



Staff Report

Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Subject: Variance
Meeting Date: May 19, 2026
Application: VAR-26-18

Existing Zoning: AR-2 (Agricultural – Residential, 1 acre or more)

Map & Parcel: 352G-9

Parcel Size: 1.437 acres

Applicant: Mr. Chad Brennan
209 Green Bridge Lane
Guyton, GA 31312

Owner(s): Mr. Chad Brennan
209 Green Bridge Lane
Guyton, GA 31312

Commissioner District: First District

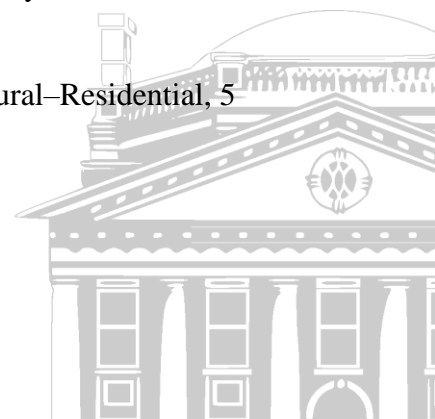
Location: 209 Green Bridge Lane
Guyton, GA 31312

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The subject parcel is located at **209 Green Bridge Lane** and currently contains a tiny home in the Green Bridge Farm subdivision, as confirmed by the Effingham County Tax Assessor’s database. Access to the property is provided via Green Bridge Lane.

Surrounding properties are zoned AR-2 and are characterized by low-density residential and agricultural uses:

- **North:** AR-2 (Agricultural – Residential, 1 acre or more) & R-3 (Multifamily Residential districts)
- **South:** AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
- **East:** AR-2 (Agricultural – Residential, 1 acre or more) & AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
- **West:** AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)





The Proposed Request:

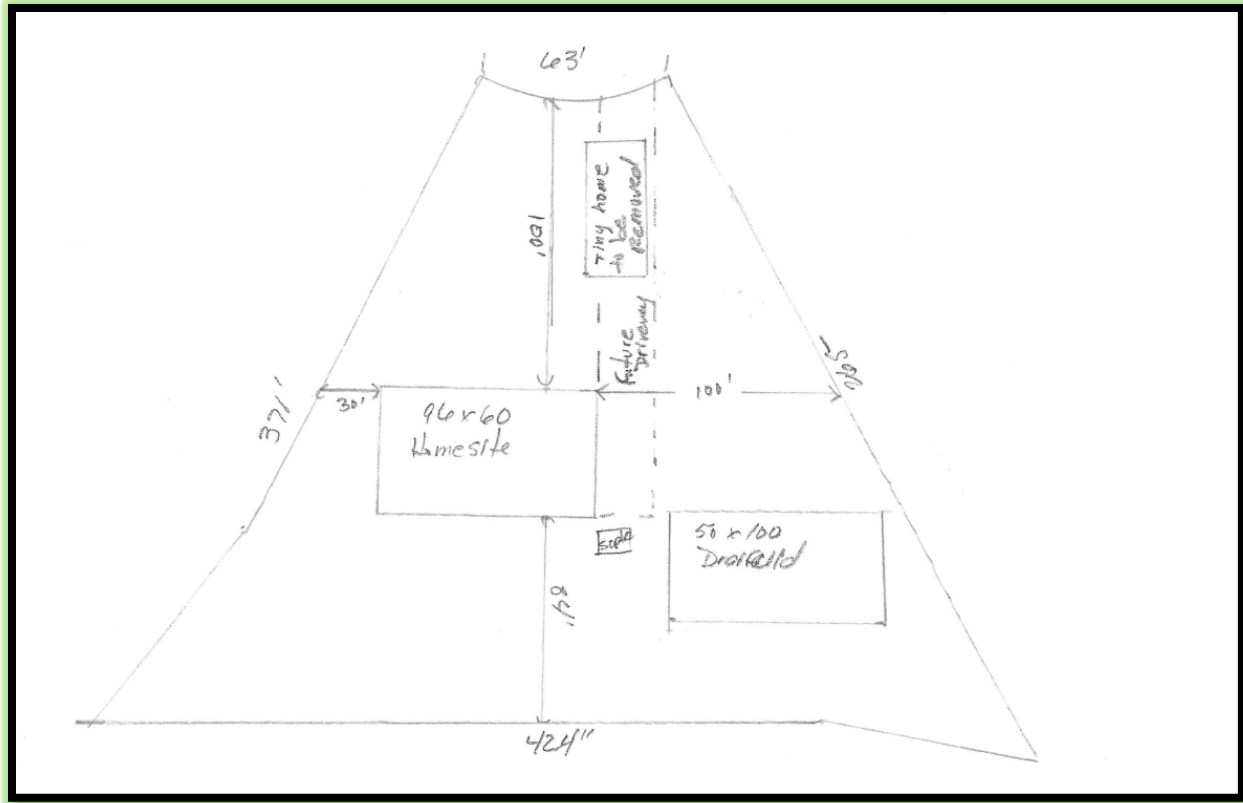
This **variance** request is submitted to permit the temporary occupancy of an existing tiny home located on the subject property during the construction of a new primary residence. The applicant has initiated the building permit process for the proposed home and intends to reside in the existing tiny home during construction.

