



**Columbia County Planning Commission
November 4, 2021 at 6:00 PM
Evans Government Center Auditorium
Evans, Georgia**

Present at the meeting included:

Chairman Jim Cox
Vice-Chairman Al Dempsey
Commissioner Russell Wilder
Commissioner Gene Futch
Commissioner Michael W. Carraway

Scott Sterling, Division Director
Will Butler, Planning Manager
Nayna Mistry, Community Planner
Danielle Montgomery, Planner II
Jennifer Neal, Planning Technician
Cara Harden, Administrative Specialist
Commissioner Donald Skinner, Sr.
Commissioner Dewey Galeas
Members of the Public
Members of the Media

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 Carraway 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) October 21, 2021

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve the October 21, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

F. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to amend the November 4, 2021 Agenda by adding (H2b2) Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 072 Parcel 073F, 1.095 +/- acres, located at 651 Gibbs Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Wilder made a motion to approve the November 4, 2021 amended Agenda. Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

G. PRESENTATION

H. DEBATE AGENDA

(H1) Unfinished Business

(H2) New Business

(H2a) Sign Review

(H2a1) Sign Review for Greenpoint, Tax Map 029 Parcel 037B & Tax Map 030 Parcels 083T & 083M, located off Wrightsboro Road & Appling Harlem Road, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for approval for the community markers for the Greenpoint PUD, located off Wrightsboro Road and Appling Harlem Road.
- There are five proposed community marker signs under review with this request.
- Four are located near the north, south, east, and west entrance points into the portion of the Greenpoint PUD south of I-20, and one community marker is located near the Pumpkin Center roundabout.
- The signs are allowed under the County code allowances for signage on vacant non-residential properties in the cases of proposed signs 1, 2, 4, and 5, which are located on Mixed Use sections of the PUD, and as a project entrance sign for a mixed use project for community marker 3, which is located at the western boundary of the development in a residential section of the PUD.
- The sign allowances differ for sign 3 as compared to the other signs.
- All of the signs are designed as obelisks, with a Greenpoint logo displayed on two sides of the structure to be visible to passing traffic from both directions.
- The heights of the proposed obelisks vary depending on the sign location; the central sign near the roundabout is 15 feet in height, while the two signs on Appling Harlem Road are 12 feet in height, and the two on Wrightsboro Road are 8 feet in height.
- The two signs near the roundabout and at the intersection of Appling Harlem Road and Hawes Branch Parkway additionally have two base walls extending around the monument signs, that come together to form a point in front of the sign.
- These walls will have additional signage on them, with lettering reading 'Greenpoint' on the more northern sign, and 'Greenpoint South' on the more southern sign.
- This additional sign face area will not exceed the code allowance of 75 feet for signage on vacant non-residential properties on arterial roads.
- While the community marker sign types are not directly covered in the County code, the code does allow for mixed use project entrance signage, and for principal freestanding signage on undeveloped non-residential properties.
- The proposed signs meet the code allowances for these sign types, and are placed in accordance with the setback requirements for these respective sign types.
- Staff recommended approval.

Chairman Cox called for the motion.

Vice-Chairman Dempsey made a motion to approve the Sign Review for Greenpoint, Tax Map 029 Parcel 037B & Tax Map 030 Parcels 083T & 083M, located off Wrightsboro Road & Appling Harlem 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 029 Parcel 053E, 6.07 +/- acres, located at 1680 Swint Road, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).

Staff member Jennifer Neal stated the following:

- This is a request for a temporary use authorization at 1680 Swint Road on 6.07 +/- acres and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).
- The applicants have plans to build a house and shop on the property.
- Permits for the house were applied for on October 15, 2021.
- The applicants are requesting to place a 38 foot travel trailer on the property to use as a

- residence during construction of the home.
- Staff recommended approval.

Chairman Cox called for the motion.

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve the Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 029 Parcel 053E, 6.07 +/- acres, located at 1680 Swint Road, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural). Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2b2) Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 072 Parcel 073F, 1.095 +/- acres, located at 651 Gibbs Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Staff member Jennifer Neal stated the following:

- This is a request for a temporary use authorization at 651 Gibbs Road on 1.095 +/- acres and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).
- The plans are under revision and the applicant is expecting to submit for permits as soon as they are complete.
- Code Enforcement has an open case in reference to clean up on the property.
- The applicant is requesting to place a 12 foot travel trailer on the property to use as a residence during construction of the home.
- Staff recommended approval.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Planning Commission questioned staff on Code Enforcement's involvement; and the procedure that will take place if the temporary use is approved and the applicant is in violation of the condition.

