

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
325 WEST SAVANNAH AVENUE  
Monday, March 31, 2025 – 5:30 PM

**GLPC Commission Members Present:** Franklin Bailey, Calvin Graham, Ed Hightower, James Miller (Vice-Chair), Vicki Rountree, Chris Webb, Chip Wildes, Tommy Willis

**Absent:** Ron Bythwood, George Foreman, Steve Miller

**Staff:** Matt Martin, City of Valdosta/Hahira Planning Director; Molly Stevenson, Lowndes County Planning Analyst (Clerk)

**VISITORS PRESENT:**

(Sign-In sheet available in file.)

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice-Chairman James Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Bailey gave the Invocation. Vice-Chairman Miller welcomed everyone to the GLPC meeting and explained that the Planning Commission serves as an advisory (recommending) body to the local member governments regarding land use requests, and the final determination of the requests presented at this meeting will be made by the applicable local governments. Vice-Chairman Miller then explained the meeting procedures and announced the dates of the public hearings for the local member governments, as listed on the agenda.

**Agenda Item #2**

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes: February 24, 2025**

Vice-Chairman Miller called for additions, questions, and corrections of the February 24, 2025, GLPC meeting minutes. There being no additions, questions or corrections to the February 24, 2025, GLPC meeting minutes, Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Commissioner Hightower made a motion to approve the February 24, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Webb second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #3**

REZ-2025-05                      Creasy, Cindy St. Ext. and Creasy Dr., 0144 530, 0144 531 & 0144 532, ~19.8 ac.  
Current Zoning:                R-A (Residential Agricultural) and MAZ III (Moody Activity Zone)  
Proposed Zoning:              R-10 (Suburban Density Residential) and MAZ III (Moody Activity Zone)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from R-A (Residential Agricultural) and MAZ-3 (Moody Activity Zone) zoning to R-10 (Suburban Density Residential) and MAZ-3 zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to

combine and then subdivide the property into conforming lots for individual residences. The subject property possesses road frontage on Cindy Street Extension and Creasy Drive, both local County Roads, is within the Urban Service Area and Neighborhood Activity Center Character Area and Moody Activity Zone, which recommend R-10 & MAZ zoning respectively.

The subject property abuts Commercial Highway Zoning and the Georgia and Florida Railroad along its western boundary, historically Agricultural Use zoning and currently MAZ-3 zoning to its north, a blend of R-A, R-1 (Low Density Residential), and R-21 (Medium Density Residential) zonings to its east and south, served by a mixture of private utilities and individual well and septic systems. County Utilities are available along Bemiss Road, and will require boring under the railroad to serve the property.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the availability of County Utilities, and the unique shape of the property, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-10 & MAZ-3 zoning as depicted on the submitted survey.

Commissioner Bailey asked if the size of the lots in the MAZ III zoned area is sufficient, and asked for verification that the total number of lots had increased with regard to the additional point of ingress/egress. Mr. Dillard confirmed. The maximum number of lots before an additional point of ingress/egress has increased to 80 lots, and 2.5 acres is the minimum lot size required for MAZ III zoning.

There being no further questions for staff, Vice-Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor of nor in opposition to the request.

Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Rountree to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Bailey second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

#### **Agenda Item #4**

REZ-2025-06                      Bailey Property, Sumner Rd., 0067 073, ~4.2 ac.  
Current Zoning:                E-A (Estate Agricultural) and R-1 (Low Density Residential)  
Proposed Zoning:            R-1 (Low Density Residential)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) and R-1(Low Density Residential) zoning to R-1 zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to unify the zoning across the subject property. The subject property possesses road frontage on Sumner Road, a local County Road, and is within the Rural Service Area and Agricultural Forestry Character area.

The subject property was recently reconfigured at the applicant's request, and consequently rendered the parcel lines and zoning boundaries at odds with the ULDC Standards. The subject property contains two existing homes, under the same ownership, which is allowed in both the current and proposed zoning. While the Future Land Use map depicts area as Agricultural and does not recommend R-1 zoning, the surrounding land uses and lot sizes are primarily a cluster of residential parcels interspersed with woodlands and farmland.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the viability of Well & Septic systems, and the ability to consistently apply the standards of the ULDC for split zoned properties, and therefore recommends approval of the request for R-1 zoning as depicted on the submitted survey.

There being no questions for staff, Vice-Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor of nor in opposition to the request.

Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Bailey to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Graham second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

#### **Agenda Item #5**

REZ-2025-07                      JHR & LL LLC, New Statenville Hwy & Clay Rd., 0161B 033, ~7.3 ac.

Current Zoning:                E-A (Estate Agricultural)

Proposed Zoning:            C-H (Highway Commercial)

Mr. Dillard presented the case in which the applicant is requesting a change in zoning on the subject property from E-A (Estate Agricultural) zoning to C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning. The general motivation in this case is for the applicant to market the property for commercial development. The subject property possesses road frontage on New Statenville Hwy and Clay Road, both County Collector roads, is within the Urban Service Area and Community Activity Center Character Area, which recommend C-H zoning.

The subject property abuts C-H Zoning along its northern boundary, M-1 (Light Manufacturing) zoning to its west and south across New Statenville within the City Limits, which are served by a mixture of private utilities, individual well and septic systems, and City Water services.

The TRC analyzed the request, the standards governing the exercise of zoning power set forth in 10.01.05 of the ULDC, and factors most relevant to this application, including the neighboring land uses and lot sizes, the viability of a Well & Septic system, the transportation infrastructure, and the unique shape of the property, and therefore recommends approval of the request for C-H zoning.

Commissioner Bailey asked if this property is an island to which Mr. Martin stated it is a County Enclave.

There being no further questions for staff, Vice-Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

No one spoke in favor of nor in opposition to the request.

Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Hightower to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Rountree second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

#### **Agenda Item #6**

VA-2025-04                      Justin Nijem    (1604 Lankford Dr.)  
Rezone 0.84 acres from C-N to R-M

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone 0.84 acres from Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) to Multi-Family Residential (R-M). The subject property is a triangular-shaped parcel located at 1604 Lankford Drive, which is along the north side of the road about 400 feet east of North St Augustine Road. This is also between the Westside Baptist Church and the Circle K convenience store. The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to develop it with a 15-unit 2-story apartment building in accordance with a submitted site plan. Each dwelling unit will consist of one (1) bedroom and one (1) bath, and total about 850 square feet of heated floor area. Because C-N does not allow multi-family development, the applicant is seeking the downzoning to R-M.

The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of R-M zoning.

The subject property is one of the last remaining vacant properties along the Lankford Drive corridor which is dominated by mainly institutional and high-density residential uses, with limited commercial uses at either end. The existing zoning pattern along this corridor is dominated by R-10 and R-M. Most of the R-10 portion is misleading in that it is mostly developed with institutional uses such as the adjacent Westside Baptist Church and the Parker Mathis Learning Center (alternative school) just beyond. There are seemingly increasing levels of traffic along this corridor, and this will probably increase dramatically if/when Lankford's planned connection to Norman Drive is completed. The subject property is definitely not conducive for R-10 single-family residential development due to its irregular shape, and its location along this 4-lane arterial roadway. Although the uses allowed in the existing C-N zoning or even in an R-P or O-P alternative would be deemed acceptable here, there is some merit in choosing multi-family development for this property --- given the large apartment complex across the street and the adjacent non-residential uses. This would make a choice of either R-P or R-M zoning interchangeable here, but given the current lack of actual R-P zoning along this corridor, R-M would seem the better choice for now.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council.

Vice-Chairman Miller asked about the number of units. Mr. Martin responded that the maximum number allowed is 15, based on the lot size.

There being no further questions for staff, Vice-Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Jimmy Cone, Project Architect                      1804 Plum St.
- Justin Nijem, Applicant                                4622 Green Island Rd.

Mr. Cone explained that the design and plan is the same as the applicant's other existing developments. Units will be ~675 sq ft, 1BR/1BA. Commissioner Bailey asked is the façade would be lap siding or synthetic stucco. Mr. Cone replied that it will be lap siding. Commissioner Willis inquired about potential fencing along the property line adjacent to the church. Mr. Cone stated the pastor of the church has no objections. Mr. Martin explained that a standard of development for R-M is a buffer requirement. Commissioner Hightower asked if the parking will be adjacent to the church to which Mr. Cone responded yes.

Mr. Nijem stated that he is willing have a fence installed. Commissioner Bailey asked how much more acreage is needed to be able to add another unit. Mr. Martin stated it is not possible and a Variance request is not permissible in this case.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Willis to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Wildes second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

#### **Agenda Item #7**

VA-2025-05                      Samuel Straka (107 Jordan St.)  
Rezone 0.51 acres from R-10 to C-H

Mr. Martin presented the case in which the applicant is requesting to rezone 0.51 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Highway Commercial (C H). The subject property is located at 107 Jordan Street which is along the east side of the road, between Maude Street and West Hill Avenue. It is the northern portion of an existing parcel (0.94 acres total) that is currently split-zoned R-10 and C-H. The property currently contains a vacant single-family residence as well as a small accessory building. There are currently no immediate plans for redevelopment, and no conceptual site plan has been provided.

