

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and recognized Leadership Lowndes Class Members.

County Manager, Paige Dukes, recognized Mrs. Jessica Ganas, Lowndes County Facilities and Marketing Coordinator, and presented her with an award for outstanding service and dedication related to the events held for Lowndes County's Bicentennial Celebrations last year.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Demarcus Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of February 9, 2026 and the regular session of February 10, 2026. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Evans. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried. The work session meeting of February 23, 2026, and the regular session meeting of February 24, 2026, were canceled.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2026-04 Jay Ma Khodiyar, ~1ac, 5507 Central St. (Clyattville), R-10 to C-G, County Water & Septic County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request by Mr. Khodiyar represents a change in zoning on a 1.0 acre property from Suburban Residential (R-10) zoning to General Commercial (CG) zoning. The main motivation for the request is to allow for a proposed multi-tenant commercial development. The subject property is largely triangular, surrounded by multiple intersections with frontages on Madison Highway, Main Street, Central Street and Davis Drive in Clyattville. Proposed access is from Madison Highway, Central Street and Davis Drive. The Comprehensive Plan Character Area map currently depicts the subject property within the Urban Service Area and the Established Residential Character Area, abutting Community Activity Center, Rural Residential, and Agricultural Character Areas. Per Comprehensive Plan guidance, C-G zoning is not listed as a recommended zoning within an Established Residential Character Area. However,

C-G zoning is across Madison Hwy, with C-G and C-C zoning approximately 500 feet south along Madison Highway. Mr. Dillard stated there are no wetlands, there is no county sewer available, but there is county water available, if approved. Mr. Dillard showed a proposed site plan. The Comprehensive Plan does show it as a Community Activity Center Corridor Area. 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 property's potential for non-residential development (especially considering its size, shape and road frontages), the potential for economic development, potential aesthetic improvements, potential light and noise concerns, the aesthetic appearance and construction type, market and feasibility concerns, and the details and scale of the proposed development, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-G zoning with the following condition: Any vehicular ingress/egress off of Davis St. 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, and construction costs for the paving of the section mentioned above. The Planning Commission discussed the benefits of commercial zoning and potential buffers before recommending approval with the one condition. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to table this item until the first meeting in May 2026, which is May 12, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2026-05 Cole Davis 84 W, ~22ac US HWY 84W, C-H to P-D, County Utilities

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this case represents a change in zoning on an approximately 22 acre property from Highway Commercial (C-H) zoning to a non-residential Planned Development (P-D) zoning. The main motivation for the request is to allow for a proposed multi-tenant commercial development. The subject property fronts US HWY 84, is within the Corridor Overlay, and is bound on the south by railroad tracks. The property is within the Urban Service Area and Community Activity Character Area per the Comprehensive Plan, which recommends C-H and P-D zonings. There are no wetlands on this property.

Mr. Dillard reviewed the rough draft site plan and read the notes which the applicant made:

1. Individual buildings may be subdivided into single parcels. Lot configuration will be determined based on actual building footprint constructed.
2. At the time this development is completed, and all lots have been developed, any portions of lots that have not been developed will be converted to common area.
3. Each building shall be connected to Lowndes County Utilities.
4. All internal drive aisles shall include a 24' access easement.
5. 473 parking spaces are depicted. All parking shall be shared. At the completion of development, adequate parking shall be constructed based on the individual building uses and in conformity with section 6.01.03.
6. Development shall conform with section 4.06.00.
7. Site lighting shall be directed away from adjacent properties.

8. Maximum total building square footage shall be 350,000 s.f. with no single building exceeding 100,000 s.f. 9. Maximum building height shall be 60 feet for all buildings located within 120 feet from highway 84 and shall be 45 feet maximum for all other buildings.
10. If an individual user requires outdoor storage, it shall be fully screened from view from adjacent properties and the public right-of-way.
11. The development shall have a buffer consistent with 4.07.06 adjacent to the Ashwood mobile home park.
12. The development shall have a 24' ingress/egress easement to the east for future development. The Planning Commission and TRC approved the request. The Planning Commission approved the request and recommended a 13th condition that a fence be installed along the eastern boundary of the property.