Staff member Will Butler responded code enforcement has been involved for at least a couple of months. They will receive a code enforcement violation and be taken to court.

Vice-Chairman Dempsey commented the applicant should clean the site before applying for a Temporary Use Authorization.

Chairman Cox called for the motion.

Vice-Chairman Dempsey made a motion to disapprove the Temporary Use Authorization, Tax Map 072 Parcel 073F, 1.095 +/- acres, located at 651 Gibbs Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2c) Conceptual Plan

(H2c1) Conceptual Plan for Hamilton Grove Revision, Tax Map 052 Parcel 037, 136 lots, 96 +/- acres, located off Wrightsboro Road and Hamilton Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for conceptual plan approval for 136 residential lots on 96 +/- acres located off Wrightsboro Road and Hamilton Road.
- The property is currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential); the property was rezoned in 2020 (RZ20-01-01).
- The original conceptual plan was approved April 1, 2021; the submitted revision is primarily in regards to the access points for the project, with impacts to the internal road network.
- The property is crossed by two tributary streams with associated floodplains.
- The development was previously proposed to have two entrances, one on Wrightsboro Road across from the Baker Place Road intersection, and one on Hamilton Road.
- The primary revision to the plan is to remove the full access on Wrightsboro Road, and provide two entrances on Hamilton Road instead.
- Emergency access is shown on Wrightsboro Road, which would be gated per the applicants,

however it is unlikely that this access will be approved by GDOT as emergency only access, and therefore the only entrances into the subdivision with the revised plan would be the two full access points on Hamilton Road.

- The remainder of the lots are accessed from the internal subdivision roads.
- The road layout, which previously included three cul-de-sacs north of the creeks, is now primarily interconnected, with only two cul-de-sacs shown, both of which are short and easily meet the maximum 700 feet in length allowed under Chapter 74.
- The revised conceptual plan includes 136 single family lots to be developed under the County's R-2 zoning criteria, a reduction of 3 lots from the previously approved conceptual plan.
- There are 8 larger lots fronting on Hamilton Road that will be approximately one acre each; these lots will have direct driveway access from Hamilton Road.
- The rezoning approval additionally conditioned a 50-foot buffer along both road frontages, which is required by County code as well.
- A change of conditions and variance were approved earlier this year (VA21-05-02 and RZ21-05-03) to allow the developer to provide 150 feet of buffer width behind the larger lots on Hamilton Road, before the graded portion of the development would begin on the north side of the creek.
- This approval applied to the Hamilton Road frontage with its larger lots only; the typical 50-foot buffer will still be required along the Wrightsboro Road frontage.
- Staff recommended approval.

Chairman Cox called for a motion.

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to approve the Conceptual Plan for Hamilton Grove Revision, Tax Map 052 Parcel 037, 136 lots, 96 +/- acres, located off Wrightsboro Road and Hamilton Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2d) Preliminary Plat

(H2d1) Preliminary Plat for River Oaks Phase III, Tax Map 071 Parcel 244, 34 lots, 14.63 +/- acres, located off Hardy McManus Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for approval of a preliminary plat for 34 residential lots on 14.63 acres, located off Hardy McManus Road.
- The property is zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential); the zoning was approved in 1993 (RZ93-09-01). The conceptual plan was approved April 20, 2017.
- This section of River Oaks includes 34 single family lots with a minimum lot size of 10,116 square feet, which meets the minimum 10,000 square foot lot size required in the R-2 zoning district.
- Setbacks are a minimum of 55 feet from the road centerlines, and 10 feet from the side and rear property lines.
- There have been minor changes to the road and lot layout from the conceptual plan, primarily the addition of a common area at the center of the section.
- Since this increases the open space in the development, and does not increase the lot count or materially change the intent of the design, these minor revisions do not require separate review or approval beyond approval of the preliminary plat.
- Sidewalks and street trees are provided on both sides of the roads, and 3.58 acres of open space is provided in this section.
- This includes the 50-foot buffer around the perimeter of the site, which is required to remain undisturbed.
- Staff recommended approval.

