

**MINUTES**  
**DALTON-WHITFIELD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**December 18, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jim Lidderdale, *Chairman*  
Chris Shiflett, *Vice Chairman*  
Jody McClurg  
David Pennington IV  
Eric Barr

**WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Jevin Jensen *Chairman*  
Barry Robbins *Vice Chairman*  
Greg Jones  
John Thomas

**VISITORS PRESENT VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Eileen M. Kelly and Jean M. Finney, Shazman Ali, Jerry and Barbara Hawkins, Jamie White, Gabriel Paniagua Villafuerte, Megan Elliott, Jose Enriquez Gomez, Vernon Gordon, Chris Tallent Jr., Brigido Meza Flores, Cynthia Dillard, Donald Dillard, Lois Montoya, Sharon King, Reyez Martinez, Carl Campbell, Carlos Daniel Miranda, Gary Brown, and others.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Ethan Calhoun  
Robert Sivick  
Robert Smalley  
Jacob Bearden  
Jean Garland

**I. GENERAL**

A. Call to Order: Chairman Jensen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and confirmed a quorum of commissioners was present with Barry Robbins and Robby Staten absent, then turned the meeting over to Chairman Lidderdale who confirmed a quorum of planning commissioners was present with Eric Barr absent.

B. Minutes: Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion to approve or correct the November 27, 2023, meeting minutes. David Pennington made the motion to accept the minutes as written and his motion was seconded by Chris Shiflett which then passed unanimously 4-0.

**II. REZONING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Heard the request of Eileen M. Kelly and Jean M. Finney to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) and Rural Residential (R-5) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 77.55 acres located at 3529 Hurricane Road, Rocky Face, Georgia. Parcel (12-345-06-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended approval of the GA rezoning. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Jean Finney represented the petition and made no additional comments following the staff recommendation.

With no other comments being heard for or against, the hearing closed at 6:06

**B. Heard the request of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Dalton and Varnell to amend the Unified Zoning Ordinance to address commercial poultry and swine operations.**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended approval of the text amendment citing the more detailed definitions for commercial swine and poultry operations. Commissioner Thomas confirmed with Calhoun that the proposed definitions were based on federal government definitions. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Terry Miller noted the concerns of Varnell citizens and leadership regarding the potential development of a large-scale poultry operation on a tract of land within the City of Varnell. Miller stated that this concern prompted the City of Varnell to develop a policy in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Varnell. Miller then pointed out that there are several hundred acres of land currently zoned GA within the City of Varnell that would currently allow commercial poultry operations with no local input.

Commissioner Thomas noted the amount of GA zoned land in Varnell was vague, and Thomas went on to state his apprehension with adoption regulation that would affect local farmers.

Sandy Pangle, Varnell Councilman, noted the limited size of the City of Varnell as compared to the unincorporated portion of Whitfield County stating that the proposed amendment would have minimal impact to the county-wide agricultural community. Pangle then pointed out the amount of residential development within the City of Varnell that has been occurring in recent years along with their expectations for continued residential development would be threatened if commercial poultry operations were permitted outright in proximity to said residential developments. Pangle ended his remarks by stating his concern with the potential impact animal feeding operations and concentrated animal feeding operations would have on the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Varnell.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:22 pm.

**C. Heard the request of Shazman Ali to rezone from Low-Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 10.67 acres located at Antioch Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-316-01-004)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended an R-3 rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Shazman Ali stated that he would be in favor of the R-3 rezoning.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:31 pm.

**D. Heard the request of Jerry and Barbara Hawkins to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling 10.0 acres located at 173 Boone Way, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (13-101-01-005)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the C-2 rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Jerry and Barbara Hawkins stated that their proposal would be the expansion of their adjacent business and that they were not opposed to the buffer conditions.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:39 pm.

**E. Heard the request of Jamie White to rezone from General Commercial (C-2) to General Commercial (C-2) and Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 0.41 acres located at Brylow Drive, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-277-01-049)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the R-5 rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Jamie White stated that he recently purchased the subject property and plans to redevelop the vacant dwelling for residential use.

William Wright, adjacent neighbor to the north, stated that he had concerns with additional stormwater runoff, but Wright did not state an opposition to the R-5 rezoning.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:45 pm.

**F. Heard the request of Gabriel Paniagua Villafuerte to rezone from Low-Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 6.59 acres located at 256 Lakewood Drive, NE, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-025-01-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the GA rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Gabriel Paniagua stated that he would like to restore electrical service to the vacant manufactured home on the subject property.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:50 pm.

