

**HARRIS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION**

May 18, 2022  
7:00 PM

Members Present: John Britt, John Brent, Chance Carlisle (arrived 7:12 p.m.), Paul Dasher, Mark Harris, Tommy Hutcherson. Members Absent: Gene Weldon. Staff Present: Andrea Dzioba, Recording Secretary and Lee Walton, Consultant.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Britt called the meeting to order.
2. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022, Regular Session was made by Mr. Brent, seconded by Mr. Harris, and passed unanimously. The motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2022, Called Meeting was made by Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed unanimously.
3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS at 7:15 p.m.**
  - A. **Explanation of Public Hearing.** Chairman Britt explained the procedures involved for the Public Hearings.
  - B. **Application of Dylan Lloyd Thomas for a Special Use Permit for a commercial Kennel for Training and Boarding of Dogs on 16.867 acres of property located at 1245 Winfree Road, Hamilton, GA; located on Map 069, Parcel 010, Land Lots 55 and 74, Land District 21, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry).** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the specifics of the application. Dylan Lloyd Thomas, applicant, appeared before the Commission and said that he rents and lives at the home located on the property and leases the land; that he plans to use the facility for training and boarding dogs; that there are 12 runs but expects to have 10 dogs at a time; that the license allows up to 20 dogs; that he will be training sporting/obedience for mostly bird dogs and that there will be no events or trials. There being no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application. There being none, he asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to this application.

Brad Davis, Winfree Road, appeared before the Commission and stated that he lives adjacent to the property and has lived there since 1998. He can hear the dogs barking at Red Woof Kennels located nearby and is concerned about noise.

Justin Slaby, Sequoia Drive in Columbus, appeared before the Commission and stated that he lives in Columbus but owns property on Winfree. He discussed that there is an ordinance concerning commercial kennels; is concerned about the location and whether it is set back 100' from the property line; that there is not outside boarding; about sanitation and runoff; has concerns with Mulberry Creek; and believes that the ordinance should be followed.

Robert Dixon, Winfree Road, live across the road from the property at issue and is concerned about the noise of potentially 20 dogs; open runs; that he can already hear noise from the other kennel on Harold Williams Road and has a reason to expect noise from this location; feels that it affects property values and enjoyment; and that he also has a letter in opposition from his sister.

In response to questions from the Commission, Dylan Thomas advised that he planned on installing security lighting; that it would be virtually impossible to see the lights from other properties; that

the dogs have a shelter overnight; that he may have bark collars on the dogs to help minimize noise; and that the State of Georgia will conduct an inspection of run off on Monday and then a final inspection for the license and then regularly inspected by the State.

There being no further comments or questions from the Commission, Chairman Britt closed the Public Hearing. A motion to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit for a Commercial Kennel for Training and Boarding of Dogs with the conditions that there be up to 20 dogs that are housed at night with a 100 foot buffer from the property line was made by Mr. Harris and the motion died for lack of a second.

A motion to recommend denial of the Special Use Permit for a Commercial Kennel for Training and Boarding of Dogs was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Britt, and failed with two in favor (Britt, Carlisle) and four opposed (Brent, Dasher, Hutcherson, Harris).

A motion to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit for a Commercial Kennel for Training and Boarding of Dogs with the conditions that it be limited to 20 dogs with a 150 foot buffer from the property line was made by Mr. Dasher and the motion died for lack of a second.

A motion to recommend approval of the Special Use Permit for a Commercial Kennel for Training and Boarding of Dogs with the conditions that it be limited to no more than 20 dogs and that the dogs are housed inside at night in order to reduce noise was made by Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Dasher, and failed with two in favor (Harris, Dasher), three opposed (Britt, Carlisle, Hutcherson), and one abstention (Brent).

A motion to recommend denial of the Special Use Permit for a Commercial Kennel for Training and Boarding of Dogs as it stands was made by Mr. Hutcherson, seconded by Mr. Carlisle, and passed with three in favor (Hutcherson, Britt, Carlisle), two opposed (Dasher, Harris), and one abstention (Brent).

- C. **Application of Cataula Volunteer Fire Department for a Special Use Permit for a Fire Station on 2.0 acres of property located on northern 2 acres of 7211 US Hwy 27, Cataula, GA; located on Map 061, part of Parcel 020, Land Lots 5 and 6, Land District 21, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry).** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the specifics of the application. There being no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application.

Richard Grantham, US Highway 27, and a member of the Cataula Volunteer Fire Department appeared before the Commission and stated that the fire station at the location will improve their ISO rating; provide immediate relief; and that they plan to widen driveway.

Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition of this application. There being none, he asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to this application.

There being no further comments or questions from the Commission, Chairman Britt closed the Public Hearing.

Following discussion, the motion to recommend approval of a Special Use Permit for a Fire Station on 2.0 acres of property located on northern 2 acres of US Hwy 27, Cataula, GA was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Hutcherson, and passed with all in favor (Brent, Harris, Britt, Carlisle, Dasher, Hutcherson) and no opposition.

- D. **Application of Willie Shepherd, III, to rezone 1.0 acre of a 1.00 acre parcel on Map 056B, Parcel 354, Land Lot 75, Land District 3; Rezoning from R-1 (Low Density Residential) to C-1 (Central Business) or C-2 (Commercial). Current use is a vacant**

**lot; proposed use is to build a Laundromat; property located at 814 West Harris Street, Pine Mountain, GA.** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the specifics of the application. Willie Shepherd appeared before the Commission along with his attorney, Alex Dixon, and advised that he plans to either restore or rebuild the laundromat in the location where it currently is; that the location was a laundromat that operated for many years by his family prior to the elder members falling into poor health; that people in the area would use it and will not have to go to LaGrange; that there would not be any parking in the back of the business near residences; and that he plans to make sure that there is lighting in the front for safety. There being no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application. There being none, he asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to this application.

Ray Hastey, W. Harris Street, Pine Mountain, appeared before the Commission and stated that the are is better than previously and has been rehabbed; that he is concerted about the business being open late at night; and believes that it will lower property values.

Mary Mullins, S. McDougald Avenue, Pine Mountain, appeared before the Commission and stated that the location is in the middle of residences; that the building was previously condemned; that the applicant was told to tear it down but keeps trying to make it work; and that kids are playing on the property.

Taylor Griffin, Wood Avenue, Pine Mountain, appeared before the Commission and expressed his concerns about the business being open late with residences around it; that there is grass growing through the foundation; that there is no roof; and that the building is only four block walls.

Alex Dixon, Mr. Shepherd's attorney, appeared before the Commission and advised that the business was previously operated by Mr. Shepherd's parents and the zoning was changed from R-2 to the current R-1 zoning when Pine Mountain adopted a new zoning map; that his clients wishes to restore and reopen the laundromat; that the business should not affect traffic adversely; that there are other commercial business such as a manufacturing facility on Wood a couple of blocks away; and that the laundromat will not have any dry cleaning.

In response to questions from the Commission, Lee Walton, Consultant, advised that the information provided shows that parking requirements would be met and that nothing was required other than standard setbacks. Alex Dixon and Willie Shepherd informed the Commission that two engineers and a contractor would be retained to address the building to determine if the building could be rehabbed and restored or if it needed to be rebuilt. There being no further comments or questions from the Commission, Chairman Britt closed the Public Hearing. A motion to recommend approval to rezone the 1 acre property located at 814 West Harris Street, Pine Mountain from R-1 (Low Density Residential) to C-1 (Central Business) or C-2 (Commercial) with the conditions that there be a 10 foot buffer of vegetation or vegetation in combination with fencing along Wood Avenue and a minimum of 25 feet from the northwest property line was made by Mr. Brent, and seconded by Mr. Harris, and failed with two in favor (Brent, Harris), three opposed (Dasher, Hutcherson, Britt), and one abstention ( Carlisle).

A motion to recommend denial to rezone the 1 acre property located at 814 West Harris Street, Pine Mountain from R-1 (Low Density Residential) to C-1 (Central Business) or C-2 (Commercial) was made by Mr. Hutcherson, and seconded by Mr. Britt, and passed with three in favor (Dasher, Hutcherson, Britt), two opposed (Brent, Harris), and one abstention (Carlisle).

- E. **Application of Whitley Harris for a Special Use Permit for a Special Events Facility on 1.47 acres of property located at 4731 Pine Lake Road, West Point, GA; located on Map 024A, Parcel 028, Land Lot 323, Land District 20, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry).** Chairman Britt called the Public Hearing to order and read the

specifics of the application. Whitley Harris, applicant, appeared before the Commission and advised that she and her husband are residents of Pine Mountain; that they day-dreamed about owning their own business; that they purchased the church; that they would like to have the church be a small family-oriented venue; that they would like to repurpose the church while preserving it; that they would like to have people use the facility during the day for bridal showers, graduation parties, baby showers, and Easter egg hunts; and that the building can hold 87 people but that she envisions smaller, more intimate gatherings. Mrs. Harris also has considered surrounding properties and advised that she will assure compliance with ordinances; that sound and lights will not encroach adjacent properties; that it should not generate a lot of traffic but will hire traffic control if needed; that there will be no parked cars lining the street; that it won't devalue surrounding properties; and that she has about 40 letters of support. In response to the questions from the Commission, Mrs. Harris informed them that she did have a lease with the property across the street for parking if necessary and that she will fence along the cemetery area to protect it. There being no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application.

Elizabeth Jamison Kouquie, Pine Lake Road, appeared before the Commission and advised that she is the Vice President of the Board of the Whitesville Cemetery Association that that she and the Association are in favor of Mrs. Harris' proposed use of the church; that the Association is made up of prior church members and that she has family in the cemetery; that she is delighted to support this application; that she wants the church to remain in good repair; that the Association has executed a lease with Mrs. Harris for parking; and that it doesn't infringe on the cemetery.

Doug Jamison, Pine Lake Road, appeared before the Commission and informed them that he thinks that this is a great thing and supports it 100%.

There being no additional individuals to speak in favor, Chairman Britt asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to this application.

Ethan Garonzik, Monument Road, appeared before the Commission and stated that he is thrilled that they are looking after the building but that he is concerning with evening events and noise; that the church is 35 yards from a residential neighborhood; that he is concerned about safety, parking along the curve and hill, and people crossing the street; and that he does, however, love the building.

Charlotte Chapman, Pine Lake Road, appeared before the Commission and informed them that there are so many other special event venues; that she wasn't sure about staffing; that the Association is profiting; that she has concerns about traffic and parking; that she is concerned about safety for children; that she didn't know how they would control the public from running over graves; and that there would be trash and litter.

In response to questions from the Commission, Whitley Harris advised that the building has functioned as a church since 1854; that it has hosted events and provided parking; that she doesn't believe that there will be any disturbance to the community; that the capacity of the church was a little more and that the architect lowered capacity; that since there isn't a lot of outdoor space, she plans to have indoor events; that she has supported renovating the church over the past 8 months without events and would like to make some of the money spent back; that there would be no alcohol in parking area and that she has applied for an alcohol license; that traffic will be their responsibility; and that she has planned to install LED lighting with solar panels.

Following discussion, the motion to recommend approval of a Special Use Permit for a Special Events Facility located at 4731 Pine Lake Road, West Point with the conditions that weekend closure by 10:30 p.m., weekday closure by 8:30 p.m., and provide plan to verify ability to park on owned property was made by Mr. Carlisle, seconded by Mr. Brent, and passed with all in favor (Brent, Harris, Britt, Carlisle, Dasher, Hutcherson) and no opposition.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Brent, seconded by Mr. Hutcherson, and passed unanimously.

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John Britt, Chairman

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Andrea R. Dzioba, Recording Secretary