Store #6308, located at 4598 North Valdosta Road. This request is for a beer and wine for consumption off the premises. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the license as presented, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, reported the following items:

- Mrs. Dukes stated that on July 21st at 10:00 a.m. there would be a groundbreaking for Fire Station #4 located at 4111 Stewart Circle.
- The week of July 21st is National Probation week and Mrs. Dukes commended Mrs. Rountree and her staff for a job well done and new programs are being introduced to reduce recidivism.
- Lowndes County Engineering and Lowndes County Utilities Departments are in conversations with Moody Air Force Base for the next step in our IGSA Partnership with Moody AFB to help restore the property at Grassy Pond.

Mrs. Dukes asked Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, to give an update to the commission regarding the Val Del Road Intersection Improvement Project. Mr. McLeod stated the project is approximately 95% complete. The utilities have been relocated (water/sewer), the new signals will be finished when pavement is installed, and Reames and Son is installing limerock, which has been boxed out for curb and gutter. Mr. McLeod stated August 2, 2025, is the target date to be opened.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

John Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, addressed the commission to thank Chairman Slaughter for attending the Mayor and Chairman's Paddle. Mr. Quarterman extended an invitation to participate in this event in 2026, with the date currently set for March 7, 2026. If there is a conflict with that date due to weather or other issues, March 28th and April 18th have been chosen as additional date options. Mr. Quarterman mentioned this Saturday is a chainsaw clean-up near Troupeville as well as picking up trash. Additionally, Mr. Quarterman invited the commission to the WWALS 8th Annual Suwannee Riverkeeper Songwriting Contest being held at the Rainwater Conference Center on September 6, 2025.

Jamie Parks, 106 East Grace Street, stated he is representing the Roger Budd Company. Mr. Parks addressed the commission, stating that there have been issues in applying for rezoning. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if this location was off of Madison Highway, off of Horace Drive with many semi-trucks parked in the area. Mr. Parks responded yes. Mr. Parks stated that without rezoning they can't get the Army Corp of Engineers to draw the lines.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.