Chairman Cox called for a motion.

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve the Preliminary Plat for River Oaks Phase III, Tax Map 071 Parcel 244, 34 lots, 14.63 +/- acres, located off Hardy McManus Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2e) Final Plat

(H2e1) Final Plat for Anderson Farms Section II, Tax Map 039 Parcel 317, 24 lots, 66.09 +/- acres, located off Louisville Road, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for approval of a final plat for 24 residential lots on 66.09 acres located off Louisville Road.
- The property is zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential); the zoning was approved in 2019 (RZ19-01-02). The preliminary plat was approved April 15, 2021.
- This is the final section of Anderson Farms, and includes 24 lots with a minimum lot size of 1.22 acres and an average lot size of 2.23 acres, which exceeds the minimum lot size required for the R-1 zoning district of 40,000 square feet.
- Setbacks are a minimum of 65 feet from the centerline of the road, 10 feet from the side property lines, and 25 feet from the rear property lines.
- Where buffers are present along the external property lines, the required setback is 10 feet from the edge of the buffer.
- Buffers are required on the north, east, and south sides of this section.
- The lots are served by public water but will have individual septic systems.
- Sidewalks are not required in this development.
- There is 9.32 acres of open space that will be dedicated to the HOA.
- Staff recommended approval.

Chairman Cox called for a motion.

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to approve the Final Plat for Anderson Farms Section II, Tax Map 039 Parcel 317, 24 lots, 66.09 +/- acres, located off Louisville Road, and currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential). Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2e2) Final Plat for Kellarie Section 5B, Tax Map 051 Parcels 1770, 1924, & 1953, 61 lots, 28.8 +/- acres, located off Baker Place Road, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for approval of a final plat for 61 residential lots on 28.8 acres located off Baker Place Road.
- The properties are zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development); the zoning was approved in 2014 (RZ14-02-03) with revisions in 2016 (RZ16-03-02), 2018 (RZ18-06-02), and 2019 (RZ19-07-02).
- This section of Kellarie includes eight parcels for townhouse development, which will be subdivided to provide 32 townhouse lots.
- The remainder of the lots in this section are single family lots with a minimum lot size of 5850 square feet and an average lot size of 9,415 square feet.
- Per the approved Anderson Farms PUD, the minimum setbacks are 20 feet from the right of way, 5 feet from the side property lines, and 10 feet from the rear property lines.
- Sidewalks and street trees are to be provided on both sides of the roads, and 2.75 acres of open space is provided in this section.
- Staff recommended approval.

Chairman Cox called for a motion.

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve the Final Plat for Kellarie Section 5B, Tax Map 051 Parcels 1770, 1924, & 1953, 61 lots, 28.8 +/- acres, located off Baker Place Road, and currently zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development). Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2f) Plan Revision

(H2g) Public Hearing

(H2g1) RZ21-11-01, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, Tax Map 068 Parcel 013, 5.71 +/- acres, located at 213 South Old Belair Road, and currently zoned S-1 (Special).

Staff member Nayna Mistry stated the following:

- This is a request for a major revision to the current S-1 (Special) zoning for property located at 213 South Old Belair Road, 5.71 +/- acres.
- Property to the north is zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential) and property to the west and south is zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) for The Hamptons at Baldwin Lake.
- Most of the property on the east side of South Old Belair Road is zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and includes several subdivisions.
- The nearest S-1 (Special) zoning is at 229 South Belair Road, which was rezoned in 2018 per file RZ18-06-07 for a sports performance and personal training business.
- The applicant is requesting the major revision to allow additional buildings to handle the projected growth for the private school.
- The narrative describes Savannah River Academy as a growing private school providing education for pre-school to eighth grade students and operating traditional school hours, Monday through Friday from 8am to 3pm from August to June.
- The development plan shows the expansion with the addition of two separate buildings providing educational spaces for a total up to 13,000 SF.
- The school is operating in the original building that was built for a church in 1996.
- At that time the adjacent subdivision did not exist.
- The Hamptons at Baldwin Lakes was under construction in 2013 with most of the homes completed between 2014 and 2017.
- This property includes some trees and shrubs along the edge of the sidewalk that helps create an opaque buffer along that property line in conjunction with the existing wood fence that is approximately six feet in height.
- Staff reviewed the buffers on site, and to improve the buffer between the school and the subdivision, have recommended a condition requiring supplementation of the buffer up to the play area, with the additional trees staggered in relation to the existing trees along Mural Lake Court.
- The overall site layout is acceptable, but the Fire Marshal has included comments about hydrants and fire access.
- The design team will work out the specifics during the detailed design process and they may have to shift the buildings a little to make the layout work.
- In regards to the Vision 2035 Future Development Map, the subject property is located within the Neighborhoods Character Area.
- The intent of the Neighborhoods Area is to preserve established neighborhoods and create quality new residential construction at suburban densities.
- This revision is an expansion of an existing school and meets the intent of the Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.
- Staff recommended approval with one condition:

Condition

Planning:

Along the southwest property line, additional landscaping, in the form of trees and shrubs, shall be required up to the existing play area located approximately 300 feet from the southwest corner of the property. The tree locations shall be staggered in relation to the existing trees on Mural Lake Court.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present. Applicant was present, but did not provide any additional information.

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

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve with condition RZ21-11-01, Major S-1 (Special) Revision, Tax Map 068 Parcel 013, 5.71 +/- acres, located at 213 South Old Belair Road, and currently zoned S-1 (Special). Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g2) RZ21-11-02, Conditional Use for Massage, Tax Map 073G Parcel 084, 0.5 +/- acres, located at 4436 Columbia Road, and currently zoned P-1 (Professional).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for a Conditional Use for Massage for 0.5 +/- acres, currently zoned P-1 (Professional), and located at 4436 Columbia Road.
- This property is located on the south side of Columbia Road, just east of its intersection with Belair Road, and is currently zoned P-1 (Professional).
- Adjacent property to the west is zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) but is in use as a Georgia Power substation.
- Properties to the south are zoned R-2 as part of the Hillbrook subdivision and are in residential use.
- Property to the east is zoned P-1 (Professional).
- The applicant is requesting a conditional use to offer massage services on the site.
- The applicant is currently operating Em.Body Massage, LLC, from the property at 4573A Cox Road, which had a Conditional Use approved in 2015 (RZ15-03-04).
- The applicant is proposing to relocate her business to the subject property, which offers more space than the current location.
- While the applicant did specify suite 204 where she intends to locate at this time, staff does not see a need to restrict the Conditional Use to a specific suite, and instead proposes a condition to limit massage businesses to only one suite, without specifying which one.
- In staff's opinion, there is no benefit to be gained by creating this additional step to a simple relocation, and therefore staff does not recommend restricting the Conditional Use to a specific suite, but rather recommends limiting the Conditional Use to only allow massage businesses in one suite.
- This parcel is within the Columbia Road Professional Corridor on the Future Development Map
- These corridors are intended to accommodate professional office uses without encroaching on adjacent neighborhoods.
- Professional offices, residential, civic, and existing neighborhood commercial uses are expected on this corridor.
- The proposed use for massage is considered a Personal Service under the County code; these types of uses are typically allowed in both professional and commercial districts.
- Additionally, the property is already developed as a professional office complex, and the proposed Conditional Use will not result in any changes from the established development.
- No additional encroachment into the neighborhood is anticipated.
- The request meets the intent of the Future Development Map.
- Staff recommended approval with one condition:

Condition

Planning:

Massage businesses are limited to one suite on the property at any given time. This is intended to allow multiple businesses to operate in the single suite.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present. Applicant present, but did not provide any additional information.

Chairman Cox 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 Futch made a motion to approve with condition RZ21-11-02, Conditional Use for Massage, Tax Map 073G Parcel 084, 0.5 +/- acres, located at 4436 Columbia Road, and currently zoned P-1 (Professional). Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g3) RZ21-11-03, Rezone from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to C-2 (General Commercial), Tax Map 028 Parcel 039, 0.905 +/- acres, located at 1803 Appling Harlem Road, 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 C-2 (General Commercial) for property located at 1803 Appling Harlem Road on 0.93 +/- acres and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural) for a proposed hotel and gas station.
- The applicant has provided a conceptual plan showing the proposed development of a hotel and gas station on the subject property as well as two parcels to the north.
- However, please note that as a conceptual plan there is no restriction of the use to what is shown on the provided plan. Any use that is permitted in C-2 would be permitted with this rezoning request.
- The subject property is located on the east side of Appling Harlem Road, approximately 900 feet to the south of the intersection of Columbia Road and Appling Harlem Road.
- Property to the north is zoned C-2 (General Commercial) to the intersection of Columbia Road, as well as for approximately 650 feet to the north of the intersection of Columbia Road and Appling Harlem, and property to the east, south, and west across Appling Harlem Road is zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural).
- The applicants have submitted a conceptual plan with the request which shows the combination of the subject parcel with the parcels to the north at 1805 & 1813 Appling Harlem which are already zoned C-2.
- As part of the review criteria for a rezoning, staff examines how the request fits within the already existing zoning and also how it fits within the Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.
- This request presents two different avenues of approach under those criteria
- The two properties to the north that are shown on the conceptual plan as being an overall part of this development are currently zoned C-2, the same zoning classification that has been requested here.
- Immediately to the north, the existing Dollar General (1821 Appling Harlem Road), the existing Circle K (1825 Appling Harlem Road), and also the two properties to the north of the intersection of Columbia Road and Appling Harlem Road (1835 Appling Harlem & 1841 Appling Harlem) are all zoned C-2 as well.
- These are the only properties in the immediate area zoned in this manner with everything else zoned R-A, as the subject property currently is.
- From this, one can argue that this request, which only concerns the subject parcel, is in keeping with the adjacent and nearby zoning since there are similar parcels located to the north that are already zoned in this manner and have been for some time.
- Further, it could be argued that this parcel creates a clear “end” to the commercial development and creates a small corridor of commercial development that could provide direct benefit to the local community by providing small scale commercial uses and a potential hotel to the area.
- Another criteria to consider is what this area is intended to be on the Future Development Map found in the Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.
- Vision 2035 is a policy document that represents the community’s primary goals for achieving its vision for growth and development.
- The subject property is located within the Neighborhoods Character Area and is also along a Rural Corridor.
- A Neighborhood is generally characterized by moderate density residential development and neighborhoods.
- The intent of this Character Area is to preserve established neighborhoods and create quality new

- residential construction at suburban densities.
- Primary future land uses include moderate density detached single family uses, greenways and trails, civic benefits such as community centers, libraries, places of worship, and schools.
- A Rural Corridor is generally characterized as a two-lane thoroughfare with a rural character.
- These areas are identified because they are likely to have development occur in the future that could lead to encroachment of more intense uses along the roadway which could interfere with traffic flow, driver safety, and the general appearance of the corridor.
- The intent of this Corridor is to preserve the rural character as development occurs through appropriate buffering while maintaining traffic flow and safety by minimizing driveways.
- Primary future land uses along these corridors includes agricultural and forestry, single family residential with appropriate buffering, civic uses, and open space.
- While the subject parcel is not within this Character Area, parcels across Appling Harlem Road are within the Rural Neighborhoods Character Area.
- This Area is characterized by low density, single family residential uses with deep setbacks from the road.
- Future development should continue to reflect lower density detached, single family residential uses and neighborhood design should incorporate a high percentage of open space.
- As noted above, neither the Neighborhoods nor Rural Character Areas include any mention of commercial development.
- Even an adjacent Character Area, which Vision 2035 does give some leeway for properties to use, does not have commercial development as a future land use.
- Taking this into account it is clear that the request would not meet the standard of being compatible with the purpose and intent of the Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.
- As noted, there are two avenues of approach to this request using the rezoning criteria.
- One leans heavily on what the existing zoning is and how the area has developed over time.
- The other takes into account the vision for growth adopted by Columbia County in the Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.
- Taking these factors into account, in staff's opinion, the fact that the request does not meet the purpose and intent of Vision 2035 is too high of a hurdle to clear.
- This carries a large amount of weight in staff's opinion when it comes to a request for a rezoning.
- Staff recommended disapproval.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present. Applicant present, but did not provide any additional information.

Chairman Cox asked if there was anyone to speak for or against the rezoning.

Laurie Jordan, 6921 Cottonwood Drive:

- Conflicts with Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan.
- There are existing hotels already in Columbia County and they are not at capacity.
- Opens potential for Appling Harlem Road to turn into a development like Lewiston Road.