The temporary use of the tiny home is intended solely to provide on-site housing during construction, thereby facilitating project oversight and the timely completion of improvements. Upon completion of the new residence and issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant has indicated that the tiny home will be removed from the property.

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Facts and Findings:

Site Characteristics

The subject parcel consists of approximately **1.437 acres** and is currently improved with a tiny home. Access to the property is provided directly from Green Bridge Lane.

The parcel does not contain any identified **wetlands, floodplains, or environmental constraints** based on County GIS mapping.

Surrounding Development Pattern

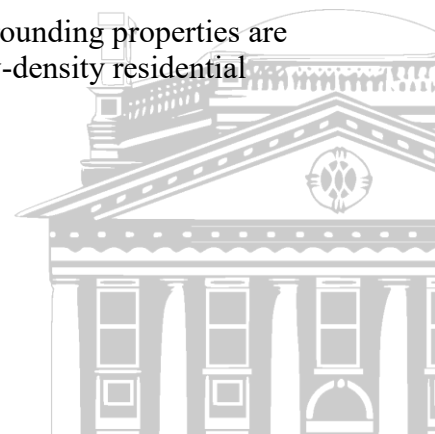
The area surrounding the parcel consists primarily of residential homesteads and agricultural tracts. Development intensity in the area is increasing, with lot sizes generally being 0.5 acre or greater.

Zoning Context

The parcel is zoned AR-2, which requires a minimum lot size of one (1) acre. Surrounding properties are primarily zoned AR-2, with some adjacent AR-1 parcels. The district supports low-density residential

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development that blends with the rural landscape and serves as a transition between more intensive development and larger-lot agricultural areas.

Infrastructure and Services

The property is served by a **private well and septic**, consistent with surrounding development. Emergency access is adequate via Green Bridge Lane.

***Variance Criteria- Article IX- 9.1:** The board of commissioners shall not grant such variances unless it finds, based on the evidence presented to it in each specific case, that:*

a. The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public safety, health, or welfare or injurious to other property, and

b. The conditions upon which the request is based are unique to the property for which the relief is sought and are not applicable generally to other property, and;

c. Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific property involved, a particular hardship to the owner would result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of these regulations is carried out, and;

d. The relief sought will not in any manner vary the provisions of the zoning ordinance or comprehensive plan, except that those documents may be amended in the manner prescribed by law.

Staff Analysis of Variance Criteria

(a) Public Safety and Welfare

The proposed temporary use of the tiny home on the property during the construction of the primary residence is not anticipated to affect public health, safety, or welfare adversely. The request is limited in duration and scope and is intended to provide safe, temporary housing while the existing dwelling is under construction.

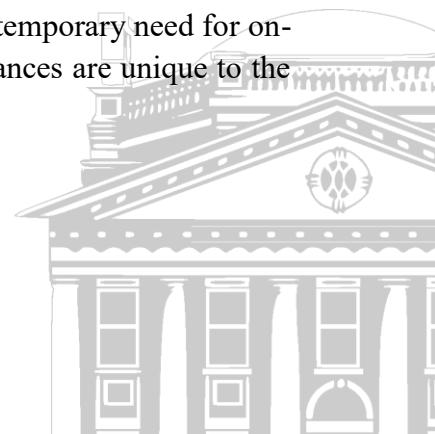
Provided that appropriate conditions are established—such as compliance with health department regulations, proper utility connections, and a defined timeframe for removal—the request is consistent with the maintenance of the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

(b) Unique Conditions

The subject property presents unique conditions that support consideration of the requested variance. Specifically, the property is undergoing active residential construction, creating a temporary need for on-site habitation that is not typical of fully developed residential lots. The circumstances are unique to the

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timing and logistics of constructing a primary dwelling, particularly when the property is in a rural area with limited access to nearby temporary housing options.

