



Columbia County Planning Commission
June 5th, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Evans Government Center Auditorium
Evans, Georgia

Present at the meeting included:

Chairman Mark Moody
Vice-Chairman Jim Steed
Commissioner Jamie Lester
Commissioner Emory Holloway
Commissioner Ryan Cato

Scott Sterling, Division Director
Will Butler, Planning Manager
Nayna Mistry, Community Planner
Danielle Montgomery, Planner II
Dylan Douglas, Planner I
Lindsay Mixon, Executive Assistant
Members of the Public

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moody called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. INVOCATION

Staff Member Dylan Douglas gave the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chairman Steed led the pledge to the American Flag.

D. ROLL CALL / QUORUM

Chairman Moody declared a quorum with 5 Commissioners present (100% Quorum).

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(E1) May 15th, 2025

Commissioner Cato made a motion to approve the May 15th, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Holloway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to approve the June 5th, 2025 Agenda. Commissioner Cato seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

G. PRESENTATION

H. DEBATE AGENDA

1. Unfinished Business

- a. **(H1a) VA25-05-02**, Variance to Sections 90-139 *Buffers & Screening* and 90-147 (g)(10)(b)(2)(i) & (g)(10)(b)(2)(ii) *Use Provisions*, 3900 Washington Road, Tax Map 078C Parcel 223, 1.72 +/- acres, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Staff Member Dylan Douglas presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:07PM.

Cody Rogers with EMC Engineering, 1211 Merchant Way, Statesboro, GA, stated they have worked back and forth with the county regarding the residents' concerns. They placed two 9ft clearance bars to stop large commercial vehicles from using Caribe Dr.

Kemberly Younts, 3914 Casa Rose Ave, stated that she appreciates the clearance bars. The neighborhood will still be used as a part of the exit strategy and will cause more traffic. A solution would be to close off the driveway to Caribe Dr.

Slyvia Elam, 4442 Oak Road, stated that she was speaking on behalf for her mom who lives at 205 Casa Linda. She is worried about her elderly mother's safety due to businesses encroaching. The traffic must travel through the neighborhood due to how bad the traffic is on Washington Road and Bobby Jones Expressway. When Walgreens was on the corner it was a neighborhood store and benefited those who lived close by.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:19PM

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to recommend approval with conditions of VA25-05-02, Variance to Sections 90-139 *Buffers & Screening* and 90-147 (g)(10)(b)(2)(i) & (g)(10)(b)(2)(ii) *Use Provisions*, 3900 Washington Road, Tax Map 078C Parcel 223, 1.72 +/- acres, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial). Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Conditions:

Planning:

1. All lighting shall be shielded and directed away from adjacent residential properties. A photometric plan, showing readings of 0 footcandles at the residential property line, shall be submitted for review during site plan review. Lighting on the southern end of the site, behind the building, shall be designed to be as low height as possible while maintaining safety. The use of bollard lighting is encouraged in this area.
2. Buffers and separation requirements are reduced per the site plan provided by EMC Engineering Services, Inc. to the Columbia County Planning Department on May 28th, 2025.

2. New Business

a. Massage Operator's License

1. **(H2a1) Massage Operator's License for Ashley Marie Parsons dba Body Healing by Marie**, 108 N Belair Road suite 7A, Tax Map 073C Parcel 045B, Massage at premise address only.

Staff Member Will Butler presented the staff recommendation.

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to approve the Massage Operator's Licenses for Ashley Marie Parsons dba Body Healing by Marie, 108 N Belair Road suite 7A, Tax Map 073C Parcel 045B, Massage at premise address only. Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Preliminary Plat

1. **(H2b1) Hamilton Grove Section 1**, 17 lots, off Hamilton Road, portion of Tax Map 052 Parcel 037, 8.1+/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Cato made a motion to approve the preliminary plat for Hamilton Grove Section 1, 17 lots, off Hamilton Road, portion of Tax Map 052 Parcel 037, 8.1+/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Holloway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. **(H2b2) The Brooks Phase 2**, 20 lots, off Columbia Road, Tax Map 073 Parcel 070, 2.6 +/- acres, and currently zoned T-R (Townhouse Residential).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to approve the preliminary plat for The Brooks Phase 2, 20 lots, off Columbia Road, Tax Map 073 Parcel 070, 2.6 +/- acres, and currently zoned T-R (Townhouse Residential). Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **(H2b3) Four Oaks Phase 5**, 16 lots, Off Stablebridge Way, Tax Map 060 Parcel 1697, 9.79 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to approve the preliminary plat for Four Oaks Phase 5, 16 lots, Off Stablebridge Way, Tax Map 060 Parcel 1697, 9.79 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Public Hearing

1. **(H2c1) Provisional Home Occupation - Jeff Alexander's Home Improvements**, 130 Pauline St, Tax Map 028 Parcel 137, 2.5 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:26PM.

Applicant or representative were not present.

Members of the public were present but provided no comments or concerns.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:26PM.

Commissioner Cato made a motion to approve the provisional home occupation for Jeff Alexander's Home Improvements, 130 Pauline St, Tax Map 028 Parcel 137, 2.5 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural). Commissioner Holloway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. **(H2c2) RZ25-06-01**, Change of Conditions, off Wrightsboro Road and Hamilton Road, Tax Map 052 Parcel 037, 96.74 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:28PM.

Applicant, Tyler Findley, 6053 Veterans Parkway, Columbus, GA, stated that he doesn't know the timeline for the new phases and wants to be able to work with the county and GDOT.

Members of the public were present but provided no comments or concerns.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:30PM.

