

**AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

Case Number: Z-23-48

Hearing Date: Monday, November 6, 2023

Applicant: Brandi Wallace

Property Owner: Sherri Valencia

Address of Property: 1898 Brown Road, Hephzibah, Georgia 30815

Tax Parcel #: 212-4-002-00-0

Present Zoning: R-1 (One-family Residential)

Commission District: 8 (Brandon Garrett) **Super District:** 10 (Wayne Guilfoyle)

Fort Eisenhower (Gordon) Notification Required: No

Request	Proposed Use / Activity	Applicable Text
Rezoning from R-1 to A (Agricultural)	Agricultural Uses	Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Section 7

Summary of Request:

This request pertains to a 10.1-acre property in southern Richmond County, located on the south end of Brown Road between McElmurray Road and Old Waynesboro Road. The property is zoned R-1 (One-family Residential) and is within the scope of the 1998 blanket rezoning to R-1. Staff have been unable to confirm the previous zoning of the property prior to the blanket rezoning. However, it is likely that the property was zoned A (Agricultural). The applicant has petitioned to rezone the property back to the A (Agricultural) zoning, to conduct agricultural activities on the property. This would entail the raising of livestock and cultivation of crops; per the letter of intent and subsequent discussion with the applicant, such activities would be conducted organically. The property would, then, be used as an educational example of regenerative farming and eco-friendly practices.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

According to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the property is located within the South Richmond Character Area. The 2018 Comprehensive Plan envisions that South Richmond maintain its predominant rural character of large tracts of forested lands, open space, and rural residences. Recommended development patterns for South Richmond include targeting new low-density residential development for the suburban part of the character area, and confining any new neighborhood commercial and professional office development to designated intersections.

Findings:

1. The property was subject to the blanket rezoning initiated by Augusta-Richmond County in 1998. There are no other prior zoning actions associated with the property.

2. The property appears to have access to municipal water lines, but not to sanitary sewer lines.
3. Per the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Functional Classification Map, Brown Road is considered a minor arterial route.
4. Augusta Transit does not serve the subject property.
5. According to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) obtained via municipal GIS, the property is not located within a Special Flood Hazard Area.
6. Data from municipal GIS layers also indicate there are no wetlands located on the property.
7. Site topography slopes generally north-to-south from approximately 385 down to 340 feet above sea level.
8. All properties adjoining the subject property have R-1 zoning. The nearest A zoned property is, by straight line distance, approximately 0.8 mile away.
9. The proposed use would be consistent with the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.
10. Code Enforcement opened a code violation case on the property on August 15. The property was being used as a petting zoo, and a sign was placed on the property advertising "Wallace's Farm Petting Zoo", with operating hours of 9:00am to 1:00pm on Sundays and Mondays. Both the use and the sign (in the R-1 zone) were in violation of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, and no business license had been obtained.
11. Staff have received an e-mail in opposition to the request.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission recommends Approval of the rezoning request with the following conditions:

1. The applicant acknowledges that the A (Agricultural) zoning does not permit a petting zoo by right.
2. The rezoning shall specifically disallow the addition of any manufactured homes to the property.
3. The applicant shall abide by all rules and regulations of the Richmond County Health Department pertaining to livestock.
4. The property shall comply with all zoning regulations for the A (Agricultural) zoning classification and any development of the property shall comply with all development standards and regulations set forth by the City of Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia, as amended, at the time of development.
5. A 25-foot buffer shall be established along the frontage of Brown Road. No animals shall be housed or serviced within the buffer.

Note: This staff report includes the information available approximately two weeks prior to the Planning Commission hearing. It represents an evaluation of the facts presented by the applicant, research done by the staff, and consideration of the relevant factors in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Augusta, Georgia. New facts may emerge, and staff reserves the right to make a verbal recommendation at the hearing based on all the information available at that time.

Letter of Intent

This land was purchased under the assumption and paperwork that it was zoned agricultural. The paperwork at the closing stated [Bonafide Agricultural Property]. My goal is to raise livestock and grow crops organically to feed the community. The property was also used as an educational example of regenerative farming and eco-friendly practices. The work done at this property has allowed me to tour many schools, businesses, and conferences teaching others about regenerative practices. I would like to keep this land as natural as possible, providing healthy habitats for the native plants and birds.