However, the applicant is simply requesting to have all of the property zoned C-H so that it can be better marketed for future commercial development.

The subject property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of C-H zoning.

The subject property is one of the last remnants of what was likely a rural residential area more than 60 years ago, before the construction of I-75 and the widening of West Hill Avenue (US 84). This former neighborhood has long since transitioned to an area dominated by commercial development on nearby arterial roadways. The surrounding zoning pattern is a mixture of C-H and R-10, with commercial development encroaching inward along the local streets.

Although there are no immediate plans for redevelopment and the request is therefore speculative in nature, it should be recognized that the subject property is currently split-zoned with C-H zoning already along its frontage with West Hill Avenue. With continued residential use of the property being no longer considered viable for the long term, making all of this property zoned C-H will increase its marketability and help facilitate its future redevelopment as a commercial use under the City's current development standards.

Staff finds the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommends approval to the City Council.

Commissioner Willis asked if the properties have 2 separate owners. Mr. Martin explained it is a single property with one owner. However, it is a split-zoned property. This request will clean up the map.

There being no further questions for staff, Vice-Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Sam Straka, Applicant 1115 Slater St.

Mr. Straka explained that the recent hurricane had rendered the structure uninhabitable.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Wildes to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff. Commissioner Hightower second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

## **Agenda Item #8**

HA-2025-03                      Marvin Brooks (113 N. Hall St.)  
Special Exception for a Duplex in R-10 zoning

Mr. Martin presented the case in which, on behalf of Lee and Marilyn Walker, Marvin Brooks Construction is requesting a Special Exception (SE) for a residential duplex in a Residential (R-10) zoning district. The subject property is located at 113 North Hall Street in Hahira, which is at the SW corner of North Hall Street and West Lawson Street. The property is currently vacant, and the applicant is proposing to construct a new 2 story residential duplex on the property. Each dwelling unit will consist of about 1,350 square feet GFA and the overall design will be very similar to the applicant's previous request 3 years ago for a duplex at 406 West Lawson Street (diagonally across the street).

The subject property is located within a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

In comparison to the same request 3 years ago, this subject property is a bit larger. It consists of about 19,900 square feet of area, which is just slightly less than the minimum 20,000 square feet that would be needed to create two (2) single-family lots in R-10 zoning (to allow 2 houses). The applicant and owner are simply proposing a duplex instead, but this time no Variances are required to allow the proposed building footprint to fit on the subject property.

In spite of the R-10 zoning on all sides of the property, much of the surrounding area is still sparsely developed and many of the existing residences are in dilapidated condition. The only recent development in the immediate area is the now-existing Duplex which was approved 3 years ago – diagonally across the street. The NAC Character Area prescribes higher density residential development, and quality infill redevelopment such as that being proposed (again), should certainly be encouraged. Conditions of approval for this Special Exception should be similar to the conditions from the request 3 years ago.

Staff finds the request for the Special Exception consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the Special Exception review criteria, and recommends approval to the Hahira City Council, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) All parking shall be off-street on private property and located to the sides of the duplex building. Driveways for each dwelling unit shall be paved and be of sufficient size to hold at least two automobiles entirely on private property. (No parking in the grassed front yard of the property).
- (2) Special Exception approval shall expire after one (1) year from the date of approval, if no building permit for the duplex has been issued by that date.

There being no questions for staff, Vice-Chairman Miller opened the Public Hearing portion of the case.

Speaking in favor of the request:

- Marvin Brooks, Applicant 4751 Barrett-Coody Rd.

Mr. Brooks stated that while the current address is on Hall St., he would like Lawson St. addresses for this project, with A & B units.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

There being no further discussion, Vice-Chairman Miller called for a motion. Motion by Commissioner Rountree to recommend approval of the request as presented by staff with two conditions. Commissioner Webb second. All voted in favor, no one opposed (7-0). Motion carried.

There being no other business, on a Willis/Wildes motion, Vice-Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

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**James Miller, Vice-Chairman**  
**Greater Lowndes Planning Commission**

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**Date**