Myra Morgan, 1790 Appling Harlem Road:

- Expressed concerns for traffic and safety.

Chris Herman, 6104 Gray Road:

- Expressed concerns of the distance geographically from the interstate.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Vice-Chairman Dempsey commented the request does not meet the intent of the Vision 2035 plan.

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

Vice-Chairman Dempsey made a motion to disapprove RZ21-11-03, Rezone from R-A (Residential Agricultural) to C-2 (General Commercial), Tax Map 028 Parcel 039, 0.905 +/- acres, located at 1803 Appling Harlem Road, and currently zoned R-A (Residential Agricultural). Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g4) RZ21-11-04, Rezone from R-2 (Single Family Residential) and PUD (Planned Unit Development) to PRD (Planned Residential Development), Tax Map 073 Parcels 040 & 046C, 5.25 +/- and 34.2 +/- acres, located at 4315 & 4299 Owens Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and PUD (Planned Unit Development).

Staff member Danielle Montgomery stated the following:

- This is a request for a rezoning from R-2 (Single Family Residential) and PUD (Planned Unit Development) to PRD (Planned Residential Development) for properties located at 4299 and 4315 Owens Road on a combined 39.45 +/- acres in order to develop a single family residential subdivision on the properties.
- The subject properties are located on the northwest side of Owens Road.
- Adjacent properties are zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development) to the north and east for Brandon Wilde senior living development, and R-2 (Single Family Residential) to the west for the Idylwilde subdivision.
- Properties across Owens Road are zoned R-2 and C-2 (General Commercial).
- The smaller parcel, 4315 Owens Road, is 5.25 acres and is zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential).
- The larger parcel, 4299 Owens Road, is 34.2 acres and is zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development) as part of the Brandon Wilde senior living development.
- This property was added to the PUD in 2004 (RZ04-06-02 and RZ04-09-04) and at that time was designated primarily for duplex development.
- The PUD was revised in 2009 (RZ09-03-04) to provide for cottage units, Independent Living apartment units, and a new community and conference center on the subject parcel; the residential units allowed included 76 cottages and 111 apartment units on the subject parcel for a total of 187 residential units.
- This development would not be associated with Brandon Wilde, nor would it be age-restricted.
- Since the requested rezoning is for PRD, the conceptual plan is being reviewed as part of the rezoning process.
- The site itself has a ridge that bisects the property roughly east to west, with the remainder of the property sloping towards the north and south property lines.
- There is an existing house on the larger property, which the narrative describes as a rental house.
- There is also an existing pond near the southern corner of the site, however no additional floodplain, wetlands, or state waters have been identified on the site at this time.
- While the applicants have indicated that the property is fairly level in their narrative, slope analysis by the County GIS department shows that at least half of the property has moderate slopes greater than 6 percent, and sections of the property particularly near the southern and northern property lines have slopes exceeding 11 percent.
- The narrative indicates this property is to be developed with minimal major site grading, however due to the existing grades and the proposed small lot sizes, staff is expecting that the property would be subject to the major site grading ordinance if developed as proposed.
- The road layout consists of a simple public road system, with a single entrance on Owens Road aligned with Legion Drive that provides access to a single loop road in roughly the center of the site.
- The developers will be required to make improvements on Owens Road, including both right and left turn lanes at the development entrance to avoid undue impacts to through traffic on Owens Road.
- Two additional loop roads are provided on the north and south sides of the site, with a single public road connection across the middle of the site between these two loop roads.
- The remainder of the roads are private alleys, and serve to provide access to the residential lots which face park spaces or in some cases the public roads.
- Some of the intersections are somewhat awkward, with offset four way intersections between public roads and alleys, as well as driveways for front-facing lots that may create fifth legs to these intersections.

- The applicants have proposed two sets of lot standards for the alley loaded and front loaded homes.
- The alley loaded homes, which would make up a majority of the project, would have a minimum width of 42 feet for internal alley-loaded lots, and 45 feet for corner lots.
- The minimum depth would be 90 feet, for a minimum lot size of 3,780 square feet on the internal lots and 4,050 square feet on the corner lots.
- Staff does wish to clarify that even if 10-foot setbacks are approved for the alley frontage, the minimum driveway length of 20 feet identified in the PRD code would apply to these lots.
- For the front loaded lots, a minimum width of 50 feet has been proposed, with a typical depth of 100 feet, for a minimum lot size of 5000 square feet.
- Side setbacks throughout the development have been proposed at 7 feet.
- This is below the 10-foot minimum identified in the PRD code, however, the code does allow the side setbacks in a PRD to be reduced when the character of the development justifies the smaller setbacks.
- Development types such as Traditional Neighborhood Development, pocket neighborhoods, or infill developments may be able to achieve a character that would support a setback reduction.
- In previously approved PRDs, the justification for the reduction of side setbacks has typically involved a combination of factors including accessible green space, structured stormwater systems, the proper use of alleys, and architectural criteria or pattern books.
- The applicants in this case have chosen to utilize the size of the homes, the topography of the site, and a unique stormwater management argument in order to justify the setback request.
- While the homes are relatively small, home size is only part of what creates the character of a development.
- As noted in the existing site analysis, there is moderate slope on a fairly large portion of the site.
- While not as extreme as slopes seen on other properties that have been developed in Columbia County, the site is not level enough to easily allow the proposed development density without major site grading.
- In staff's opinion, the topography is not unique or level enough to justify the setback reduction.
- Per the narrative, the internal parks and the required 50-foot buffer around the perimeter of the site creates approximately 37% open space in the development.
- The largest park is to be centered on the existing pond, which is intended to be enlarged to accommodate drainage from the developed site.
- A deck and covered picnic pavilion overlooking the pond are proposed as part of the amenities for the development.
- Additional amenities planned include a community grill and meeting area, a dog park, and playground.
- A minimum 50-foot buffer is required from the public road per County code; the narrative specifies the buffer on Owens Road will be 100 feet.
- The larger parcel is part of the Evans Activity Center, while the smaller parcel is part of the In-Town Neighborhoods Character Area.
- Both of these areas allow for higher density residential development, including single family development as well as townhouses and apartments, although the extent of that allowance in the In-Town Neighborhoods area is limited to corner lots and major thoroughfares.
- The proposed higher density, single family residential development meets the intent of these Character Areas, and could additionally provide a transition between these Character Areas.
- The intent of the PRD is to create a more coherent and coordinated development that allows for a more desirable use of the land and a better physical environment than could be created under a single zoning district.
- At this time, staff does not believe the submitted plan and narrative are sufficient to provide for a coherent, coordinated development that meets the higher standards expected of a PRD.
- The applicants have requested to postpone this request in order to make revisions to the submittal addressing these issues.
- Staff recommends to postpone.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Commissioner Futch questioned staff whether the applicant provided a stormwater plan.

Staff member Danielle Montgomery answered they will use the existing pond and per comments from Stormwater an additional pond may be required.

Chairman Cox questioned staff about the square footage of the homes.

Staff member Danielle Montgomery answered 900 to 1800 square feet.

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

Jim Trotter, 3019 Bransford Road:

- Request to postpone for 2 weeks.
- Met with executive director of Brandon Wilde and will adjust concerns with Brandon Wilde and Columbia County.
- We understand there are concerns from the neighbors and it is the nature of development to have some opposition for properties that have been undeveloped for a period of time, but this request will have lower density than what was already approved.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Chairman Cox questioned the applicant whether two weeks would be enough time.

Jim Trotter answered he may need more time but would not like to postpone more than four weeks.

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

Robert Hagler, 3206 Candace Drive;

- Represented Brandon Wilde development.
- Submitted a petition from Brandon Wilde residents. (Included in the final agenda packet)
- Explained the history of Brandon Wilde development and density.
- Expressed concerns with drainage due to the grading plan.

Maxanne Edmunds, 260 Bohler Drive:

- Expressed concerns with traffic and safety.

Karen Lennox, 4275 Owens Road, Apt 536:

- Expressed concerns for wildlife.

Everett Greenwood, 4275 Owens Road, Apt 711:

- Was previously informed the future development would be consistent with Brandon Wilde.

Dee Castillo, 268 Bohler Drive:

- Expressed concerns with traffic and the impact on the school system.
- Requested a traffic study.

