

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, September 9, 2025

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

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

Vice Chairperson Joyce Evans was not in attendance.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., and recognized members of Leadership Lowndes, thanking them for their participation.

**INVOCATION**

Commissioner Orenstein

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Commissioner Orenstein

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 25, 2025, and the regular session of August 26, 2025. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**REZ-2024-06 Budd Horace Ave, 1735 Madison Hwy, ~3.0ac, CON & C-H to CON & C-H, Well & Septic** County Planner, J.D. Dillard presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated the request is to change the existing boundaries of conservation and commercial highway. The property is a total of three acres. It is currently approximately .75 acres of commercial highway and 2.25 acres of conservation. Mr. Dillard stated the property is almost 95 percent within the flood zone according to the 2008 and 2021 flood maps. He further stated this case is from 2024, and it began with a Code Enforcement complaint regarding semi-trucks parking. This led to a TRC meeting with the applicant and property owner. The application was submitted in March of 2024 and reviewed by staff. Mr. Dillard stated staff noticed that it was lacking information regarding the wetlands that they needed to make a proper recommendation, so they held the application at that time to allow the applicant time to provide the information needed from the Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA. Staff followed up several times throughout the remainder of 2024, requesting the information and in 2025 they received more complaints. Mr. Dillard

referred to a photo presented mentioning the state of the vehicles on the property, stating they have been there the entire time. He also mentioned some of the operations on the property that are not being performed in the properly permitted structure, which rises to the concern of environmental sensitivity. The property is within the Valdosta-Lowndes Regional Airport Overlay and there are supplemental standards that address some of the allowed uses. Mr. Dillard also mentioned the structure on the property that has unpermitted power and unpermitted use that was retrofitted for a well and septic for a bathroom in the building. Mr. Dillard went on to mention the commercial highway on the southeastern portion of the property and the conservation line that has been there more or less since the property came into inception and the County adopted zoning. The Future Land Use Map depicts the area primarily as park recreation and conservation, which does not recommend commercial highway zoning, but does recommend conservation. Mr. Dillard mentioned the land disturbing activity on the property back in 2017, stating there was a pond on the property and in 2020 it appears to have been filled in without a permit, and in 2025 they discussed the operation and its approximate location. The TRC recommended the following: A) Tabling:  
The Commission could consider tabling the request until:

1. A Jurisdictional Determination has been issued by the ACOE.
2. A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR<sup>[4]</sup>) 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 southernmost 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 completed 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

### 3. Deny

At the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant's representative spoke in support of the request, stating they were trying to bring the property into compliance to build a shop for the tenant, and that they understood and were agreeable to staff's conditions. The board had multiple questions about the applicants' compliance history, the ability to build or place structures in a flood plain, and the viability of the site overall to accommodate the current use and potential future uses. Ultimately, the Planning Commission recommended Denial (6-1).

Commissioner Marshall asked what the Planning Commission based their decision of denial on, Mr. Dillard responded, they based it on the floodplain and the ability to develop the property in accordance with the standards, the environmentally sensitive nature, and the timeline. The Planning Commission saw that this property is not viable for this particular operation.

Roger Budd III, 11 Tremblewood Trail, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Budd stated he is the property owner. He stated his tenant, Eduardo Lantigua, does semi-truck repair on the property. Mr. Budd further stated Mr. Lantigua was already on the property when he (property owner) received a notification that there was a code violation. He stated he met with staff from the County and there was a zoning issue. Mr. Budd further stated the property has been zoned for a long time. He said he spoke to Dale Hodges and her father had the property zoned as commercial for used car sales dating back to the 1950s. Mr. Budd further stated that is why there is pavement out front on Madison Highway. He went on to say he wants to allow the tenant to continue operating his business in Lowndes County. Mr. Budd stated they are willing to do whatever it takes for the tenant to continue operating on the property. They want to build a building for the tenant to use and the tenant wants to pay for a building. Mr. Budd stated they were told there is not enough C-H frontage on the road to allow him to build a building. They talked about the possibility of building a building far enough off of Madison Highway to have in the portion that is zoned C-H. Mr. Budd stated he does not know how it was zoned conservation, he guesses it was prior to their ownership of the property. He believes conservation is an issue. Mr. Budd stated he has been told that there are errors in the Flood Plain/Wetlands Maps