**G. Heard the request of Megan Elliott to rezone from Low-Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 50.84 acres located at 2011 Old Whaley Road, Dalton,**

**Georgia. Parcel (09-037-13-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the GA rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Megan Elliot stated that the subject property was a working farm and stated that she had no issues with the condition cited in the staff analysis.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:55 pm.

**H. Heard the request of Jose Enriquez Gomez to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling 0.33 acres located at 2071 Freeport Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-086-08-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the C-2 rezoning be denied. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Jose Gomez stated that the building on the subject property was used as a convenience store prior to its most recent use as a church, and Gomez stated the intent to use the subject property and existing building for a used car sales operation. Gomez stated that the subject property had been vacant since purchased by the petitioner. Chairman Lidderdale confirmed with Gomez that the building on the subject property is approximately 1,400 square feet. Lidderdale asked Gomez if they knew the previous commercial use of the subject property to which Gomez stated that it was used as a neighborhood market.

A neighbor who failed to state their name for the record stated their opposition to C-2 rezoning based on concerns with additional stormwater runoff affecting the groundwater springs and streams as well as concerns regarding the public safety of the neighbors.

Gary Brown, a nearby property owner stated his opposition to the C-2 rezoning based on his concerns regarding the lack of ability to create a buffer along the northern property boundary. Brown noted the former neighborhood grocery store that closed in 1976. Brown also stated concerns with the ability to safely store automobiles on the subject property due to the limited amount of parking area.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 7:08 pm.

**I. Heard the request of Vernon Gordon to rezone from Suburban Agricultural (SA) to Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 17.34 acres located at 1271 Dawnville Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (09-073-08-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the R-5 rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Keith Gordon, the petitioner's son, stated the petitioner's desire to create family easements for his granddaughters to later build homes.

Roy Painter, an adjacent neighbor, stated that he would be opposed to the R-5 rezoning due to manufactured homes and duplexes but that he would not oppose an R-2 rezoning.

Sharon and Jeremy Mooney, neighbors, stated that they were opposed to trailers and duplexes.

Lidderdale confirmed with Gordon that he would not be opposed to conditions that would prohibit manufactured homes or duplexes on the subject property.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 7:18 pm.

**J. Heard the request of Chris Tallent Jr. to rezone from High-Density Single Family Residential (R-7) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling 1.18 acres located at 2215 Cleveland Hwy., Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-103-11-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the C-2 rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Chris Tallent stated that he had already begun installing a buffer along the northern boundary of the subject property, but Tallent requested that a variance be granted for the buffer along the northeastern property boundary in order to address access issues related to the adjacent residential property. Chairman Lidderdale confirmed with staff that such a variance could be granted by the Planning Commission.

Christino Hara, an adjacent neighbor, states that the stormwater runoff from the organic soil has affected his backyard. Hara also stated the soil has an odor that affects his property as well as noise pollution from the machinery used to load and move said soil.

Tallent stated that buffer trees have been installed as well as a retention pond to address the stormwater silt runoff.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 7:28 pm.

**K. Heard the request of Brigido Meza Flores for a special use request in a General Agricultural (GA) district a tract of land totaling 22.31 acres located at 148 Livingston Way, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-127-03-000)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the Special Use Permit for an event center be denied. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Brigido Meza Flores represented the petition with assistance from a translator. Flores stated that they intend to address any noise pollution issues as their residence is located on the subject property. Flores also stated that the traffic would be intermittent and should not create any congestion issues for the neighboring properties. Flores also noted the second property access easement to Beulah Dr. that could accommodate firetruck access. It was stated that the petitioner would apply for a stormwater permit. Flores stated the intent to operate the event venue on weekends and holidays with no events allowed past midnight. Flores stated that there have been three family-related events held on the subject property and that police had been called to address complaints with no citations issued. Flores stated that they have the equipment to maintain the driveway access easements.

Lois Montoya, a local realtor and friend of Flores, stated that she was in favor of the Special Use Permit based on the respectable character of the petitioner. Montoya stated that she had attended a quinceanera on the subject property and that she did not observe any noise pollution or safety issues related to that event. Montoya went on to state the need for outdoor event venues in the area. Montoya then mentioned the proximity to other event venues in the nearby area.