No one spoke in opposition. Mr. Bill Nijem, 1007 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of the request on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Nijem stated the applicant is agreeable with the twelve conditions on the site plan, but does have a concern regarding the thirteenth condition from the Planning Commission. Mr. Nijem stated the applicant would like to stop the fencing at the property line where the mobile home park is located. The remaining property is commercial property which is an undeveloped field. Mr. Nijem requested the Commission approve this request with the twelve conditions on the site plan. Mr. Bill Kent, the engineer on the project, is available to answer more technical questions. Commissioner Smith asked if there were plans to replant the trees, Mr. Nijem responded yes, Mr. Kent has those plans.

Vice Chairman Orenstein asked a question related to the fence condition recommended by the Planning Commission. Mr. Dillard stated this condition relates to child safety regarding the detention pond. Vice Chairman Orenstein stated the concern is someone from the east coming from the west onto the property, which is warehouses, but there will be a detention pond, which is fenced in any way. Mr. Bill Kent, 2214 North Patterson Street, with Innovate Engineering & Surveying, the engineer on this project, responded to Vice Chairman Orenstein's question stating the depth will be less than maximum, in this case no fencing is required. Chairman Slaughter stated the fencing 440 feet to US Highway 84 was to protect the mobile home park, an existing fence on US Highway 84 which is the northside, this should also protect the mobile home park. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request with the twelve conditions, excluding the thirteenth condition recommended by the Planning Commission, seconded by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REZ-2026-06 Val Del Mobile Home Park, ~34ac, 3910 Val Way, R-A & P-D to P-D, County Utilities
County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this case represents a change in zoning on approximately 34 acres of property from Residential Agricultural (R-A) and Planned Development (P-D) zoning to an all Planned Development (P-D) zoning to unify a mobile home community that began in the 1970's and expanded in the 1990's. The property is within the Urban Service Area and Rural Residential Character Area per the Comprehensive Plan which recommends P-D zoning. There are wetlands on this property. The original MHP along Val Way and Del Circle contained approximately 30 homes, then in 1997, an expansion north onto Heart Lake Drive proposed an additional 14 lots, and in 1998 revised it to 72 lots, which were never fully developed. The new P-D layout reconfigures the park into an approximately 155 lot layout, including recreation space and

common areas in accordance with ULDC standards. Some of the conditions being proposed, a ten (10) foot buffer, meaning a tree every ten feet. Mr. Dillard read the notes attached to the site plan:

1. Lot lines shown are for graphical purposes only. Lots will not be subdivided or sold individually. Property will remain single ownership.
2. Each home shall be connected to Lowndes County Utilities.
3. Paving for internal access drives shall be constructed to county standards and will be privately maintained.
4. Each home shall have 2 parking spaces in compliance with section 6.01.03.
5. Development shall conform with section 4.03.26 and 4.06.00.
6. Site lighting is planned to be expanded and provided in the community and shall be directed away from adjacent properties.
7. All exterior homes shall be placed a minimum of 30' from outer property boundary.
8. The community identification sign shall conform with 4.03.26K.
9. There shall be a non-encroachment easement along Val-Del Road with the exception of the drive entrances.
10. Other development standards not listed or shown shall be governed by suburban density residential (r-10) standards.
11. One tree will be required for every 3 lots in addition to buffer planting requirements.
12. On street parking will not be allowed.
13. The pedestrian pathway to be all-weather surfaces.

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 property's history and future development plans, the availability of County Utilities, the compliance with the supplemental standards of the ULDC, and the potential environmental impacts, and therefore generally recommends approval of the request for P-D zoning per the site plan.

At the GLPC meeting, the applicant's engineer spoke in support of the request, talking through the differences in the proposed site plan, Staff's initial comments about its conformity with the ULDC, and the GLPC questions about ingress/egress, emergency services accessibility, overall security and privacy of the property, and the landscaping and buffering requirements against the surrounding properties.

An additional citizen spoke in support of the request, praising the expansion of an affordable housing option in the area, while one neighbor spoke in opposition, mainly about buffering and density as it relates to traffic concerns in the area. The Planning Commission initially motioned and voted to recommend tabling the request until an updated site plan for their review could be provided. However, the motion failed (4-5). A second motion to recommend denial, based on an incomplete site plan for their review ultimately passed unanimously (9-0). The applicant's engineer provided an updated site

plan for the TRC to review that addressed the Planning Commission's concerns through layout and noted conditions on the site plan.