Brandi Wallace

Planning Commission


Z-23-48

November 6, 2023

1898 Brown Road

Aerial

Legend

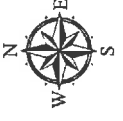
 Subject Property



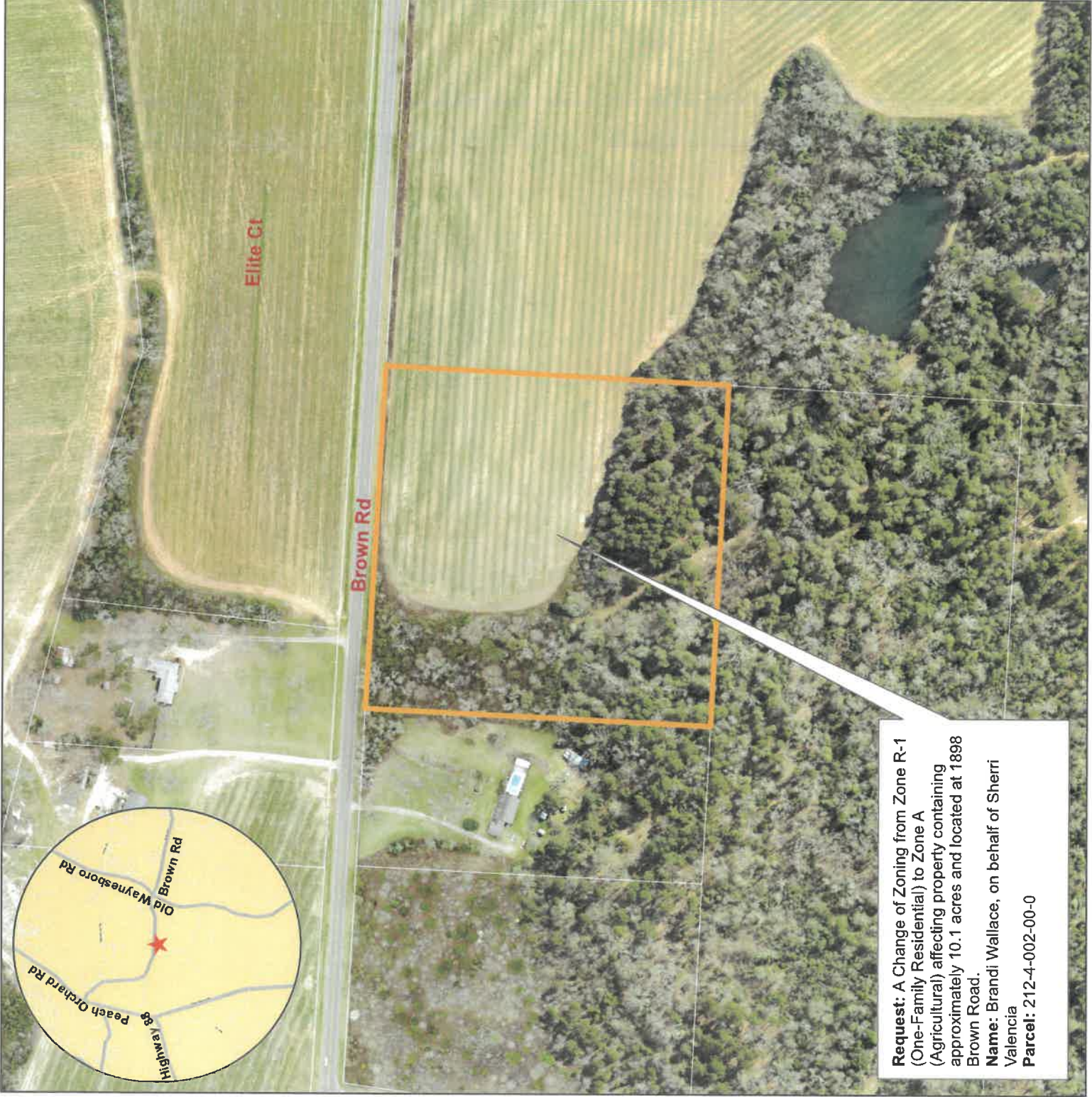
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Planning & Development Department
535 Telfair Street Suite 300
Augusta, GA 30901
10/17/2023 MH18072

Augusta, GA Disclaimer

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0 400 Feet



Request: A Change of Zoning from Zone R-1 (One-Family Residential) to Zone A (Agricultural) affecting property containing approximately 10.1 acres and located at 1898 Brown Road.
Name: Brandi Wallace, on behalf of Sherri Valencia
Parcel: 212-4-002-00-0

Planning Commission


Z-23-48

November 6, 2023

1898 Brown Road

Current Zoning

Legend

 Subject Property

Zoning Classification

 R-1: One Family

Residential



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0 400 Feet



Elite Ct

Brown Rd


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Z-23-48
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1898 Brown Road


Future Zoning

Legend

 Subject Property

Zoning Classification

 R-1: One Family Residential

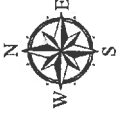
 A: Agricultural



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0 400 Feet



Elite Ct

Brown Rd

A

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REZONING

PLANNING COMMISSION

R-1 (ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL)
TO **A** (AGRICULTURAL)

1898 Brown Road

PARCEL 212-4-002-00-0

PROPERTY OWNER:

SHERRI VALENCIA

November 6 @ 3:00pm

**Lee Beard Room
Augusta-Richmond County
MUNICIPAL BUILDING - 2nd FLOOR**

AUGUSTA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.
535 TELFAIR STREET | AUGUSTA, GA 30902

For More Information Call (706) 821-1796

DO NOT REMOVE UNDER PENALTY OF LAW



Aug 15, 2023 at 9:56:00 AM
1835-1883 Brown Rd
Augusta GA 30815
United States