Cynthia Dillard, a neighbor, stated her opposition to the event center permit based on her concerns with traffic generation and noise associated with the previous events that she observed continuing past midnight. Dillard delivered a petition and call record to the Sheriff's Department citing complaint calls related to noise pollution. Sharon King, a neighbor along Livingston Way, stated that she had been a resident at this location for 70 years. King stated that she had also experienced noise pollution related to the previous events held on the subject property. Chairman Lidderdale confirmed that King had signed the petition opposing the event center permit. Reytez Martinez, a neighbor along Beulah Dr., stated that he was opposed to the event center permit based on his concerns regarding traffic generation, traffic safety, and noise pollution. Reytez also stated that he signed the petition opposing the event center permit.

Donald Dillard, a neighbor, stated his opposition to the event center permit based on his concerns regarding noise pollution late at night as well as traffic generation and dust associated with increased traffic.

Flores rebutted by stating that the pavilion had been constructed in June of 2022 and that there had been no citations regarding noise pollution. Meza stated that the neighbors' concerns were civil disputes and that there is viable access to Beulah Drive.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 7:55 pm.

**L. Heard the request of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Dalton and Varnell to amend the Unified Zoning Ordinance to create a new Urban Planned Unit Development (UPUD) zoning district. (County & City)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the UZO text amendment to create a new UPUD zone district affecting only the portions of Whitfield County that are within the Metropolitan Statistical Area as delineated by the US Census Bureau. Calhoun went on to note that parcels of land would be eligible up to eight acres in size with no minimum lot size requirement. Calhoun then stated that additional site design and architectural requirements would be applied to any prospective sites. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Carl Campbell, Executive Director of the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, stated that the UPUD zone district would allow for infill and redevelopment within the urban areas where residential redevelopment is challenging under existing zone districts. Campbell then stated that the proposed UPUD would eliminate the need for countless variances and allow for additional design regulations than the current zone districts. Campbell stated that the UPUD zone district would be a step towards the implementation of the Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy by creating infill and redevelopment opportunities that may otherwise be unfeasible while installing barriers to prevent bad actors from creating poorly designed developments. Campbell then drew attention to a site plan for a proposed development funded by the Dalton-Whitfield JDA on South Hamilton Street for a tract of land formerly donated to the JDA by Mohawk. Campbell noted the JDA's pending application for funding through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for the S. Hamilton residential development. Campbell stated that the proposed S. Hamilton development would create small-lot single-family detached and townhouse residential workforce housing to be marketed at under \$300,000 per unit as required by the aforementioned grant.

Chairman Jensen asked Campbell why the proposed area was not solely within the City of Dalton. Jacob Bearden then stated that the MSA boundary would allow eligibility for potential tracts of land surrounding the periphery of the City of Dalton where urban developments may be feasible.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 8:06 pm.

**M. Heard the request of Carlos Daniel Miranda to rezone from Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) to Medium Density Single Family Residential (R-3) a tract of land totaling 0.43 acres located at 1123 Trammell Street, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-182-02-033) City)**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended the R-3 rezoning be approved. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Carlos Miranda stated his intent to remodel and occupy the single-family detached dwelling on the subject property.

Chairman Lidderdale stated that the Planning Commission would take a five minute recess and return to open the regular meeting at 8:16 p.m.

### **III. REGULAR MEETING**

**A. Recommendation regarding the request of Eileen M. Kelly and Jean M. Finney to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) and Rural Residential (R-5) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 77.55 acres located at 3529 Hurricane Road, Rocky Face, Georgia. Parcel (12-345-06-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested GA rezoning. **David Pennington then made a motion to recommend approval of the GA rezoning. Chris Shiflett then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the GA rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**B. Recommendation regarding the request of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Dalton and Varnell to amend the Unified Zoning Ordinance to address commercial poultry and swine operations.**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested UZO text amendment. **Chris Shiflett summarized the concerns raised during the public hearing. David Pennington then made a motion to recommend approval of the text amendment based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Eric Barr then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the text amendment followed, 4-0.**

**C. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Shazman Ali to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 10.67 acres located at Antioch Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-316-01-004)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-5 rezoning. **Jody McClurg then made a motion to recommend tan R-3 rezoning be approved. Chris Shiflett then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve an R-3 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**D. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Jerry and Barbara Hawkins to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling 10.0 acres located at 173 Boone Way, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (13-101-01-005)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested C-2 rezoning. **Chris Shiflett then made a motion to approve the C-2 rezoning with the condition cited in the staff analysis. David Pennington then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the C-2 rezoning and condition followed, 4-0.**

**E. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Jamie White to rezone from General Commercial (C-2) to General Commercial (C-2) and Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 0.41 acres located at Brylow Drive, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (11-277-01-049)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-5 rezoning. **Chris Shiflett then made a motion to approve the R-5 rezoning. David Pennington then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the R-5 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**F. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Gabriel Paniagua Villafuerte to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 6.59 acres located at 256 Lakewood Drive, NE, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-025-01-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested GA rezoning. **Eric Barr then made a motion to approve the GA rezoning. Jody McClurg then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the GA rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**G. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Megan Elliott to rezone from Low Density Single Family Residential (R-2) to General Agricultural (GA) a tract of land totaling 50.84 acres located at 2011 Old Whaley Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (09-037-13-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested GA rezoning. **David Pennington then made a motion to recommend approval of the GA rezoning including the condition cited in the staff analysis. Chris Shiflett then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the GA rezoning and condition followed, 4-0.**

**H. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Jose Enriquez Gomez to rezone from Rural Residential (R-5) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling 0.33 acres located at 2071 Freepoint Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-086-08-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested C-2 rezoning. **Chris Shiflett then made a motion to recommend denial of the C-2 rezoning based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Jody McClurg then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to deny the C-2 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**I. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Vernon Gordon to rezone from Suburban Agricultural (SA) to Rural Residential (R-5) a tract of land totaling 17.34 acres located at 1271 Dawnville Road, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (09-073-08-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-5 rezoning. **Chris Shiflett then made a motion to recommend approval of the R-5 rezoning with the condition that no manufactured homes or duplexes be permitted on the subject property. David Pennington then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the R-5 rezoning and condition followed, 4-0.**

**J. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Chris Tallent Jr. to rezone from High Density Single Family Residential (R-7) to General Commercial (C-2) a tract of land totaling 1.18 acres located at 2215 Cleveland Hwy., Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-103-11-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested C-2 rezoning. **Chris Shiflett then made a motion to recommend approval of the C-2 rezoning to include a variance to omit the buffer requirement along the northeast corner of the subject property. David Pennington then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the C-2 rezoning and buffer variance followed, 4-0.**

**K. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Brigido Meza Flores for a special use request in a General Agricultural (GA) district a tract of land totaling 22.31 acres located at 148 Livingston Way, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-127-03-000)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested Special Use Permit for an event center. Lidderdale noted the issues of containing noise pollution given the pavilion had no walls to contain noise that would affect the adjacent neighborhood. **Chris Shiflett then made a motion to recommend denial of the Special Use Permit for an event center. Jody McClurg then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to deny the Special Use Permit for an event center followed, 4-0.**

**L. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Dalton and Varnell to amend the Unified Zoning Ordinance to create a new Urban Planned Unit Development (UPUD) zoning district. (County & City)**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested UZO Text Amendment. **David Pennington then made a motion to recommend approval of the UPUD UZO Text Amendment. Chris Shiflett then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the UPUD UZO Text Amendment**

followed, 4-0.

**M. To hear the recommendation regarding the request of Carlos Daniel Miranda to rezone from Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) to Medium Density Single Family Residential (R-3) a tract of land totaling 0.43 acres located at 1123 Trammell Street, Dalton, Georgia. Parcel (12-182-02-033) (City) Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested R-3 rezoning. Eric Barr then made a motion to recommend approval of the R-3 rezoning. Jody McClurg then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the R-3 rezoning followed, 4-0.**

**N. Preliminary Plat Review- Ryman Farm PH VI**

Ms. Price-Garland oriented the Planning Commission to the subject property located adjacent to the existing Ryman Farm development. Garland stated that the proposed preliminary plat is intended to be the final phase of the Ryman Farm neighborhood. Garland went on to state that the preliminary plat shows a total area of 17-acres with approximately 2,000 linear feet of new streets and 34 new residential lots. Garland noted that a few minor details remained to be addressed on the preliminary plat such as fire hydrant spacing. Garland then pointed out that the City of Dalton will not allow any driveway access to Threadmill Road. Garland recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the preliminary plat on the condition that all subdivision requirements be met so that site work and permitting could begin prior to awaiting the January Planning Commission meeting. Chairman Lidderdale asked for a motion on the proposed preliminary plat. **Chris Shiflett made a motion to approve the preliminary plat with the condition that all subdivision plat requirements be met, and his motion was seconded by David Pennington. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.**

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business scheduled, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ethan Calhoun  
Secretary