Commissioner Cato made a motion to recommend approval with conditions of RZ25-06-01, Change of Conditions, off Wrightsboro Road and Hamilton Road, Tax Map 052 Parcel 037, 96.74 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Holloway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Condition:

Planning:

Either the roundabout or the previously conditioned left turn lane must be installed prior to approval of the final plat for the first phase of the project that uses Wrightsboro Road for access.

3. **(H2c3) RZ25-06-02**, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, 285 Flowing Wells Road, Tax Map 079 Parcel 066. 50.62 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special).

Staff Member Nayna Mistry presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:33PM.

Eric Hedinger, 285 Flowing Wells, stated that he is the head of the school and here to answer any questions.

Richard Rogers, 4121 Fair Oaks Drive, stated that his property borders the school. He notices that the school cares about the property and are trying to be good neighbors.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:35PM.

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to recommend approval with conditions of RZ25-06-02, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, 285 Flowing Wells Road, Tax Map 079 Parcel 066. 50.62 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special). Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Conditions:

Planning:

The wall height variance applies to finished masonry products only as proposed in the plan provided with this application. The approved height does not apply to chain link fencing.

Stormwater Management:

Will need an easement encroachment agreement prior to approval for the fence and signs.

4. **(H2c4) RZ25-06-03**, Major PUD (Planned Unit Development) Revision, 710 Point Bluff Parkway, Tax Map 029 Parcel 037L, 3.06 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff Member Dylan Douglas presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:39PM.

Applicant, Krupa Patel, 303 Clearwater Lane, stated that she was present.

Members of the public were present but provided no comments or concerns.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:40PM.

Commissioner Cato made a motion to recommend approval of RZ25-06-03, Major PUD (Planned Unit Development) Revision, 710 Point Bluff Parkway, Tax Map 029 Parcel 037L, 3.06 +/- acres, and

currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development). Commissioner Holloway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. **(H2c5) RZ25-06-04**, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, 3402 Gordon Highway, Tax Map 063B Parcel 028, 2.28 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special).

Staff Member Will Butler presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:42PM.

Bill Corder with Bluewater Engineering, 4210 Columbia Road, stated this request is pretty straightforward. The church is growing, and they need more room.

Members of the public were present but provided no comments or concerns.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:43PM.

Commissioner Cato made a motion to recommend approval of RZ25-06-04, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, 3402 Gordon Highway, Tax Map 063B Parcel 028, 2.28 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special). Commissioner Holloway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. **(H2c6) RZ25-06-05**, Rezoning from S-1 (Special) to R-1 (Single Family Residential), 1.01 +/- acre portion of 5164 Mill Branch Road, Tax Map 061 Parcel 1829, 30.9 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:45PM.

Applicant, Barry Allen, 280 Bobby Jones Expressway, stated that they are looking to sell this portion.

Members of the public were present but provided no comments or concerns.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 6:46PM.

Vice-Chairman Steed made a motion to recommend approval of RZ25-06-05, Rezoning from S-1 (Special) to R-1 (Single Family Residential), 1.01 +/- acre portion of 5164 Mill Branch Road, Tax Map 061 Parcel 1829, 30.9 +/- acres, and currently zoned S-1 (Special). Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7. **(H2c7) RZ25-06-06**, Rezoning from PUD (Planned Unit Development) to S-1 (Special), off Columbia Road, Tax Map 061 Parcels 2140 & 2141, 39.49 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery presented the staff recommendation.

Chairman Moody opened the public hearing at 6:50PM.

Owner, GB Sharma, 3543 Interlachen Dr, stated that he has developed many properties. He has owned this current property since 2007. He has received offers before, but due to the topography on the site the sales have not gone through. With global warming and the need for clean power, a solar farm would be a good use at this location. He will make sure the solar company complies with any conditions.

Warren Kritko with Bijan Solar, 1 Griffin Road South, Bloomfield, CT, stated that GA Power is looking

for additional renewable energy sources. Solar farm must connect where capacity is available. 35 year contract and then will be decommissioned. They are willing to comply with any conditions. The solar panels are non-reflective.

Donald Taylor, 5669 Sunbury Loop, stated that he is against the rezoning. This will affect property values in the area and wants to keep this area residential and not industrial.

Patrick Duncan, 755 Whitney Shoals, stated that he wanted to bring awareness for critical infrastructure projects. There have been reports of undocumented communication devices in solar panels. Would like there to be a mandate for components to be US approved. Manufacturer and developer would need to be responsible for any damages to GA power or county.

Paige Rivera, 2102 Fothergill Rd, stated that she has been a resident of Bartram Trail since 2010. They bought in this area due to the residential aspects. The pet grooming, daycare, sports development, etc are business they want in this area. Doesn't agree that a solar farm will be a good fit.

Danielle Abeles, 114 Grindle Shoals, stated that her and her neighbors have several concerns with this rezoning. This could affect the resale of homes, runoff increased if trees are removed, eye sore to look at and worried would the solar panels be a projectile if the county was hit with another hurricane. She would like to keep the area as quiet as possible and states there are probably other options than a solar farm for this area.

Warren Kritko, Bijan Solar, responded to several of the comments by the public, stating that solar panels are non-reflective, they are willing to comply with any conditions imposed, and that they were considering using US manufactured equipment.

Chairman Moody closed the public hearing at 7:10PM.

Commissioner Holloway made a motion to recommend disapproval of RZ25-06-06, Rezoning from PUD (Planned Unit Development) to S-1 (Special), off Columbia Road, Tax Map 061 Parcels 2140 & 2141, 39.49 +/- acres, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development). Vice-Chairman Steed seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

I. LEGAL MATTERS

J. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

There was no further business to discuss; therefore Vice-Chairman Steed made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Commissioner Lester seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Signature on File
Mark Moody, Chairman

Signature on File
Scott Sterling, Planning Services Director