

HABERSHAM COUNTY
GEORGIA | Est. 1818

HABERSHAM COUNTY

Planning & Development

130 Jacob's Way Clarkesville, GA 30523
706-839-0142 www.tidills@habershamga.com

MINUTES
HABERSHAM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Public Hearing
Tuesday, July 7, 2026

The Habersham County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, July 7, 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, Emily Herrin & Jason Smith.

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 Jason Smith.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approved without change.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved without change.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

CU-26-04: Mitchell Payne is seeking a Conditional Use to be allowed to operate a Gas-Powered Go Kart Track and RC Electrical Go Kart Track on his property. The tract is located at 155 Ponderosa Rd. and is further identified as Map 023 Parcel 132.

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

The applicant began to lay out plans and intentions for the property. The Conditional Use request is to allow the applicant and property owner to operate a Gas-Powered Go Kart Track and/or RC Electrical Go Kart Track on his property. The applicant wants to do racing one night a week primarily on Friday nights, which may occasionally be moved to Saturday night but never more than one night a week. The track will officially

open at 4 PM for practice but no racing will occur outside the hours of 6 PM and 10 PM. During the winter months the racing will be moved to Saturday daytime racing and will conclude before dark. Mr. Payne says that no alcohol will be allowed during the events. He also wants to limit the Go Karts to 10 per race. No Go Kart motors shall be allowed to be running after 10 pm. The applicant made it clear several times that although there is an entry fee for each racer, it's not about the money but rather about building memories for the kids and giving them something to do.

After the applicant finished speaking, anyone in attendance in favor of or in opposition to the proposal was given a chance to speak.

The following people were in attendance to speak in favor of the proposal.

1. Kaylie Shook 2833 Hwy 356
2. Stanley Laymon 170 Whipperwill Lane Clarkesville, GA. 30523
3. Russell Gibson, Banks County, GA.
4. Marie Payne 189 Twin River Rd. Demorest, GA. 30535
5. Rodney Sutton 1150 Goshen Creek Rd. Clarkesville, GA. 30523

The comments below were primarily the same from all those that spoke in favor of the proposal.

1. Having a Go Kart track helps build a strong community bond by bringing much needed activities to the community.
2. Go Kart racing helps kids to interact with one another and gives them something to do while teaching them competitiveness.
3. It is also good for the economy of the county by bringing people in that will spend their money at local businesses.

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

1. Allison Haynes 274 White Rapids Dr. Demorest, GA. 30535
2. Dennis Haynes 274 White Rapids Dr. Demorest, GA. 30535
3. Marguerite Gerrin 965 Twin River Orchard Rd. Demorest, GA. 30535

Listed below were the main concerns of those that were in opposition.

1. Increase in traffic. Ponderosa Rd. is a single lane dirt road, and it is not built to sustain that much traffic.
2. Noise is a major issue with motors running and people yelling.
3. Parking is a concern as well. Cars are parked up and down the road at each event both on the road right of way and on other people's property.
4. Dirt and dust are a nuisance when stirred up by the racing.

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

The Planning Commission had a few concerns as well such as.

1. Adequate Parking – a more detailed site plan of parking needs to be provided.
2. Environmental Health regulations on public restrooms.

3. Fire and EMS services requirements at such events.

A motion was then made by Commissioner Ronald Lewallen to **table CU-26-04** until the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting so these concerns by the Planning Commission could be addressed.

It was seconded by Commissioner Larry Phillips. All were in favor.

The results of the votes were as follows:

Commissioner Greg Hill – Yea
Commissioner Mike Roberts – Yea
Commissioner Emily Herrin – Yea

Commissioner Larry Phillips – Yea
Commissioner Ronald Lewallen – Yea
Commissioner Jason Smith – Yea

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

REPORTS TO COMMISSION:

None.

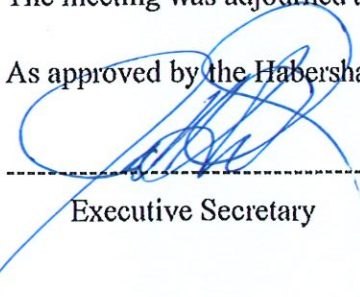
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 PM.

As approved by the Habersham County Planning Commission:



Executive Secretary

4 April 20

Date