



HABERSHAM COUNTY
GEORGIA | Est. 1818

HABERSHAM COUNTY

Planning & Development

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MINUTES
HABERSHAM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Public Hearing
Tuesday, November 4, 2025

The Habersham County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at the Habersham County Courthouse, located at 295 Llewellyn St. in Clarkesville, Georgia.

Planning Commission Members Present: Greg Hill, Larry Phillips, D. Higgins, Jim Kiger, & Jason Smith.

Commissioners Jessie Owensby, & Richard Thornton were unable to attend.

Also present was Mike Beecham, Planning & Development Director, & Troy Dills, Planning & Development Assistant Director.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

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

INVOCATION:

The invocation was given by Commissioner Jim Kiger.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approved without change.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved without change.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

V-25-03: Ralph Black is seeking a Variance to reduce the impervious setback from 150 ft. to 75 ft. and for a reduction of disturbed area setback from 100 ft. to 50 ft. The tract is located on Ben Jones Rd. and is further identified as Map 064 Parcel 107.

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

Commissioner Jason Smith had to recuse himself since he was the representative for the applicant.

Mr. Jason Smith began to lay out the intentions of the applicant and what his plans were for the property.

The Variance request is to reduce the impervious setback from 150 ft. to 75 ft. on the property and for a reduction of disturbed area setback from 100 ft. to 50 ft. The property originally had a 50 ft. setback from all water. However, when a previous applicant split the parcel into (4) different lots they lost their "lot of record" status for the property. This now made it a 150 ft. setback from water. The applicant (Mr. Black) wants to build a single-family residence and a barn closer to the water than is currently allowed. Therefore, he is requesting a Variance to reduce the impervious setbacks on the property.

The following people were in attendance in opposition to the proposal and to express their concern(s).

- Grady Tuell 183 Winding Soque Way Clarkesville, Ga. 30523
- Lew Oliver 274 Seye Wailo Trail Clarkesville, GA. 30523
- Scott Schuler 115 Caney Fork Demorest, GA. 30535
- Pete Watts 255 Pioneer Ridge Clarkesville, GA. 30523
- Lynette Huntley 182 Pioneer Ridge Rd. Clarkesville, GA. 30523
- Gary Hopkins 155 Hemlock Ln. Clarkesville, GA. 30523
- Stephen Tomasovich 122 Winding Soque Ln. Clarkesville, GA. 30523

The following concerns seemed to resonate among all those that spoke.

- Instability of the Ecosystem.
- Erosion problems could possibly affect the structure integrity of the river banks and the be a threat to the local area's natural resources.

After everyone that was opposed to the proposal was finished speaking, public comment was then closed so the Planning Commission could discuss the proposal and vote.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Greg Hill to **deny V-25-03**.

It was seconded by Commissioner Larry Phillips. All were in favor. The results of the votes were as follows:

Commissioner Greg Hill -- Nay
Commissioner D. Higgins -- Nay

Commissioner Larry Phillips -- Nay
Commissioner Jim Kiger -- Nay

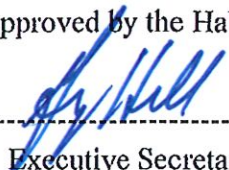
OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS TO COMMISSION: None.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: Discussion was made about the proposed new Unified Development Code.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

As approved by the Habersham County Planning Commission:



Executive Secretary



Date