

HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUBJECT: Conditional Use Application CU-25-02 – Event Center

DATE: June 4, 2025

☒ **RECOMMENDATION**

☐ **POLICY DISCUSSION**

BUDGET INFORMATION: N/A

☐ **STATUS REPORT**

~~ANNUAL-~~

☐ **OTHER**

~~CAPITAL-~~

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: June 16, 2025

PURPOSE: Make a recommendation to the Board regarding application CU-25-02: David & Leah MacNellis are seeking a conditional use for an Event Center 3001 Pea Ridge Road, map parcel 026 101A (2.0 acres), 014 002 (17.42 acres), and 014 002D (3.0 acres) in the LI, Low Intensity District.

BACKGROUND / HISTORY:

1. This property is an approximately 100 year old schoolhouse located on Pea Ridge Road. The applicant wants to restore the schoolhouse and stated that to pay for the restoration it will need to be an event center which can be rented.
2. The proposed event center will be rented out for various functions, such as weddings, anniversary celebrations, birthday parties, etc.
3. They propose a parking area in front of the schoolhouse. They also propose a kitchen for meal prep for caterers and ADA bathrooms. They propose new siding, roof, and interior walls/ceilings. They want to keep the basic footprint of the existing building. They feel the schoolhouse can safely hold up to 150 people which is within the allowable occupant load according to the building codes.
4. The surrounding area is residential, agricultural or undeveloped. There are scattered single family homes in the area. There is an existing event center, Ogletree Estates, to the northeast on Paradise Park Road.
5. The applicant wants the ability for the people renting the facility to serve alcohol. This will require the individuals renting the site to acquire an Alcohol Special Event License if selling alcohol.
6. The Planning Commission had a number of questions regarding the use of music and the applicant stated they would close the event center at 10pm. They stated they live behind the schoolhouse and will be able to regulate the noise levels.
7. We had a group show up in favor of the application though none spoke. We had no one speak against the application.

FACTS AND ISSUES: The Planning Commission forwards this application to the Board with a recommendation of Approval with Conditions.

1. The event center will close at 10pm.
-

OPTIONS: The Board of Commissioners could act on this application as follows:

1. Approval of the request with conditions as recommended by the Planning Commission;
 2. Denial of the request; or
 3. Commission defined alternative.
-
-

RECOMMENDED SAMPLE MOTION: I motion to approve CU-25-02 with Conditions as recommended by the Planning Commission.

DEPARTMENT:

Prepared by: Mike Beechan

Director _____

**ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMENTS:** _____

County Manager

DATE: _____



HABERSHAM COUNTY
GEORGIA | Est. 1818

HABERSHAM COUNTY

Planning & Development Department
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523
706-839-0140 www.habershamga.com

Habersham County Planning Commission Conditional Use Staff Report

APPLICATION NUMBER: CU-25-02

REQUESTED ACTION: David & Leah MacNellis are seeking a Conditional Use to be allowed to open an Event Center on their property that can be rented for a variety of functions such as birthday parties, anniversary celebrations, or weddings, etc. The tract is located at 3001 Pea Ridge Rd. And is further identified as Map 026 Parcel 101A.

Synopsis: Initial inquiry regarding this was addressed when applicant came in to discuss future plans of the property that includes the operation of an Event Center.

PETITIONER: David & Leah MacNellis.

PROPERTY OWNER: David & Leah MacNellis.

EXISTING USE: Residential

PROPOSED USE: Event Center.

LOCATION: 3001 Pea Ridge Rd.

PARCEL(S) SIZE: 2 acres.

MAP# 026 PARCEL# 101A.

EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICT:

	Current Zoning District	2029 Future Land Use Designation
Parcel	LI	Rural
North	LI	Rural
East	LI	Rural
South	HI	Rural
West	HI	Rural

MEETING DATES: Planning Commission: June 3, 2025

Board of Commissioners: June 16, 2025

PLANNING ANALYSIS:

1. The existing land uses and zoning classification of nearby property;

The current zoning classification of this parcel is LI- Low Intensity along with adjoining properties except to the south and west that are zoned HI- High intensity. The land use of this parcel is Rural.

