

**DALTON-VARNELL-WHITFIELD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**503 WEST WAUGH STREET**  
**DALTON, GA 30720**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City of Dalton Mayor and Council  
Andrew Parker  
Jonathan Bledsoe  
Jean Price-Garland

**FROM:** Jim Lidderdale  
Chairman

**DATE:** December 19, 2023

**SUBJECT: The request of the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Dalton and Varnell to amend the Unified Zoning Ordinance to address commercial poultry and swine operations.** The most recent meeting of the Dalton-Varnell-Whitfield County Planning Commission was held on December 18, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Whitfield County Courthouse meeting room. A portion of the agenda included a public hearing concerning the above matter. A quorum of five members of the Planning Commission was present. All legal requirements for advertising and posting the public hearing were met. The petition was represented by Ethan Calhoun and Terry Miller.

**Public Hearing Summary:**

Mr. Calhoun summarized the staff analysis which recommended approval of the text amendment citing the more detailed definitions for commercial swine and poultry operations. Commissioner Thomas confirmed with Calhoun that the proposed definitions were based on federal government definitions. There were no further questions for Calhoun.

Terry Miller noted the concerns of Varnell citizens and leadership regarding the potential development of a large-scale poultry operation on a tract of land within the City of Varnell. Miller stated that this concern prompted the City of Varnell to develop a policy in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Varnell. Miller then pointed out that there are several hundred acres of land currently zoned GA within the City of Varnell that would currently allow commercial poultry operations with no local input.

Commissioner Thomas noted the amount of GA zoned land in Varnell was vague, and Thomas went on to state his apprehension with adoption regulation that would affect local farmers.

Sandy Pangle, Varnell Councilman, noted the limited size of the City of Varnell as compared to the unincorporated portion of Whitfield County stating that the proposed amendment would have minimal impact to the county-wide agricultural community. Pangle then pointed out the amount of residential development within the City of Varnell that has been occurring in recent years along with their expectations for continued residential development would be threatened if commercial poultry operations were permitted outright in proximity to said residential developments. Pangle ended his remarks by stating his concern with the potential impact animal feeding operations and concentrated animal feeding operations would have on the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Varnell.

With no other comments heard for or against, this hearing closed at approximately 6:22 pm.

**Recommendation:**

Chairman Lidderdale sought a motion on the requested UZO text amendment. **Chris Shiflett summarized the concerns raised during the public hearing David Pennington then made a motion to recommend approval of the text amendment based on his agreement with the content of the staff analysis. Eric Barr then seconded the motion and a unanimous recommendation to approve the text amendment followed, 4-0.**