



**Columbia County Planning Commission
March 18, 2021 at 6:00 PM
Evans Government Center Auditorium
Evans, Georgia**

Present at the meeting included:

Chairman Jim Cox
Vice-Chairman Rich Henderson, Sr.
Commissioner Russell Wilder
Commissioner Gene Futch
Commissioner Al Dempsey

Scott Sterling, Division Director
Will Butler, Planning Manager
Nayna Mistry, Community Planner
Danielle Montgomery, Planner II
Cara Harden, Administrative Specialist
Paul Scarbary, Development Services Division
Director
Members of the Public

A. CALL TO ORDER

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

B. INVOCATION

Commissioner Wilder gave the invocation.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Futch led the pledge to the American Flag.

D. ROLL CALL / QUORUM

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

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(E1) March 4, 2021

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve the March 4, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice-Chairman Henderson made a motion to add (H2b1) Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 042 Parcel 089C, 9.26+/- acres, located at 1228 Louisville Road, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural). Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve the March 18, 2021 Revised Agenda. Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

G. PRESENTATION

Chairman Cox gave a brief description of the Planning Commission's role in the rezoning and variance process for the public's edification. Chairman Cox stated: "Before we begin, I'd like to take a moment to clarify that the Planning Commission is a recommending body to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. The decisions made on rezoning & variance requests tonight will be forwarded to the Commissioners for final action on March 30, 2021. If you wish to address the Board of Commissioners at their meeting, please see Ms. Cara Harden to obtain a Request to Speak form."

H. DEBATE AGENDA

(H1) Unfinished Business

(H2) New Business

(H2a) Architectural Review

(H2a1) Architectural Review for Grand Oaks Evans, Tax Map 072 Parcels 547 & 548, 8.55+/- acres, located at 850 Ronald Reagan Drive & 732 North Belair Road, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for an architectural review of the proposed building elevations for the properties at 850 Ronald Reagan Drive and 732 North Belair Road.
- The zoning for these properties is PUD (Planned Unit Development); the properties were originally zoned PUD in 2004 (RZ04-07-06), but are being developed under the most recent Major Revision file RZ19-12-02.
- One of the conditions from the approved revision was as follows:
Proposed buildings must meet the design intent specified in the narrative and submitted architectural examples. Prior to building permits being issued for the site, the proposed elevations must receive approval from the Planning Commission.
- The staff analysis of the design intent specified in the narrative included several key elements of the building design: building massing, variation in materials, textures, colors, and building accent elements.
- As noted, the applicant submitted architectural examples at that time to illustrate their overall design intent and was to draw from that inspiration to formulate the elevations that are before the Planning Commission at this time.
- Submitted for review is the mixed use building along Ronald Reagan Drive (noted as Building 2) and three apartment buildings (Buildings 1, 3, & 4).
- Building 1 is located along Williamsburg Way and Buildings 3 & 4 are located along Ronald Reagan Drive.
- The apartment buildings are provided specifically to show how the grade change and pedestrian access to these buildings is addressed along the primary frontage which was noted as a challenge on this site with a 24 foot grade difference from Ronald Reagan Drive to North Belair Road.
- The mixed use building wraps the corner at the traffic circle and extends along Ronald Reagan Drive just beyond the intersection of Market Street and Ronald Reagan.
- Materials used on this building include a mixture of brick, cast stone, and fiber cement board cladding (simulated stucco).
- The ground floor, which is the commercial uses, is primarily cast stone with brick used on the corner bays to provide for variation in the material, texture, and colors.
- Upper floors are primarily brick in the central bays, but include fiber cement to provide for variation.
- The roof is flat, but utilizes parapets to provide differing heights across the frontage with the highest being at the central bay.
- Balconies are provided for the apartment units with some inset and others extending out from the frontage.
- Similar to the Meybohm Building, a multistory wraparound balcony is shown on the corner adjacent to the outdoor space.
- Additionally, metal balconies are used throughout, also evoking the Meybohm Building.
- Elevation changes on this frontage are not as pronounced as the remainder of Ronald Reagan Drive.
- Continuing along Ronald Reagan Drive is Building 3, an apartment building.
- Materials on this building are brick on the first two floors for the frontage (with some fiber cement accenting in the balconies and entrances).
- The third floor is primarily brick across the frontage, but does include portions of two bays that are fiber cement and the fourth floor is entirely fiber cement.
- Metal balconies are again provided for the apartment units with corner units having wraparound balconies.