Commissioner Smith asked if this was single and double-wide mobile homes, Mr. Dillard responded yes, both are allowed. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding a covenant or a covenant being proposed, Mr. Dillard answered that the applicant is available to answer those questions. Vice Chairman Orenstein asked which border and are the trees being doubled. Mr. Dillard responded the southside near Betty's Place. No one spoke in opposition. Bill Kent, 2214 North Patterson Street, with Innovate Engineering & Surveying, spoke on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Kent stated this property will be under single ownership and there are no covenants. Mr. Kent stated at first the applicant was looking to reapply for the P-D portion of the property, but due to split zonings and plans for future growth, why not show the entire property. This does not mean the entire development will be completed at the same time. The existing homes will remain, as development takes place until time to relocate. Vice Chairman Orenstein asked if this is the master plan, Mr. Kent answered yes. Mr. Kent stated the first phase will begin in the back of the property. Commissioner Smith asked regarding green space, Mr. Kent responded that there would be two recreational areas. Commissioner Marshall stated there is a concern with citizens who have purchased homes in this area and this looks like a mobile home park and the concern is that the property will not deteriorate and will remain nice. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if the lots were rented. Mr. Kent responded yes. Chairman Slaughter mentioned a phasing plan. Mr. Dillard answered that construction plans, phase 1 and 2, and access roads will be built to county standards, once construction plans are turned in to staff. Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, added the streets will not be accepted by Lowndes County, they will remain private. Vice Chairman Orenstein stated his interest in a phasing plan would be regarding water and sewer connections. Chairman Slaughter asked if the widening of Val Del Road, as far as right of way requirements, had been taken into consideration. Mr. Kent responded to his knowledge that there are no plans yet, but the placement of the homes have been taken into consideration for the homes that abutt Val Del Road.

Mr. Bob Turner, 1025 Bryan Woods Road in Savannah, spoke in favor of this request as the applicant. He owns American Park Services and purchased this park three years ago and has agreed to the conditions that have been recommended. Mr. Turner stated there are no covenants and this is treated as an apartment complex. Mr. Turner mentioned there are local and state inspections that are followed. Commissioner Marshall wanted to thank Mr. Turner for considering affordable housing, but asked that Mr. Turner assure that the property values hold better than traditional manufactured/mobile homes. Mr. Turner stated some new mobile homes have been moved in and requirements will have to be met by those citizens wishing to move in their own mobile homes. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the rezoning request as presented with the thirteen conditions listed on the site plan, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Acceptance of Infrastructure for Cameron Lane/Longleaf South Commercial Park

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Longleaf South Commercial Park is located off of Highway 84 West, begins at Wetherington Lane and ends at existing Cameron Lane. All construction and paperwork have been completed. Engineering and Utilities staff have conducted the final inspection of the construction. The developer has requested Lowndes County to accept the infrastructure, which includes Cameron Lane right of way, road, stormwater structures within the right of way, and water and sewer infrastructure. Mr. McLeod stated

the portion being accepted is only .94 miles long of the right of way. Regarding the question Commissioner Wisenbaker asked at the work session, there is approximately under 100 acres which is able to be developed. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the request as presented, seconded by Vice Chairman Orenstein. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Kinderlou-Clyattville Road Paving and Drainage Improvements, TIA-P.I. 0016278 Supplemental Agreement No. 1

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the original agreement dated 04/25/2022 with the Georgia Department of Transportation has a "not to exceed amount" of \$3,450,000.00 for the Kinderlou Clyattville Road Paving and Drainage Improvements project. Staff asked the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) office for additional funding to cover the difference between the actual cost of the project (\$4,550,000.00) and the agreement amount. After reviewing the initial TIA budget, bid amount, and projected tax collections for TIA, the TIA office has agreed to provide additional funds of \$1,100,000.00 to cover the total cost of the project. The project is complete, and the Supplemental Agreement will allow staff to invoice TIA for the final reimbursement. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the agreement as presented, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Beer and Wine License - Manishkumar Patel of Kasumbal 2025 LLC, DBA Busy Food Mart, 6872 B Lake Park-Bellville Road, Lake Park, GA 31636

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated Manishkumar Patel of Kasumbal 2025 LLC, DBA Busy Food Mart, located at 6872 B Lake Park-Bellville Road, is requesting a license for the sale of beer and wine for consumption off premises. This is an existing establishment with a license that needs to make a correction to the address. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the beer and wine license as presented, seconded by Commissioner Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Valdosta Housing Authority Request for Loan

