

PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

Growth Management Department



MEETING DATE:	September 25, 2024
PROJECT:	<p>Public Hearing and Recommendation to Town Council for that Certain Property Owned by Rose Kitty and Ferrellgas Inc., Consisting of a Total of 1.38 Acres, More or Less, Located at 328, 330 and 332 Buck Island Road and identified by Beaufort County Tax Map Numbers R610 03 000 0016 0000 (328 and 330 Buck Island Road) and R610 039 000 018C 0000 (332 Buck Island Road) for the Following Applications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Consideration of an Amendment to the Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan "Blueprint Bluffton" to Amend the Said Properties from the Future Land Use Designation of Suburban Living to Neighborhood Center;2. Consideration of a Zoning Map Amendment to Rezone the Subject Properties from the Residential General (RG) District to the Light Industrial (LI) District.
PROJECT MANAGER:	Dan Frazier, AICP Growth Management Manager

REQUEST: Town Staff requests that Planning Commission hold Public Hearings and vote to forward recommendations to Town Council for the applications for certain properties containing a Total of 1.38 Acres, More or Less, Located at 328, 330 and 332 Buck Island Road and identified by Beaufort County Tax Map Numbers R610 03 000 0016 0000 (328 and 330 Buck Island Road) and R610 039 000 018C 0000 (332 Buck Island Road) for the Following Applications:

1. Consideration of an Amendment to the Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan "Blueprint Bluffton" to Amend the Said Property's Future Land Use Designation from Suburban Living to Neighborhood Center;
2. Consideration of a Zoning Map Amendment to Rezone the Subject Properties from the Residential General (RG) District to the Light Industrial (LI) District.

INTRODUCTION: On June 17, 2024, the Town of Bluffton (the "Applicant"), on behalf of the property owners Rose Kitty and Ferrellgas Inc, submitted applications (ZONE-06-24-019188 and COMP-06-24-019187) requesting approval of an Amendment to the

Town of Bluffton Official Zoning Map (Attachments 1, 2 and 3). The two subject parcels total +/- 1.38 acres and are identified by Beaufort County Tax Map Numbers R610 03 000 0016 0000 (328 and 330 Buck Island Road) and R610 039 000 018C 0000 (332 Buck Island Road). The parcels are contiguous and located on Buck Island Road approximately 370 feet north of the Buck Island Road at Simmonsville Road intersection.

The request includes two concurrent applications. The Applicant is requesting an amendment to the Official Zoning Map for the Town of Bluffton to rezone the two (2) subject parcels from the Residential General (RG) zone district to the Light Industrial (LI) zone district. The Applicant is also requesting to amend the future land use designation for the subject properties from the Suburban Living designation to Neighborhood Center.

Unified Development Ordinance Section 3.2.2.F states that the first step in the Zoning Map Amendment and Comprehensive Plan Amendment review process is to hold a Planning Commission Workshop for the request. The Planning Commission held a workshop for these applications on July 24, 2024.

BACKGROUND: On May 14, 2024, the Town of Bluffton adopted an update to the Buck Island-Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan. As part of the neighborhood planning process leading up the drafting of the plan update, these two parcels were identified properties containing long-time commercial non-conforming uses. As a result, an Action Plan strategy included in the updated neighborhood plan was to “explore the possibility of rezoning two residentially zoned properties with long-time commercial non-conforming uses on Buck Island Road to an appropriate commercial zoning district” (Attachment 4).

A more regional view of the Town’s Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map show that the current non-conforming use of the properties are more compatible with the future land use and zoning designations of the adjacent properties to the south (Attachments 5 and 6).

Blueprint Bluffton Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use Map – The Future Land Use Map contained within the Town of Bluffton’s Comprehensive Plan identifies nine future land use categories that provide generalized recommendations as to where and how development should occur. The descriptions that accompany these categories prescribe the general character and types of development that are most appropriate in each category.

A description of the current and proposed future land use designations are as follows:

Future Land Use Designation (Current)

Suburban Living - The Suburban Living category is intended to include low density single-family neighborhoods. Much of this category includes portions of large Planned

Unit Developments that are under active construction or are built-out. Allowable density is up to three dwelling units per acre and must be at least one dwelling unit per acre. Community amenities such as trails, parks, and centralized swimming pools are encouraged.

Future Land Use Designation (Proposed)

Neighborhood Center - The Neighborhood Center category is intended to guide emerging neighborhood-focused retail clusters throughout the community. These centers, such as Buckwalter Place, provide the opportunity for residents to be within walking distance of grocers, restaurants, retailers, and medical offices. These centers help establish neighborhood identity and are best served when supported by a mix of middle housing and single-family residences within walking or biking distance.