- Similar to the mixed use building, the roof is flat, but parapets are provided to differentiate height along the frontage for visual interest.
- This building illustrates how walk-up entrances will be used along this frontage with entrances ranging from ground level on the left side of the elevation to inset porches or stoops with several stairs to reach the entrance on the right side.
- Building 4 is similar to Building 3.
- Materials are again all brick for the first two floors with some fiber cement accenting the balconies and entrances.
- Similar to Building 3, the third floor is primarily brick, but includes sections that are fiber cement.
- This visually will link the buildings together, but provides differentiation in materials so the development does not appear uniform.
- Balconies are again provided throughout and include a mixture of wraparound, metal, and inset.
- Similar to the other buildings, the roof is flat, but parapets are used to provide visual interest with differing heights.
- This building further illustrates how the change in grade has been addressed with a walk-up entrance at grade on the left side of the elevation and an entrance on the right with several stairs to reach it.
- Going over to Williamsburg Way we have Building 1.
- Materials are again primarily brick for the first two floors with fiber cement providing vertical separation across the frontage at the gated entrances to the internal units.
- This is slightly different from Buildings 3 & 4 which do not have this gated entrance from street level and are instead directly into individual units.
- Also visible in this vertical element is the internal stairway which is again a departure from Buildings 3 & 4.
- The third floor is a mixture of brick and fiber cement across the frontage with the flat roof and parapets of varying heights seen on the other buildings.
- Metal balconies are again provided with corner units having wraparound balconies.
- As noted, entrances are via either a gated entrance to the interior or via individual entrances at ground level.
- The only noted departure from the other provided elevations is the gated entrances.
- This is less formal than the individual walk-ups, but does still maintain the downtown feel that is desired for this area.
- The residential buildings include walk-up entrances for the units fronting on Ronald Reagan Drive and the architects have coordinated with the engineer for the project in order to show how the elevation of the site will impact the building design, with entrances ranging from ground level, to a full set of stairs from the public sidewalk to the door.
- The walk-up entrances encourage the desired downtown feel for this project, and encourage pedestrian activity and connection of this development to the larger Evans Town Center area.
- The buildings additionally use metal porches similar to those found on the Meybohm Building, providing additional variation in materials and depth to the facades as well as coordinating this project with the Plaza development.
- Staff recommends approval of the architectural review.

Chairman Cox stated this was not a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present.

Ellen Garland, Silver Studio Architect:

- Presented a PowerPoint to show the materials used for the project and pictures of their previous projects.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Commissioner Dempsey questioned the applicant on the estimated time frame for the project.

Ellen Garland and Matt Mills answered approximately 24 months.

Commissioner Wilder questioned the applicant whether the time frame was for all 4 buildings.

Matt Mills answered yes and all buildings will have the same elements throughout.

Chairman Cox stated this was not a public hearing and called for a motion.

Vice-Chairman Henderson made a motion to approve Architectural Review for Grand Oaks Evans, Tax Map 072 Parcels 547 & 548, 8.55+/- acres, located at 850 Ronald Reagan Drive & 732 North Belair Road, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development). Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2b) Temporary Use Authorization

(H2b1) Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 042 Parcel 089C, 9.26+/- acres, located at 1228 Louisville Road, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for a temporary use authorization for a 34 foot travel trailer at 1228 Louisville Road on 9.26 +/- acres and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).
- The applicant has indicated that the existing home was involved in a house fire.
- Therefore, the request is for temporary use of the travel trailer during construction of the home.
- Staff recommends approval.

Chairman Cox stated this was not a public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 042 Parcel 089C, 9.26+/- acres, located at 1228 Louisville Road, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural). Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2c) Conceptual Plan