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated the Valdosta Housing Authority has housing opportunities related to affordability beyond the properties which they manage. Harvest Station phase one and two are a part of those relationships throughout our community. In an effort to continue to support affordable housing and further initiatives, the Valdosta Housing Authority has requested the county to make a loan to the authority in the amount of \$500,000.00. Commissioner Evans requested she be recused since she is a board member on the Housing Authority Board. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the loan in the amount of \$500,000.00, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BID

2025 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Local Road Assistance (LRA) Supplemental Resurfacing Bids

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated the commission approved the Local Road Assistance (LRA) application on May 27, 2025, and upon approval, Lowndes County received \$1,677,028.92 of (LMIG) Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant LRA funding assistance from the Georgia Department of Transportation. The 2025 LMIG Supplemental bids include 6.94 miles of county roads. This project has a 180-day completion time. Bids were received and opened on February 19, 2026. Staff received two bids, with the Scruggs Company submitting the low bid in the amount of \$1,491,023.01. Commissioner Marshall asked if this

included the entire length of Radar Site Road. Mr. McLeod answered yes. Vice Chairman Orenstein asked if this was resurfacing. Mr. McLeod responded that it will be resurfaced with two layers, temporary striping, permanent striping and RPM's. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the low bidder, the Scruggs Company in the amount of \$1,491,023.01, seconded by Commissioners Evans and Marshall. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the items below:

Due to weather, the ribbon cutting for the mental health expansion at the Lowndes County Jail has been moved to March 23rd at 1:00 p.m.

LEAD's (Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner), sponsored by the Valdosta Rotary Club to benefit first responders, will be held tomorrow from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Rainwater Conference Center. Lowndes County Fire Rescue Class 25-02 will graduate on Friday at 10:00 a.m. at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse.

Andy Severin with the Lowndes County Fire Rescue Department will be retiring and that ceremony will be held on March 17th at 11:30 a.m. at 903 North Patterson Street.

On March 19th, there will be an Eagle Scout Ceremony at the Lowndes County Historic Courthouse.

County Manager, Paige Dukes, requested that following the citizens wishing to be heard, she would like to request an executive session for the acquisition of real estate.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

Madeline Jarnagin, 1201 Ravenwood Circle, addressed the commission in opposition to data centers. Ms. Jarnagin discussed the proposed data center on Coleman Road and expressed her concerns and asked that citizens be included in meetings and transparency. Mrs. Jarnagin also mentioned noise and light pollution and if any proposed barriers to help with noise/light.

Andrew Swann completed and submitted a 'citizens wishing to be heard' form. However, when Chairman Slaughter called his name during the meeting, he was not present.

Michael Noll, 2305 Glynnedale Drive, addressed the commission in opposition to data centers. Mr. Noll expressed concerns regarding the significant water consumption and high electricity demands associated with these facilities. Mr. Noll cited potential negative impacts, including increased noise, air and light pollution, and declining real estate values. Mr. Noll requested that a Development of Regional Impact study be conducted and recommended the establishment of a citizen community committee to further evaluate and address these concerns.

Sandra Jordan completed and submitted a 'citizens wishing to be heard' form. However, when Chairman Slaughter called her name during the meeting, she was not present.

Marguerite Gravlee, 1209 Cloverhill Road, addressed the commission in opposition to data centers. Ms. Gravlee requested that any such facilities be located away from residential areas.

Elizabeth Flail, 1209 Ravenwood Circle, addressed the commission in opposition to data centers. Ms. Flail requested that the commission consider alternative locations that would not be near residential homes.

Laura Hannah Dixon, 303 Tomlinson Drive, addressed the commission in opposition to data centers. Ms. Dixon stated that selecting an alternative location could also impact wildlife and surrounding areas. She further recommended that a representative from the community be selected to participate in meetings related to the project.

Chairman Slaughter stated that a press release outlining the position of Lowndes County is available on the County's website and social media platforms. Vice Chairman Orenstein stated that the Board is unified on this matter and encouraged citizens to contact him or any other commissioner with questions or concerns. He further noted that research is being conducted by consulting with other communities and colleagues across the state.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:38 p.m. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the acquisition of real estate, seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

At 6:44 p.m. Chairman Slaughter reconvened the regular session with no additional information being discussed. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, seconded by Commissioner Wisenbaker. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting.