

HABERSHAM COUNTY
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HABERSHAM COUNTY

Planning & Development

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MINUTES
HABERSHAM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Public Hearing
Tuesday, March 3, 2026

The Habersham County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at the Habersham County Courthouse, located at 295 Llewellyn St. in Clarkesville, Georgia.

Planning Commission Members Present: Greg Hill, Larry Phillips, D. Higgins, Mike Roberts, Ronald Lewallen, & Jason Smith.

Also present was Mike Beecham, Planning & Development Director, Troy Dills, Planning & Development Assistant Director & Habersham County Attorney, Paul Frickey.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairman D. Higgins called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was given by Commissioner Mike Roberts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approved without change.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved without change.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

WTF-26-01: Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless is seeking approval to allow installation of a New 185' Telecommunication Monopine Cell Tower. The tract is located on Commerce Parkway and is further identified as Map 082 Parcel 039.

After the proposal was presented, the applicant was given a chance to speak.

Mr. Andrew Rotenstreich was the representative for the applicant, and he was in attendance to speak on the proposal and what the intentions were for the property. Mr. Rotenstreich explained why they chose the above location for the installation of a New Cell Tower. He stated that they always look for (4) things when searching for a new site.

1. Cell phone coverage issues in the area.
2. Is the lot or parcel a buildable and favorable spot for a cell tower?
3. Does the construction and placement of the tower meet the local ordinances?
4. Willingness of the landowner.

Mr. Bruce Carlyle, the representative for the landowner, was also in attendance and stated that the landowner agreed with and was ok with the applicant's intentions for the property.

The following people were in attendance to speak in opposition to the proposal.

1. Linda Shadburn 120 Commerce Parkway Cornelia, GA. 30531 (representative for Foundation Academy).
2. Andrew Burpee 120 Commerce Parkway Cornelia, GA. 30531 (part owner of Foundation Academy).
3. Robert Popham 205 Commerce Parkway Cornelia, GA. 30531.

The issue below seemed to be basically the same concern for all those in opposition.

1. Danger of RF Frequency Radiation to the local children at the nearby child day care.

After everyone in attendance in favor of or in opposition of the proposal had spoken, public comment was the closed so the Planning Commission could discuss and vote.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Larry Phillips to approve WTF-26-01 as submitted.

It was seconded by Commissioner Greg Hill. All were in favor.

The results of the votes were as follows:

Commissioner Greg Hill – Yea
Commissioner Mike Roberts – Yea
Commissioner Jason Smith – Yea

Commissioner Larry Phillips – Yea
Commissioner Ronald Lewallen – Yea

AM-26-01: A public hearing with respect to the possible adoption of a new Habersham County Unified Development Ordinance, including the possible adoption of a new Zoning Map.

Habersham County Planning & Development Director Mike Beecham discussed the new Habersham County Unified Development Ordinance. He addressed the Planning Commission to see if there were any changes that the Planning Commission wanted to see made before it was presented to Habersham County Board of Commissioners.

After Mr. Beecham finished speaking, public comment was opened for anyone to speak that might have questions or issues with the proposal.

The following people were in attendance to speak in opposition to the proposal.

1. Bruce Carlyle
2. Chris Rudden
3. Henry Lovell 1475 Hollywood Hwy Clarkesville, GA. 30523
4. Eddie Davidson 815 Gibson Rd. Clarkesville, GA. 30523

The issues below seemed to be basically the same concern for all those in opposition.

1. The concern that the 1800 sq feet minimum for houses in new subdivisions would be county wide.
2. Too many moratoriums have been issued as of late.
3. Two-acre minimum lots are too much and will slow down the economy.

After everyone in attendance in favor of or in opposition of the proposal had spoken, public comment was the closed so the Planning Commission could discuss and vote.

The Planning Commission then presented several things that they would like to see changed and or added in the new ordinance. Below is a list that was brought before all.

1. Change square footage minimum in subdivisions from 1800 to 1500.
2. Remove residential uses from General Industrial district.
3. No curb & gutter requirements in Rural Residential, Conservation, & Agricultural districts.
4. Traffic study required only when it exceeds 50 peak hour trips a day.
5. Closed loop cooling system on data centers. 500 feet from nearest residence and consistent sound barriers.
6. Setbacks for cell towers to be 1500 feet from any existing building.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Mike Roberts to approve AM-26-01 with following changes.

It was seconded by Commissioner Ronald Lewallen. All were in favor.

The results of the votes were as follows:

Commissioner Greg Hill – Yea
Commissioner Mike Roberts – Yea
Commissioner Jason Smith – Yea

Commissioner Larry Phillips – Yea
Commissioner Ronald Lewallen – Yea

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

REPORTS TO COMMISSION:

None.

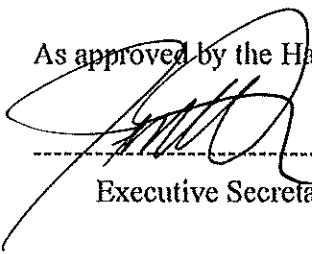
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

None.

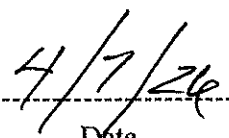
ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 PM.

As approved by the Habersham County Planning Commission:



Executive Secretary



Date