(H2c1) Conceptual Plan for 1915 William Few Parkway, Tax Map 061 Parcel 084C, 75 lots, 46.4 +/- acres, located at 1915 William Few Parkway, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for a conceptual plan approval for 75 residential lots on 46.4 acres located at 1915 William Few Parkway.
- The property is currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential) but is the subject of a rezoning request (RZ21-03-05) to be rezoned to R-2 (Single Family Residential); the Board of Commissioners approved this request on March 16th, 2021.
- The concept plan presented follows the R-2 zoning requirements.
- Euchee Creek is the western property line, and approximately the western third of the property is floodplain associated with Euchee Creek.
- The site is sloped from east to west, falling as much as 90 feet across the site down to Euchee Creek.
- The development is proposed with a single point of entrance on William Few Parkway.
- Traffic Engineering has noted that the location of the entrance is dependent on verification of adequate site distance, and that the entrance will require a right turn deceleration lane and a left turn lane, which are both shown on the submitted conceptual plan.
- The left turn lane in particular will impact the floodplain along Euchee Creek and possibly the bridge and culvert on William Few Parkway, and will require FEMA permitting for construction.
- The road layout for the project consists of a road paralleling the east and north property lines, and two additional cul-de-sacs extending west towards Euchee Creek.
- The main road includes a sharp curve at the north end of the site that does not appear to meet the County's geometric requirements for new roads; Traffic Engineering has discussed the road layout with the design engineer, who is aware of the County requirements and is certain they can be met at preliminary plat.
- Otherwise the road layout is typical of other neighborhoods in the County, with 50-foot rights of way

- and cul-de-sacs at the ends of the roads.
- The length of the additional cul-de-sacs will need to be verified, but the main road will require specific approval from Planning Commission as the length will exceed the 700 foot maximum length specified in Chapter 74 for cul-de-sacs.
- Approval of the conceptual plan will indicate approval of the road layout, and therefore of the proposed cul-de-sac length.
- This project will additionally be required to comply with the requirements of Appendix D of the fire code; this will include sprinkler systems in all of the homes unless a second entrance point can be developed, as well as requirements regarding the road design which can be addressed during Plan Review.
- The submittal includes a note that sprinkler systems will be provided in each house to comply with the updated fire code standards.
- Water and sewer service are required with the R-2 zoning district; both are easily available to this property, with an existing water main on William Few Parkway and an existing sewer line along Euchee Creek.
- Currently a single stormwater pond is shown for the site; the County stormwater department has expressed concern that this single pond is likely not sufficient to accommodate the proposed development and the necessary sediment capture during construction of the project to adequately protect Euchee Creek.
- Additional ponds are likely to be needed, which may impact the final lot count.
- Since the site is expected to be mass graded due to the topography, a 50-foot buffer is required around the site, which is shown on the conceptual plan.
- It is anticipated that zoning conditions will be added requiring a connection to the Euchee Creek Greenway; a sidewalk along William Few Parkway is shown on the conceptual plan to provide this connection.
- Staff recommends approval.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Vice-Chairman Henderson questioned staff whether the proposed Conceptual Plan proposes the best option for the road layouts and the topography.

Staff Member Danielle Montgomery answered this plan would be the best option with the topography issues to give them the best lot count and the best ability to develop the property.

Chairman Cox stated this was not a public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to approve Conceptual Plan for 1915 William Few Parkway, Tax Map 061 Parcel 084C, 75 lots, 46.4 +/- acres, located at 1915 William Few Parkway, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Dempsey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2d) Preliminary Plat

(H2e) Individual Plat

(H2e1) Individual Plat for Eric Joerg & Stanley Perhonish, Tax Map 029 Parcel 053, 6 lots, 29.57 +/- acres, located at 1635 Old Appling Harlem Highway, and currently split zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) & R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for an individual plat approval for six lots located at 1635 Old Appling Harlem Highway on 29.57 +/- acres and currently split zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) & R-A (Residential Agricultural).
- Currently, the entirety of the proposed parcel 1 is zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) and portions of parcels 2 & 3 are zoned in the same manner.
- The property to the north has corrected this zoning through a recent rezoning (RZ21-02-02) to R-

A.

- The owners of the subject property have also applied for a rezoning to R-A to address their zoning which will be heard by the Planning Commission on April 1st, 2021.
- However, the parcels do meet lot and structure requirements for either zoning district, so there is not a rationale to wait until the rezoning is complete to approve the plat in this situation.
- That being said, there are comments from the Health Department that the applicants are addressing and aware of that pertain to the septic systems on the individual sites.
- Staff recommends approval.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Chairman Cox questioned staff whether there was any curb cut scheduled for Swint Road and whether there will be two driveways.

Staff Member Will Butler answered yes there will be a curb cut, but they will probably share the driveway.

Chairman Cox stated this was not a public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Dempsey made a motion to approve Individual Plat for Eric Joerg & Stanley Perhonish, Tax Map 029 Parcel 053, 6 lots, 29.57+/- acres, located at 1635 Old Appling Harlem Highway, and currently split zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) & R-A (Residential Agricultural). Vice-Chairman Henderson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2e2) Individual Plat for The Kroger Company, Tax Map 061 Parcel 2906 (Portion of), 1 lot, 1.054+/- acres, located Off Bluegrass Trail, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for an individual plat approval for 1 lot off Bluegrass Trail on 1.054 +/- acres and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).
- The plat was processed as a minor plat, so any further subdivision of the parcel will require approval by the Planning Commission to waive the 5 year moratorium on further subdivision of the parent parcel.
- The parent parcel was most recently subdivided in 2018 to create three lots (5144 Bluegrass, 427 Lewiston Road, & 437 Lewiston Road).
- The proposed lot is shown at just over 1 acre with an approximately 7,700 square foot building that plans indicate will be additional restaurants.
- Requested by the applicant is a proposed outparcel along Bluegrass Trail that is currently in for site plan review by Columbia County Plan Review.
- Staff recommends approval.

Chairman Cox stated this was not a public hearing and called for a motion.

Commission Futch made a motion to approve Individual Plat for The Kroger Company, Tax Map 061 Parcel 2906 (Portion of), 1 lot, 1.054+/- acres, located Off Bluegrass Trail, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial). Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2f) Plan Revision

(H2g) Public Hearing

(H2g1) RZ21-03-06, Major PUD (Planned Unit Development) Revision, Tax Map 071G Parcel 015, 0.4+/- acres, located at 4502 Guildford Court, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff member Nayna Mistry stated the following:

- This is a request for a Major PUD Revision for property located at 4502 Guildford Court on 0.4 +/- acres.
- The applicant is requesting a reduction in building setbacks for new and existing structures and

- specifically for adding a new accessory structure.
- The subject property is located in Phase 1 of Stratford, which is a residential subdivision located off Hardy McManus Road, currently zoned PUD.
 - Surrounding subdivisions are zoned R-2 (Single-family Residential) and there some R-1 (Single-family Residential) parcels close by.
 - The plat of the property shows a 10 foot strip of HOA property that is along Aylesbury Drive.
 - Another 10 foot strip is running along the opposite side of Aylesbury Drive.
 - Most of this strip has some existing trees but the section adjacent to the subject property does not.
 - The side setback is 10 feet and there is a 20 foot drainage and utility easement over the existing sewer line.
 - The water utility department has marked the sewer line out so the applicant can see where the 10 foot requirement is.
 - The proposed accessory structure is noted on the permit as 26 feet by 44 feet (1,056 square feet).
 - At the site visit, the applicant measured out these dimensions but decided to make it smaller in both directions due to the location of the sewer line and to maintain adequate space along the angled fence line.
 - Staff has requested an as built plan.
 - Staff recommends to postpone.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present.

Gary Carter, 4502 Guildford Court:

- Request to postpone to April 15, 2021 due to needing to get the land survey done.
- Potentially reducing the size of the building.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Commissioner Wilder questioned the applicant whether he had already hired a surveyor.

Gary Carter answered yes, the process should only take two weeks.

Vice-Chairman Henderson questioned the applicant whether he was hiring a contractor or building himself; whether the building would have electricity; what the building would be used for; and whether he has HOA approval.

Gary Carter answered he would be building himself; the building would be used for storage; and he is working with the HOA for approval and will submit to them again once he has the revised plans.

Commissioner Dempsey questioned the applicant what the size of the building will be once he reduces it.

Gary Carter answered approximately from 44 feet to 35 or 36 feet by 26 feet.

Chairman Cox questioned the applicant about the height of the building.

Gary Carter answered the standard height of 8ft on side with the highest point being 12 or 13 feet.

Commissioner Wilder questioned the applicant whether he had already poured the pad for the building.

Gary Carter answered no, that no work has been done at this time.

Chairman Cox questioned the applicant whether the building would have electricity.

Gary Carter answered no.

Chairman Cox questioned Director Paul Scarbary on what permits and inspections would be needed.

Director Paul Scarbary answered the drawings would need to be submitted to see what permits and inspections would be needed. Once the plans have been submitted an inspector will come out within 24 hours.

Vice-Chairman Henderson advised the applicant to work closely with Director Scarbary and his staff so that he does not have to come back in front of Planning Commission.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if there was anyone to speak for or against the Revision.

Tim Cook, 4581 Aylesbury Court:

- Expressed concerns with the height of the building and the public hearing sign being taken down after two days.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Staff member Danielle Montgomery answered the Public Hearing Sign is put out 15 days prior to the Public Hearing and is supposed to remain on site.

Vice-Chairman Henderson and Commissioner Wilder questioned staff whether the HOA could disapprove the height of the building.

Planning Director Scott Sterling answered yes, that would be their decision.

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the sign was put out March 2, 2021 at the time of the site visit.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if there was anyone else to speak for or against the Revision. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Vice-Chairman Henderson made a motion to postpone to April 15, 2021 RZ21-03-06, Major PUD (Planned Unit Development) Revision, Tax Map 071G Parcel 015, 0.4+/- acres, located at 4502 Guildford Court, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development). Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g2) RZ21-03-07, Conditional Use for Massage, Tax Map 082G Parcel 023, 0.87+/- acres, located at 106 Davis Road, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for a Conditional Use for Massage on 0.87 +/- acres currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial) and located at 106 Davis Road, Suite D.
- This property is located on the east side of Davis Road, south of Sheriffs Drive, and west of Hatfield Drive, and is currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).
- All surrounding properties are also zoned C-2 (General Commercial).
- The applicant is requesting a conditional use to offer massage services on the site.
- The owner has requested this conditional use to only apply to 106 Davis Road, Suite D which consists of approximately 1,517 square feet.
- The applicant has a state issued massage license and resides in Columbia County, less than 50 miles from the subject property.
- The applicant has indicated that she will be the only massage therapist at this location.
- Hours of operation would be between the hours of 10AM and 7PM Monday thru Friday, 11AM and 6PM on Saturday, and 1PM and 5PM on Sunday.
- Surrounding properties are in commercial use and should not be impacted by these hours of operation.
- This parcel is within the Martinez Activity Center on the Future Land Use map, which is intended for shops, restaurants, office, higher density residential, civic uses, and open space.
- The proposal is compatible with the surrounding area, and therefore meets the intent of the future land use map.
- Staff recommends approval with condition:

Condition

Planning:

The Conditional Use for Massage shall be limited to 106 Davis Road, Suite D located within the subject property.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present.

Heather Gault, 1317 Lone Oak Road:

- Have been licensed for 2 years.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if there was anyone to speak for or against the Conditional Use. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to approve with condition RZ21-03-07, Conditional Use for Massage, Tax Map 082G Parcel 023, 0.87+/- acres, located at 106 Davis Road, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial). Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g3) RZ21-03-08, Rezone from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to M-2 (General Industrial), Tax Map 043 Parcels 022E & 022T, 47.3+/- and 0.67+/- acres respectively, located off Old Augusta Highway, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for a rezoning from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to M-2 (General Industrial) for property located off Old Augusta Highway, a combined 47.98 +/- acres, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).
- The subject property is located on the west side of Old Augusta Highway.
- Currently, the property is completely surrounded by property within the City of Harlem via an annexation that is in process.
- According to the applicant, the property has been used as a manufacturing facility since approximately 1902.
- In regards to the rezoning request, the applicant has asserted that the property has been used for industrial uses since approximately 1902 and provided photos of the site in the 1980's and 1990's that clearly show it being used for industrial use in those time periods.
- Zoning in Columbia County has been in existence since at least 1965 with the first modern zoning map adopted on February 9th, 1970.
- Staff is in possession of that zoning map, but does not have this area of the County to verify zoning.
- However, staff does have access to the official zoning map from 1998 which confirms that this property is shown as being zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural), even though it was in operation at that time as an industrial use.
- Surprisingly, property in the near vicinity across Old Augusta Highway is zoned M-1 (Light Industrial), but includes residential and agricultural uses.
- Access to the site is currently via a 50 foot ingress egress easement with an approximately 18 foot wide paved access drive from Old Augusta Highway through 6109 Old Augusta Highway which is currently in the process of being annexed into the City of Harlem.
- Provided with the application are several photos of the site from 1983 and 1993.
- The subject property is located within the Rural Character Area on the Vision 2035 Future Land Use Map, but is nearly adjacent to the Gordon Highway Corridor.
- The Rural Character Area is intended to preserve the existing rural character, including agricultural uses and large lot residential uses, as well as natural and historic features.
- This area is characterized by very low density single family residential uses and agricultural activities.
- Primary future land uses are very low density single family residential uses, agricultural and forestry uses, and civic benefit uses.
- While not meeting the exact intent of the Rural Character Area, due to the history of the site in the area and its proximity to the Gordon Highway Corridor the request is in keeping with the intent of the Vision 2035 Future Land Use Map.
- Staff recommends to approval.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present.