depending on elevation, and he believes this property is one where the error has occurred. Mr. Budd further stated a map modification needs to be made. To his understanding, the only way to have this done is if a representative from the Army Corps of Engineers changes the map. He went on to say he wants to have the C-H zoning that they think the tenant needs so that he can continue operating his business in compliance. Commissioner Orenstein asked if the tenant is operating a repair shop, Mr. Budd responded, yes, mobile repair. Commissioner Orenstein stated those vehicles have been there a long time and it looks more like a junk yard than an auto repair shop. Commissioner Orenstein also mentioned the area is a gateway into our community, and it does not look appealing. Commissioner Orenstein also stated that if Mr. Budd and the tenant would have made some effort to get the property cleaned to look more appealing, he would be in favor of trying to help. Commissioner Marshall asked if Mr. Budd has been involved with this case the entire time, Mr. Budd responded yes, and he believes this could be changed if the Army Corps of Engineers would move the wetlands line. Mr. Budd further stated they are not trying to create an eye sore, they are trying to respond to the conditions. He stated they can ask the tenant to move the vehicles to the back side of the property. Chairman Slaughter asked Mr. Budd if anyone from his firm completed an application or contacted the Army Corps of Engineers about this issue, Mr. Budd responded yes, they have contacted them repeatedly. Chairman asked when the Army Corps of Engineers told Mr. Budd they would come look at the property, Mr. Budd responded that he gets the run around from them. Chairman Slaughter asked Mr. Dillard and Director of Engineering, Chad McLeod if they have any documentation that shows that the property owner has been in contact with the Army Corps of Engineers, Mr. McLeod stated the County has reached out to the Army Corps of Engineers, and they have not received an application for this property. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if there is a fee to submit the application, Mr. McLeod responded he does not believe there is a fee, but he will check. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to deny the request, second by Commissioner Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

#### **REZ-2025-14 Dinkins, 6533 Lake Alapaha Blvd, 1.0ac, C-C to R-21, County Water & Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated the request is from C-C (Commercial Zoning) zoning to R-21 (Residential Zoning). It is supported by the Future Land Use plan for the area. Much of Lake Alapaha Plantation is currently R-21. Mr. Dillard stated there are no wetlands or floodplain issues on the property. The property used to house an old kennel, but the kennel has been removed. Mr. Dillard stated county water is available immediately to the south, and it will be served by a septic system. Mr. Dillard further stated that based on the initial review by Public Health there are no issues with it being a viable property for residential development. The applicant spoke in favor of the request, and no one spoke in opposition, therefore the Planning Commission recommended approval. Commissioner Orenstein asked if the total request is one acre, Mr. Dillard responded, correct. Commissioner Orenstein asked if they would be turning one commercial lot into two R-21 residential lots, Mr. Dillard responded, correct. Chairman Slaughter stated originally when this development was done, there was a commercial component of it that was out near Highway 84 that has not been developed, so they are now wanting to put houses on that property. No one spoke in opposition or support of this request. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request, second by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

### **FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **Pet Shop Ordinance**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated this is an ordinance that will prohibit the retail sale of unaltered pets in Lowndes County and in pet store/pet shop environments.

Mrs. Dukes further stated that currently there are more than 1,000 animals in Lowndes County that are being euthanized. The shelter is overpopulated, and this is a direct result of the lack of spays and neuters in Lowndes County. Mrs. Dukes stated rescues, volunteers, Lowndes County staff, and other concerned citizens in the community work tirelessly to try to find homes for these pets. Mrs. Dukes stated we developed our template off of actions that other communities have taken in addressing the overpopulation of pets in retail sales as well. Commissioner Marshall asked Mrs. Dukes to clarify what unaltered animal means, Mrs. Dukes responded an animal that has not been spayed or neutered. Commissioner Smith asked if this only pertains to cats and dogs, Mrs. Dukes responded, correct. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adopt the ordinance, second by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

## **BID**

### **Moody Water Storage Tank Rehab**

Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated Moody Air Force Base (AFB) has a 500,000 gallon water storage tank that is in need of rehab. Moody AFB has secured funds for this project to be performed under the water and wastewater contract with Lowndes County. Two bids were received, with Razor Back, LLC submitting the low bid in the amount of \$149,370.00. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the bid as presented, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

## **REPORTS - County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes mentioned the below items:

- On Thursday, September 11th, at 10:00 a.m. there will be a 9/11 ceremony held at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse on the second floor. This year law enforcement is hosting and Senator Russ Goodman will be the guest speaker.
- On Friday, September 12th, there is the Recovery Walk at 10:00 a.m. at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse sponsored by the Lowndes County DUI Court.
- Next week, Lowndes County will be the host community for the Georgia Peanut Tour, bringing in over 300 attendees.
- Last week, city and county leadership, along with EMA Director, Ashley Tye, met with FEMA, who provided an update stating that everyone who requested and qualified for housing has received it.

Lastly, Mrs. Dukes asked County Attorney, Walter Elliott, to provide an update on the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). Mr. Elliott stated the SDS statute was recently amended, and the amended new statute will be effective January 1, 2026. It changes the connection between the Comprehensive Plan due date and the SDS process. Under the new statute, the county must initiate the SDS process between April 1 and July 1 of the year after the Comprehensive Plan is due. The due date for the SDS agreement is December 31 of the year after the Comprehensive Plan is due. Lowndes County's Comprehensive Plan is due October 31, 2026. The SDS process would be initiated between April 1 and July 1, 2027, and the statutory due date for the Lowndes County SDS would be December 31, 2027. Mr. Elliott stated yesterday clarification was received from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) office and that they agree with that analysis.

**CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD** - There were no citizens wishing to be heard.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Commissioner Wisenbaker. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.