Jeri Whitworth, 4275 Owens Road, Apt 701:

- Was previously informed the future development would be consistent with Brandon Wilde.
- Expressed concerns of losing greenspace.

Lloyd Van Horn, 1 Bohler Lane:

- Expressed concerns with drainage due to grading plan, safety, and lighting.

William Moyer:

- Expressed concerns with drainage, grading, noise, and dust of the development.

Mahi Majanovic, 3713 West Lake Drive:

- Expressed concerns with drainage into Reed Creek, high density traffic count, and on street parking.

Frank Spears, 4275 Owens Road, Apt 407:

- Requested disapproval instead of postponing the item.
- Expressed concerns with stormwater.
- Explained the recently amended code for fire safety requiring two entrances/exits to a neighborhood, otherwise all homes are to be sprinkled.
- PRD requirements are required, but have not been met by applicant.

Chairman Cox closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Carraway made a motion to disapprove RZ21-11-04, Rezone from R-2 (Single Family Residential) and PUD (Planned Unit Development) to PRD (Planned Residential Development), Tax Map 073 Parcels 040 & 046C, 5.25 +/- and 34.2 +/- acres, located at 4315 & 4299 Owens Road, and currently zoned R-2 (Single Family Residential) and PUD (Planned Unit Development). Commissioner Futch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

(H2g5) VA21-11-01, Variance to Section 90-147(a)(2) & (i)(3) *Use Provisions*, Tax Map 072A Parcels 335 & 190, 0.491 +/- acres and 9.54 +/- acres respectively, located at 4292 Washington Road and 4272 Washington Road, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial).

Staff member Will Butler stated the following:

- This is a request for a variance to Section 90-147 (a)(2) & (i)(3) *Use Provisions* for property located at 4292 & 4272 Washington Road on 0.491 & 9.54 +/- acres and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial) to permit an existing drive thru to remain and expansion of the drive thru onto adjacent property.
- The subject properties are located on the west side of Washington Road, just north of the intersection of Towne Centre Drive and Washington Road.
- Adjacent properties are primarily C-2 with the University Hospital PUD (Planned Unit Development) to the south across Towne Centre Drive.
- The requested variance is to permit an existing drive thru along Washington Road in front of the existing Taco Bell to remain, as well as allow for expansion of the drive thru onto the adjacent property in an area that was once a full access into the site, but is now just a right out exit after the modification to the access to the north of Taco Bell.
- Per the submitted plan, the applicant intends to modify the existing parking lot and expand the drive thru onto the adjacent property for more stacking capacity for Taco Bell.
- Per the applicant, this expansion onto the adjacent property is within an area that was up until a few years ago the drive lane for the full access entry/exit into the site.
- With the construction of the extension of Rountree Way to the north of Taco Bell, this full access was modified to a right out exit only.
- The remaining pavement that was previously used as a full drive lane is essentially dead space to the south of Taco Bell.
- This will allow for more stacking for Taco Bell, improve circulation of the drive thru, and also put an area on the site back into use after the road project.
- The only requested condition from staff is regarding proof of an easement between the owners of the Taco Bell and Publix properties as part of site plan review.
- Staff has already been in contact with the project engineer and this has been mutually agreed to.
- Staff recommends to approve with condition:

Condition

Planning:

Prior to approval of the submitted site plan, a recorded easement agreement pertaining to the drive thru and any other associated required easements between the property owners of tax map 072A parcels 335 & 190 shall be provided to the Columbia County Planning Department.

Planning Commission questions/comments/concerns:

Chairman Cox questioned staff whether there would be any issues with relocating any of the lighting fixtures.

Staff member Will Butler answered no.

Chairman Cox stated this was a public hearing and asked if the applicant was present. Applicant present, but did not provide any additional information.

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

Commissioner Futch made a motion to approve with condition VA21-11-01, Variance to Section 90-147(a)(2) & (i)(3) *Use Provisions*, Tax Map 072A Parcels 335 & 190, 0.491 +/- acres and 9.54 +/- acres respectively, located at 4292 Washington Road and 4272 Washington Road, and currently zoned C-2 (General Commercial). Commissioner Wilder 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

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

With no further business to discuss Commissioner Futch made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41p.m. Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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Signature on File

Jim Cox, Chairman

Signature on File

Scott Sterling, Planning Services Director