John West, 1223 George C. Wilson Drive, Augusta, GA:

- Request to withdraw without prejudice.
- Improvements will need to be done to property to come up to code.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Chairman Cox questioned the staff whether the inspection department would be involved and whether they could apply again at any time in the future if the item were withdrawn without prejudice.

Planning Director Scott Sterling answered yes and they could apply again at any time.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if there was anyone to speak for or against the Rezoning. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Futch made a motion to withdraw without prejudice RZ21-03-08, Rezone from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to M-2 (General Industrial), Tax Map 043 Parcels 022E & 022T, 47.3+/- and 0.67+/- acres respectively, located off Old Augusta Highway, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural). Commissioner Dempsey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g4) RZ21-03-09, Rezone from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to M-1 (Light Industrial) and M-2 (General Industrial), Tax Map 069 Parcel 004D, 1.76 +/- acres, located at 4945 Wrightsboro Road, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for a rezoning from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to M-1 (Light Industrial) and M-2 (General Industrial) for property located at 4945 Wrightsboro Road on 1.76 +/- acres.
- The subject property is on the north side of Wrightsboro Road just east of John Deere Parkway and is currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).
- A portion of the property was rezoned to M-2 in 2019 (RZ19-06-05) and subsequently combined with adjacent M-2 parcels for industrial development.
- Adjacent property to the north is therefore zoned M-2; properties to the west are zoned M-2 and R-1; properties to the south are zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) across Wrightsboro Road; and properties to the east are zoned R-1.
- This parcel is at the edge of the existing industrial developments on John Deere Parkway, Wrightsboro Road, and Horizon South Parkway, including John Deere and Georgia Iron Works in close proximity to this site.
- The applicant is requesting two zoning districts for this property.
- While staff does not typically support split zoning, in case the property is intended to be subdivided per the submitted plat, with the rear portion of the site, designated parcel A-1, to be zoned M-2 (General Industrial) and combined with the adjacent M-2 parcel, Tax Map 069 Parcel 003D, and the front portion on Wrightsboro Road to be zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) for office use and future office/warehouse development.
- While the applicant could not ordinarily request to rezone this parcel to M-2, as it does not meet the minimum lot size of 2 acres, since this portion of the property is to be combined with an adjacent property already zoned M-2, the M-2 zoning is logical and prevents creating a split zoning situation on the (future) combined parcel.
- Combining these parcels additionally creates a more usable M-2 property with a more rectangular shape that should be easier to develop.
- The property as a whole cannot be rezoned to M-2 due to the 2 acre minimum lot size requirement of that zoning district.
- The remaining portion of the site designated Parcel A is less than one acre, but is intended to be used for light industrial uses in keeping with the surrounding increasingly industrial and commercial character of the area.
- Therefore, in this case the split zoning request is logical, since the portion to be combined with the adjacent property should be zoned the same as the adjacent parcel, while the remainder of the site to be used for the office and future development is less than 1 acre and would not meet

the requirements for a standalone M-2 parcel.

