



County
Effingham
Georgia
Board of Commissioners



Damon M. Rahn, Chairman at Large
Forrest F. Floyd, District 1
Roger Burdette, District 2
Jamie Deloach, District 3
Elizabeth Helmly, District 4
Phil Kieffer, District 5

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES JULY 15, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Damon Rahn, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Jamie Deloach, and Ms. Elizabeth Helmly met in work session at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers at the Effingham County Administrative Complex located at 804 South Laurel Street Springfield, Georgia 31329.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Manager, Mr. Edward Newberry – County Attorney, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy County Clerk, Ms. Chelsie Fernald – Planning Manager, Ms. Kimberly Barlett – Community Planner, Mr. Xerxes Sabb – I.T. Support Specialist III.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Travis Bazemore and Murray Marshall.

I - CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rahn called the session to order at 4:12pm

II- WORK SESSION TOPICS

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICTS: R-1 & R-5 (1):

Senior Planner Fernald began the work session and focused on reviewing the R-1 and R-5 zoning regulations and the open space ordinance. The R-1 district aims to preserve the character of low-density residential neighborhoods, allowing a maximum of one principal residence and one accessory dwelling unit. Utilities remain unchanged, permitting septic systems or private/community sanitary sewer systems. New development standards for R-1 include sidewalk requirements in communities with water and sewer.

Specifications for sidewalks were clarified to ensure consistency. The ordinance allows minimal clearing within required buffers for entrance features, with staff discretion to ensure visual cohesion and mitigate impacts on adjacent properties. Entrance requirements were not mandated due to difficulties in definition, allowing flexibility for staff. In the R-1 A district, 46 lots are zoned for manufactured or modular homes on foundations. The ordinance will not change, but measures to retain natural trees during development were discussed. Encouraging tree preservation through a combination of the tree ordinance and open space requirements, including credits for



saving grand trees or a percentage of the tree canopy, was suggested. Changes to residential zoning focus on preserving and developing open space and amenities. The current R-1 lacks an open space requirement. Buffer requirements may be extended from 15 to 50 feet, incorporating berms and heavy foliage buffers. The steering committee emphasized addressing neighborhood frontage to maintain a rural feel, using Lonadine as an example.

The discussion also covered erosion prevention, with suggestions for construction fence delineation and inspections before site clearing. The open space document was highlighted as crucial for distinguishing Effingham from surrounding jurisdictions. R-5 requires a 25% open space requirement, calculated from the total site minus wetlands and required buffers. Developers must provide usable open space (e.g., fields) for every 200 lots, with enhanced credits for hard-scape amenities like tennis courts and playgrounds. Ponds can contribute to open space requirements but are capped at 25%, with the remaining 75% being non-water related. Incentives for amenities were discussed, with some advocating for mandates like walking trails around ponds. Legal restrictions and community compliance were considered, favoring incentives over strict requirements. Open space can be turned over to the county, homeowners' association, or a conservation nonprofit. R-1 does not require a homeowner's association but mandates community maintenance agreements for ponds. The session emphasized balancing development in R-1 with larger home sites, open space, and amenity requirements. Incentives include bus stops, playgrounds, and asphalt trails.

III – ADJOURNMENT

At 5:02 pm, there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Damon Rahn, Chairman

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AUGUST 5, 2025

Stephanie D. Johnson, County Clerk