Carmella Braswell – Lowndes County Zoning Administrator

Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals

RE: Required Letter of Explanation for a variance request of the ULDC standards stated in sections 4.03.11 – Vehicle Repair Shops and 4.07.06C – Buffer Area Standards.

Subject Property – 2703 U.S. Hwy 41 S – Tax Map 0166 Parcel 078 – ±1.4 acre parcel zoned C-H with 2400 square foot metal building structure

Subject property is actively marketed FOR SALE and is under contract to an established automotive service / repair shop end user. While performing his due diligence prior to purchasing the property the buyer was notified that to receive a business license for this location to operate as an automotive service / repair shop a buffer would be required between the northern and eastern boundary lines where this property zoned C-H touches up with properties zoned E-A. It is current property owner's and buyer's understanding that the buffer required by the ULDC would be a 30' x 2 for a 60' buffer requirement.

Background of the property is that the building was built around 1980 to service and repair heavy machinery by a prior owner. The current property owner Mr. Ramos purchased the property in 2004 and operated an automotive repair / service shop for many years until moving his business to Jacksonville FL. He has maintained the property and kept utility services active on site and continued to store and work on personal automobiles on this property to present day.

This buffer requirement causes the property an unnecessary hardship to no fault of the owner. Property owner bought the property in 2004 – several years before the ULDC was established and could not of known it would one day of affected the future marketability or value. The 2400 sf structure was built very close to the northern property boundary. While this would not be permitted under the ULDC today, it was allowed when built by prior owner. The 60' wide structure would almost be completely engulfed by required 60' buffer. Also, the neighboring property owners of the E-A zoned parcels have continuously known about the use of the subject property and have not complained or asked for a buffer to be implemented.

Requiring a 60' buffer on two sides of the property would make over 40% of the property undevelopable. It is estimated that over 25,000 square feet of buffer would be required on the northern and eastern boundaries. On a 1.4 acre parcel the usable / developable acreage drops significantly to an estimated to be ±0.82 acres.

For the reasons above and because several requirements of sections 9.01.03 – Nonconforming structures & 9.01.04 required for a variance request to be submitted, the property owner respectfully asks that the buffer requirements be omitted by a variance issued by the VLC ZBOA so that he can sell his property and the buyer can occupy the property and continue the same property use that has been occurring on site for 35+ years.