- Since the zoning request is only acceptable based on the future plans for development of the site, staff has proposed a condition requiring the combination plat to be completed and a copy submitted to the Planning Department within 60 days of approval by the Board of Commissioners to avoid creating a nonconforming M-2 parcel from tract A-1 on the submitted plat.
- Staff has additionally carried forward conditions from the 2019 rezoning approval of the adjacent M-2 parcel for this request to ensure consistency, particularly since the parcels are to be combined.
- These conditions included shielding lighting from adjacent residential properties and limitations on allowed uses, primarily prohibiting adult businesses and exterminating or septic tank services that could pose nuisances to the adjacent residential properties.
- The applicants have not submitted a development plan with this request; such a plan is not required, but is often included with the submittal.
- The applicant has verbally indicated that the M-1 portion of the site may be used for a real estate office in the short term, utilizing the existing building, with a possibility of future development to office/warehouse space, particularly if the adjacent parcel to the west can be acquired and rezoned as well.
- Before the existing building could be used for a business, the site would have to be developed to commercial standards, including providing paved parking, landscaping, buffers, stormwater detention, etc.
- The two sites will also be expected to provide interparcel access to ensure the M-1 parcel retains adequate tractor trailer access through the M-2 site to John Deere Parkway.
- The widening project for Wrightsboro Road is proposed to include a median in front of the subject parcel, which would limit tractor trailer access from Wrightsboro Road.
- Traffic has included a condition requiring this interparcel connection.
- The subject property is located within the Neighborhoods Character Area on the future land use map.
- This area is intended for the protection of existing neighborhoods and the development of new single family neighborhoods.
- While the request is not residential in nature, and is in fact rezoning property away from residential use, in this case there are changing conditions in this area that impact the rezoning request.
- The extension of Gateway Boulevard to Wrightsboro Road just to the east of this parcel has changed the character and anticipated future development of this area; under similar consideration, the parcel at the corner of this new intersection was recently rezoned to C-2 (General Commercial) (RZ20-04-01), and it is anticipated that the update to Vision 2035 will expand the Activity Center to include the parcels on the north side of Wrightsboro Road between John Deere Parkway and Gateway Boulevard.
- The Gateway Activity Center is a mixed use activity center that already includes a large portion of industrial development with the adjacent industrial parks; the proposed use is therefore in keeping with the existing development pattern and the changing conditions of the area, and staff is therefore in support of the rezoning request.
- Staff recommends to approve with conditions:

Conditions

Planning:

1. The property identified as Parcel A1 must be combined with the adjacent M-2 property, Tax Map 069 Parcel 003D, within 60 days of approval by the Board of Commissioners, and a copy of said plat showing the combination must be submitted to the Planning Department.
2. The existing house may not be used for a business until the property is developed to commercial standards, including but not limited to paved parking, landscaping, buffers, and all other applicable code requirements. No business license shall be approved on the property until the site is in compliance with County codes.
3. On-site lighting must be oriented to reduce or eliminate spillover onto adjacent residential parcels. A photometric plan must be submitted to Columbia County as part of site plan approval.

4. The following uses are prohibited on this property:
 - a. Adult bookstores, entertainment establishments, and adult theatres
 - b. Exterminating, fumigating, septic services

Traffic Engineering:

1. Due to close proximity of parcel to John Deere Parkway signal and the proposed zoning, the applicant/developer is required to secure an access easement through adjoining M2 parcel for connectivity to John Deere Parkway traffic signal. An improved full access driveway on Wrightsboro Rd is not guaranteed to be granted due to safety and volume concerns. Furthermore, Wrightsboro Rd widening is in the very early stages of planning and is expected to be a 4-lane road with a raised median. The access on Wrightsboro Rd for this property is anticipated to be a left turn restricted driveway (i.e. right in/right out only).

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present.

Tony Atkins, 6701 Wrightsboro Road:

- Bought the back property last year to include 5 acres and built a building for a contractor at John Deere.
- We acquired the front piece earlier this year and it is unknown at this time whether the house will be usable.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if there was anyone to speak for or against the Rezoning. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Vice-Chairman Henderson made a motion to approve with conditions RZ21-03-09, Rezone from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to M-1 (Light Industrial) and M-2 (General Industrial), Tax Map 069 Parcel 004D, 1.76 +/- acres, located at 4945 Wrightsboro Road, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Dempsey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2h) Text Amendments

(H2i) Items Added (which need immediate action)

I. LEGAL MATTERS

J. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Planning Director Scott Sterling provided the number of houses for sale in Columbia County as a follow-up from the Vision 2035 public hearing at the meeting on March 4th, 2021:

143 -less than 200k
239 - 200k -250k
168 - 250k - 300k
169 - 300k – 350k
91 – 350k – 400k
54 – 400k -450k
35 – 450k – 500k
105 – greater than 500k

382 less than 250k or 38% of the market

550 less than 300k or 55% of the market

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

There was no further business to discuss; therefore Vice-Chairman Henderson made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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Signature on File

Jim Cox, Chairman

Signature on File

Scott Sterling, Planning Services Director