2. The suitability of the subject property for the zoned purposes;

The property is designated as LI – Low Intensity. This district will provide and protect an environment suitable for single-family detached residential uses or individual lots, conventional subdivisions and master planned developments, together with such other accessory uses as may be necessary to and compatible with low density residential surroundings.

3. The extent to which the property values of the subject property are diminished by the particular zoning restrictions;

It is the intent of the Conditional Use process to permit specific uses compatible with a residential area. The process will assist in determining the need for buffers, parking, hours of operation and other concerns that may be presented.

4. The extent to which the diminution of property values of the subject property promote the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public;

Property values are not diminished by the current zoning.

5. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner;

An Event Center should not be a hardship to the community if used within certain guidelines.

6. Whether the subject property has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned;

Property does have a reasonable economic use within the LI District.

7. Whether the proposed zoning will be a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property;

The compatibility of the proposed use with adjacent properties is critical. Specific criteria will need to be addressed such as hours of operation, capacity, noise, sanitation, buffers, etc., to promote harmony and balance in an existing rural neighborhood.

8. Whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property;

The existing land use patterns in the area is primarily rural. However, during certain times, an increase in traffic, noise, etc. may be an issue that needs to be addressed.

9. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policies and intent of the land use plan;

The Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as Rural. The scope of the proposed use will support compatibility and balance if certain criteria is met.

10. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools;

The increase of noise and traffic could possibly be an issue to the neighborhood.

11. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal;

The balance of the above mentioned issues at this location are essential to maintaining the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed use may need to have restrictions placed upon it to support harmony and balance in this rural neighborhood.

Staff Recommendation:

The Conditional Use request is to be allowed to convert and old schoolhouse building on their property into an Event Center that can be rented for a variety of functions such as birthday parties, anniversary celebrations, or weddings, etc. The old schoolhouse is believed to be around 100 years old and has been a landmark in the community for many years. In the past many people have gone to school there, bought peaches, or even worked on cars in the building. The applicants would like to preserve the history of this building, but it will need many costly repairs. Turning it into an Event Center will both restore the building and make it available to afford the renovations. The Event Center hours would vary but not extend anything past 10:00 pm. It will be equipped with ADA bathrooms and a prep kitchen for caterers to use, which will require new up to date electrical wiring and plumbing to be installed. The applicants would also like to have the ability for people that are renting the building to serve alcohol. The structure has 1915 sq feet with expansion plans of 468 sq, for the ADA bathrooms. An outside patio will be provided as well as adequate parking available in the front of the building and in adjacent field. If proper measures and protocols are adhered too, there should not be any hardships to the neighborhood. Noise and traffic could possibly be the only major concerns. Staff feels that if done in moderation, the Event Center should not affect the balance and harmony of the community. Therefore, staff recommends approval of CU-25-02.

Staff recommends:

☒ Approve as Submitted
☐ Denial

☐ Approval with Conditions
☐ Table

Planning Commission recommends:

☐ Approve as Submitted
☐ Denial

☐ Approval with Conditions
☐ Table

Board of Commissioners Decision:

☐ Approve as Submitted
☐ Denial

☐ Approval with Conditions
☐ Table

4-8-25



HABERSHAM COUNTY
GEORGIA | Est. 1818

HABERSHAM COUNTY

Planning & Development

130 Jacob's Way Clarkesville, GA 30523
706-839-0140 www.habershamga.com

APPLICATION TYPE: Variance: _____ Conditional Use: ☒ Map Amendment: _____
[Check ☒ appropriate application(s)]

PLEASE BE ADVISED THIS FORM IS PUBLIC INFORMATION

Applicant / Primary Contact David & Leah MacNellis

Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] State [REDACTED] Zip [REDACTED]

Telephone # () [REDACTED] Cell Telephone # () 706-968-4451

E-Mail [REDACTED]

Property Owner(s): David and Leah MacNellis

Address [REDACTED] City [REDACTED] State [REDACTED] Zip [REDACTED]

Telephone # () [REDACTED] Cell Telephone # () [REDACTED]

E-Mail [REDACTED]

Agent: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone # () _____ Cell Telephone # () _____

E-Mail _____

Location (Street Address) of Property: 3001 pea ridge rd. cornelia, ga.

Acreage of Site: _____ Tax Map & Parcel#: 026 101A Existing LUI District: _____

Action Requested: _____

Cite Pertinent Section(s): _____

Existing Use: _____

Proposed Use: _____

APPLICATION PROCESS FEE: \$200.00

RECEIVED
APR 10 2025
BY: t. dills



HABERSHAM COUNTY

Planning & Development

130 Jacob's Way Clarkesville, GA 30523
706-839-0140 www.habershamga.com

PROPERTY OWNER'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property described in the attached legal description, that all information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that the applicant and/or agent listed below is authorized to act as the applicant and/or agent in the pursuit of the proposed application of this property.

Property Owner/Executor/Officer
(Print)

Property Owner/Executor/Officer
(Signature)

 / /
Date of Signature

Authorized Agent
(Print)

Authorized Agent
(Signature)

 / /
Date of Signature



Planning & Development

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Required For All Applications Regarding the Comprehensive Land Development Resolution

When any application is made for a Public Hearing with regards to the Comprehensive Land Development Resolution within two (2) years immediately preceding the filing of the applicant's application for public hearing, campaign contributions aggregating \$250.00 or more to a local government official who will consider the application, it shall be the duty of the applicant to file a disclosure report with the governing body of the respective local government showing:

- (1). the name and official position of the local government official to whom the campaign contribution was made; and
- (2). The dollar amount and description of each campaign contribution made by the applicant to the local government official during the two (2) years immediately preceding the filing of the application for public hearing and the date of each contribution; and
- (3). The disclosure shall be marked by the **applicant, property owner, or person representing the property owner** and shall be filed within ten (10) days after the application for Public Hearing is first filed with the Planning Staff. If the disclosure is not provided to the Planning Staff within said 10 days, the application shall be removed from the scheduled agenda.

I hereby certify that I have ✓; I have not ; (please ✓ one) read the above and that:

Within the two (2) years immediately preceding this date, I have; _____ I have not ☒; (please ☒ one) made any contribution(s) aggregating \$250.00 or more to any local government official involved in the review or consideration of this application.

If you have made such contributions, you must provide the data required below within 10 days of filing this application.

Name of Official(s)

Office

Amount

____/____/____
Date of Contribution

Applicant's Name (Please Print)

Signature of Applicant

____/____/____
Date of Signature

When my husband and I purchased the property at 2989 Pea Ridge Road, it included an old school house. We believe the school house to be around 100 years old. I grew up on Pea Ridge Road and it has always been a fixture here that holds different stories for many people in this area. People will occasionally stop if they see us outside and want to see it. Many of them either went to school, bought peaches, or even worked on cars in the building. To have a piece of history is special to us and we want to do our best to keep it around a little longer. The school house is aging and is in need of repairs and updates. To be able to afford the renovation we are going to have to make the school house profitable.

The one idea that we feel would be beneficial for not only us, but the community as well, would be an event center. We are thinking of an area that can be rented for a variety of functions: birthday parties, anniversary celebrations, weddings, etc. We have room for parking directly in front of the school house or we can open the field next to the school house to the south for parking as well.

The event center hours would vary but we would not extend anything past 10:00 pm. All activities would conclude at that time. There are homes, ours included, around the area and we want to be respectful of them.

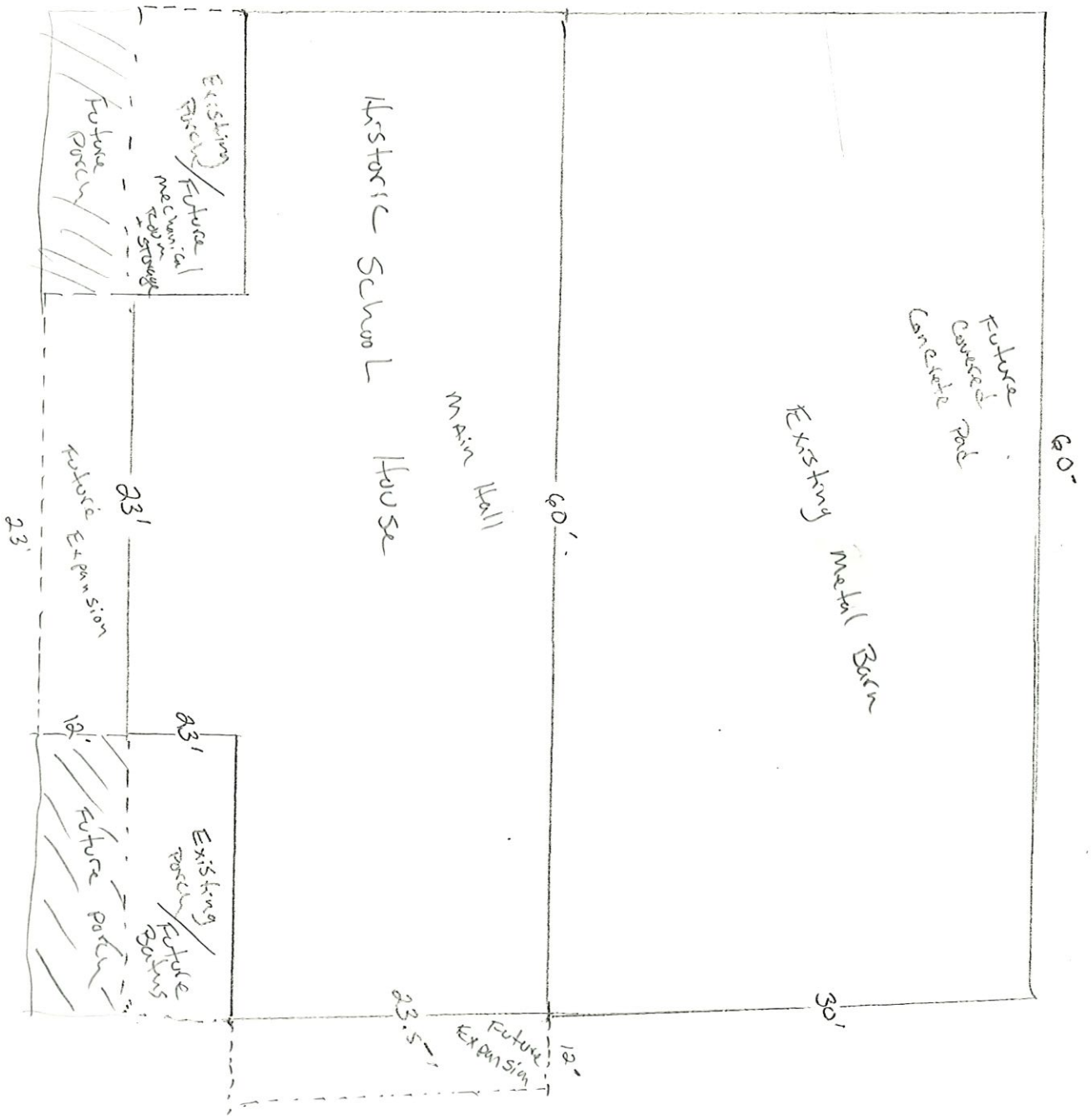
As far as the event center itself, we will be installing ADA bathrooms and a prep kitchen for caterers to use. All new wiring and plumbing will be installed. We will be putting on new siding, new roof and new interior walls/ceilings. We do not have a set plan as to what everything will look like yet, but we want to try and keep the basic footprint of the building as best as we can. We also will be trying to reuse anything we can from the original building.

We believe the event center will be able to hold up to 150 people, but will rely on the fire code to dictate that number.

We will want to have the ability for the people renting the event center to serve alcohol. If they choose to do so, we will require a police officer be hired through us to be on site. Depending on the size of the group, 2 may be required.

BY THE NUMBERS

- Front of the school house has 23,930 sq ft. for parking
- Able to lease an additional 50,000 sq ft. for parking in the adjacent field
- School house has 1915 sq ft for activities with an expansion of 468 sq ft expected for ADA bathrooms and mechanical room/storage
- Outside patio that can be enclosed for cooler weather is 1800 sq. ft.



North

Exhibit
A

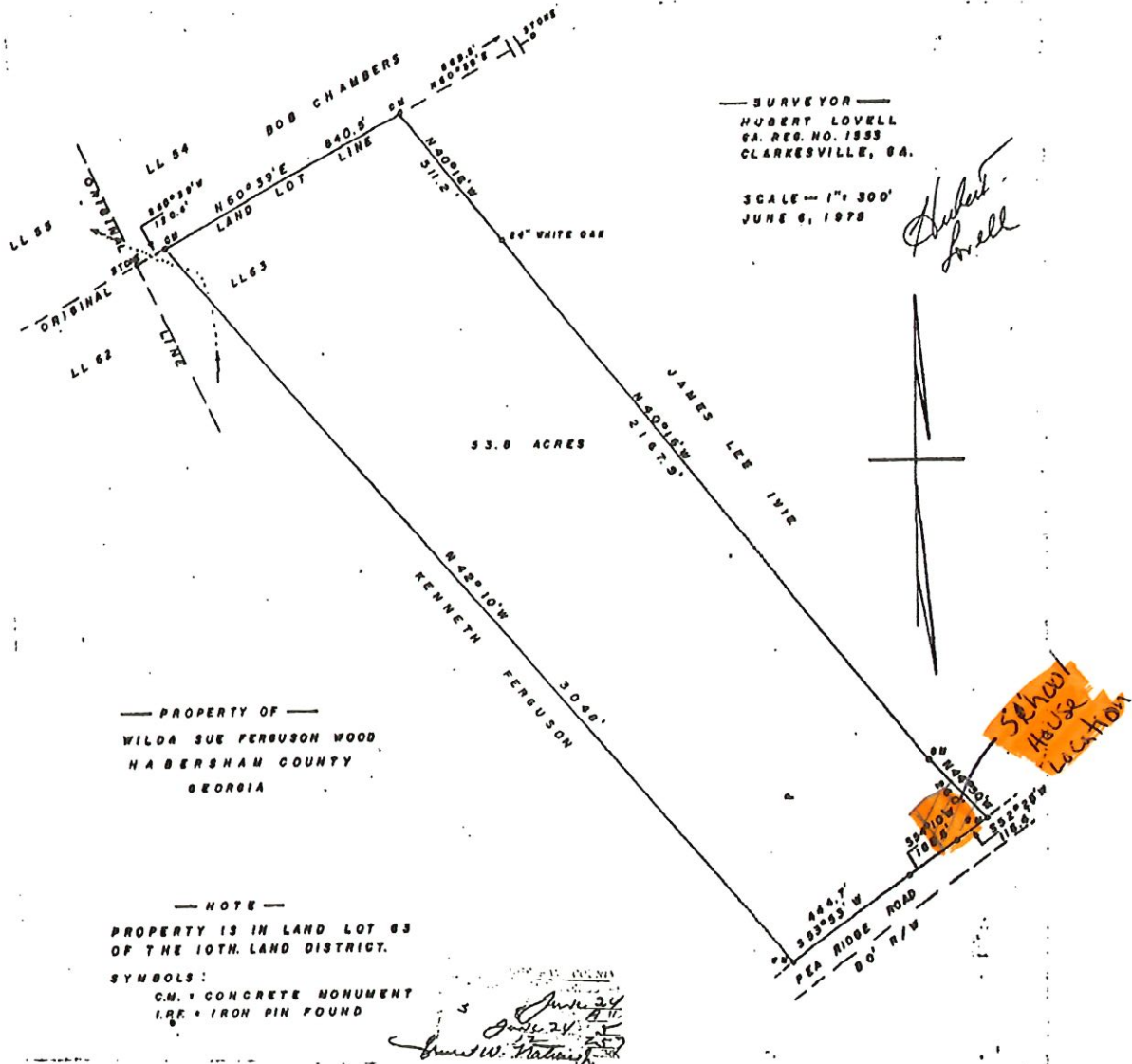
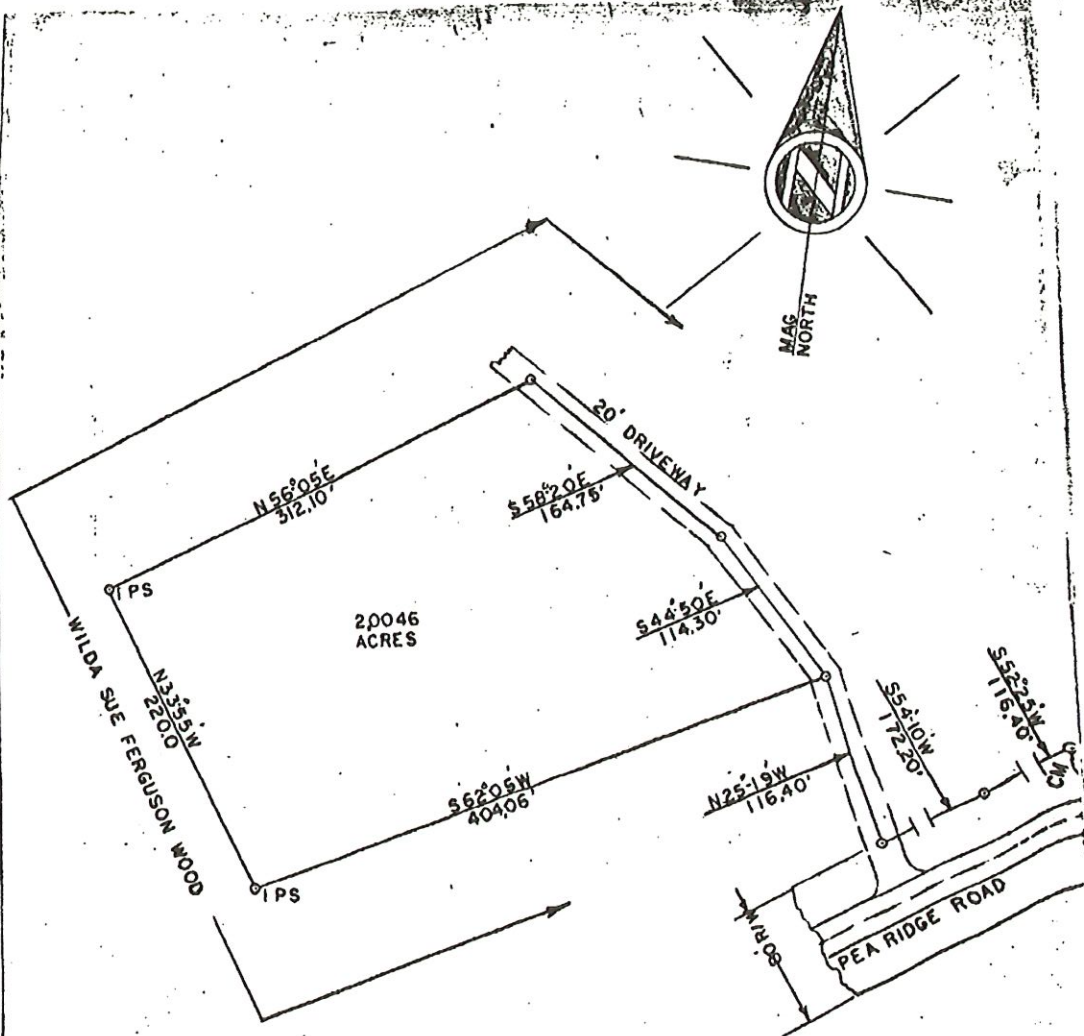


Exhibit
B

329



GEORGIA, HABERSHAM COUNTY
CLERK'S OFFICE, SUPERIOR COURT
FILED FOR RECORD *10/10/75*
1975 AT 8 O'CLOCK *PM*
RECORDED *10/10/75*
IN BOOK NO. *12-60-63*
James W. Hatcher, Jr.

School House
P.O. #

Property Owner KENNETH & SUE WOOD	
County of HABERSHAM	
State of GEORGIA	
Dist. No. 10	
Land No. 63	
Scale 1" = 60'	
Date OCT. 1975	
Survey E. R. A. to Int. & Assoc.	



THIS SURVEY WAS MADE BY
JAMES W. HATCHER, JR.
A PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR
REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA
NO. 12345