A description of the current and proposed zoning districts are as follows:

Zoning (Current)

Residential General (RG) - The RG district is intended to provide for moderate-density residential neighborhoods. This district will include a range of dwelling types in an integrated neighborhood setting with other civic and recreational uses. The regulations are designed to promote neighborhood character and accommodate a variety of dwelling types.

Zoning (Proposed)

Light Industrial (LI) - The LI district is intended to provide locations for light industrial, research and development, assembly, high technology production, precision manufacturing, and similar primary employment uses. This district can be used to integrate a number of mutually supportive uses within the district to create employment centers.

ANALYSIS: Following is an analysis of the criteria for each application:

1. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

Town Staff, Planning Commission and Town Council are required to consider the criteria set forth in Section 3.3.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance in assessing an application for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. These criteria are provided below followed by a Staff Finding(s) based upon review of the application submittals to date.

- a. **Consistency with the intent of the overall policies in the Comprehensive Plan.**

Finding: The two subject parcels were identified in the Buck Island-Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan Update as properties containing long-time commercial non-conforming uses. As a result, an Action Plan strategy included in the updated neighborhood plan was to explore the possibility of rezoning these two properties to an appropriate zoning district. The appropriate zoning district is Light Industrial, and the appropriate future land use designation to support the zoning is Neighborhood Center.

- b. **Consistency with demographic changes, prevailing economic trends and/or newly recognized best planning practices that would deem the proposed amendment necessary and proper for the advancement of the Town of Bluffton's goals.**

Finding: The application is consistent with demographic changes, prevailing economic trends and/or newly recognized best planning practices that would deem the proposed amendment necessary and proper for the advancement of the Town of Bluffton's goals.

- c. **If applicable, the ability of public infrastructure and services to sufficiently accommodate the requested amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.**

Finding: The Properties subject to the Amendment are currently served by public infrastructure and services and any new development on the site is anticipated to have little to no impact on existing services.

- d. **Appropriate and efficient use of public funds, the future growth, development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and consideration of the fiscal impact on property owners.**

Finding: Approval of the amendment would have little or no fiscal impact on public funds.

- e. **Enhancement of the health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.**

Finding: The application will enhance the health safety and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.

- f. **Consistency with applicable South Carolina Planning law and consideration of case law.**

Finding: The application is consistent with applicable South Carolina Planning law and case law.

- g. **Impact of the proposed amendment on the provision of public services.**

Finding: The proposed amendment will have little to no impact on public services.

h. The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

Finding: The application has been reviewed by Staff and has been determined to be complete, meeting all requirements of the Applications Manual.

2. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

Article 3, Section 3.4.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance provides the following review criteria:

a. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or, if conditions have changed since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, consistency with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Plan, recent development trends and the general character of the area.

Finding: The zoning map amendment request will be consistent with the proposed future land use designation of Neighborhood Center. Upon approval of the concurrent Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the request will meet this criteria.

b. Capability of the site's physical, geological, hydrological and other environmental features to support the breadth and intensity of uses that could be developed in the proposed zoning district.

Finding: The properties are capable of supporting the breadth and intensity of uses permitted within the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district.

c. Compatibility of all the potential uses allowed in the proposed zoning district with surrounding uses and zoning districts in terms of suitability of location, impacts on the environment, noise, density, nature of use, traffic impacts, aesthetics, ability to develop adjacent properties under existing zoning, and potential influence on property values.

Finding: The rezoning of the Properties to Light Industrial (LI) is compatible with surrounding uses and zoning districts which are light industrial. The current long time commercial and light industrial non-conforming use of the properties currently have minimal impacts to the surrounding area.

- d. **Capacity of public infrastructure and services to sufficiently accommodate all potential uses allowed in the proposed district without compromising the public health, safety and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.**

Finding: There is current capacity of public infrastructure and services to sufficiently accommodate all potential uses allowed in the proposed district without compromising the public health, safety and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.

- e. **Public need for the potential uses permitted in the requested zoning district.**

Finding: The public need for the current non-conforming uses on the properties have been established. The zoning map amendment to the Light Industrial District will bring the current use into conformance.

- f. **The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.**

Finding: The application has been reviewed by Staff and has been determined to be complete, meeting all requirements of the Applications Manual.

SCHEDULE: The proposed schedule for the applications is provided as Attachment 7.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application Submittal
2. Existing Zoning
3. Future Land Use Map
4. Buck Island – Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan
5. Future Land Use Map (Regional)
6. Zone Map (Regional)
7. Meeting Schedule