Additionally, the parcel's size, configuration, or location may make off-site accommodation impractical for overseeing construction activities. As such, the request is tied to a specific, time-limited situation that does not generally apply to other properties and would not establish a broad precedent if approved with appropriate conditions.

Hardship

The hardship primarily stems from the practical difficulty of managing construction activities while residing off-site, particularly when alternative housing options are limited or located a significant distance from the property. Additionally, the nature of the project may require regular on-site supervision for security, coordination of contractors, and timely decision-making.

Staff finds that the request is limited in scope and duration, as it is intended solely to accommodate temporary living arrangements during the construction period. With appropriate conditions, such as establishing a defined timeframe for occupancy and ensuring compliance with applicable health and safety standards, the request would not adversely impact the surrounding area or be contrary to the intent of the ordinance.

(d) Consistency with the Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan

The requested variance does not alter the permitted use of the property or conflict with the intent of the zoning ordinance. The request seeks limited relief from the ordinance restrictions to allow temporary residential occupancy by trailers (tiny homes on chassis) during the construction of the primary dwelling. The proposed use remains incidental and subordinate to the property's principal residential use and does not constitute a permanent change in land use. With appropriate conditions and time limitations, the request maintains the overall intent and integrity of the zoning regulations.

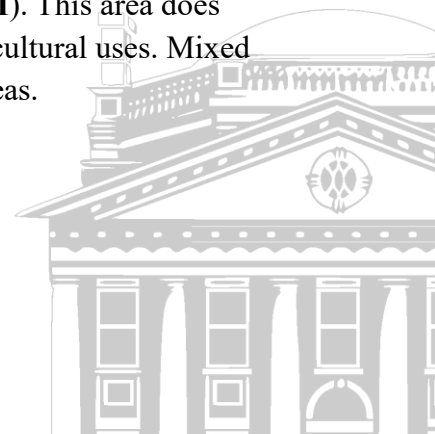
According to County ordinance *Section 3.21.1-Mobile homes, trailers, mobile home parks, and trailer parks states that parked or stored camping and recreational equipment shall never be occupied or used for living, sleeping, or housekeeping purposes.*

Although the ordinance does not typically permit temporary occupancy of a tiny home as a dwelling unit, the request is temporary in nature and associated with the active construction of the existing primary residence.

The parcel is designated **Agricultural** area on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This area does allow for low-density residential development that is compatible with nearby agricultural uses. Mixed housing types such as stick-built or manufactured homes are permitted in these areas.

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Rural areas are characterized by low-intensity development, larger lots, limited pedestrian orientation and access, sizable amounts of open space, and a high degree of separation with deep setbacks.

Comprehensive Plan:

The parcel is designated **Agricultural** area on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This category supports low-density residential development that is compatible with nearby agricultural uses. The intent is to ensure residential development patterns that are compatible with surrounding densities, building types, and established neighborhoods characterized by low intensity development, larger lots, low pedestrian orientation and access, with a sizable amount of open space, and with a high degree of separation and deep setbacks. (Effingham County 2020-2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, pg. 36).

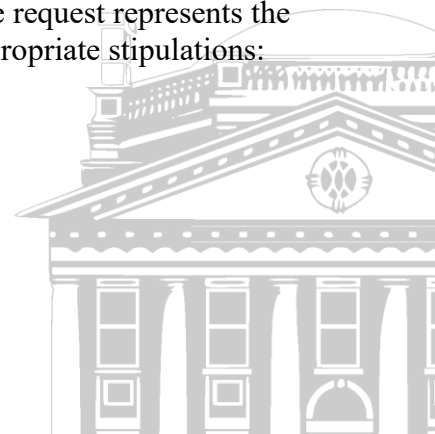


Recommendation:

Based on the findings contained in this report, staff finds that the request satisfies the variance criteria contained in Article IX, Section 9.1 of the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance. Allowing limited, temporary use of a tiny home provides a reasonable solution that enables the applicant to remain on-site while ensuring the timely completion of the home construction. Staff finds that the request represents the minimum necessary relief and, if approved, should be subject to the following appropriate stipulations:

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1. **The tiny home may be occupied for up to twelve (12) months during the home renovation.** Should an extension be needed, the applicant shall come before the Board of Commissioners for approval.
2. **Upon completion of the renovation,** the tiny home shall be vacated, removed, and disconnected from the well and septic.

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