



Staff Report

Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Subject: Variance
Meeting Date: April 7, 2026
Application: VAR-26-6

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

Map & Parcel: 342-28

Parcel Size: 3.00 acres

Applicant: Anthony Lester
987 Springfield Egypt Road
Springfield, Ga 31329

Owner(s): Anthony Lester
180 Lakeshore Road
Guyton, Ga 31312

Commissioner District: Third District

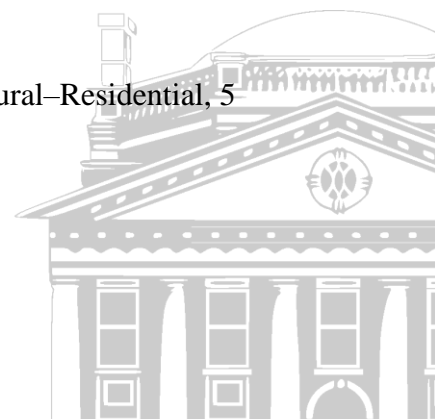
Location: 987 Springfield Egypt Road
Springfield, Ga 31329

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The parcel is located at 987 Springfield Egypt Road. The parcel currently has a mobile home, as confirmed through the Effingham County Tax Assessor’s database. Access to the property is provided via Springfield Egypt Road.

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)
- **South:** AR-2 (Agricultural – Residential, 1 acre or more)
- **East:** AR-2 (Agricultural – Residential, 1 acre or more) & AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)



- **West:** AR-2 (Agricultural – Residential, 1 acre or more) & B-3 (Major Commercial)



The Proposed Request:

This **variance** request is intended to allow for two campers to be temporarily occupied while the existing mobile home on the property is being remodeled. The proposed temporary occupancy for the two campers includes one for the applicant, spouse, and daughter, and the other for the applicant's mother.

The applicant’s proposed remodeling work is limited to cosmetic improvements; therefore, a building permit is not required. The project will not include any exterior modifications, electrical work, or plumbing.

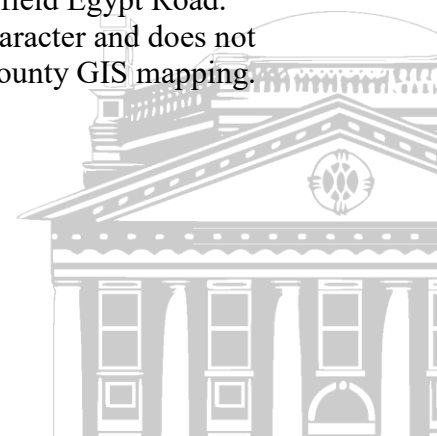
Facts and Findings:

Site Characteristics

The subject parcel contains **3.00 acres** and currently has a mobile home on Springfield Egypt Road. Access is provided directly from Springfield Egypt Road. The parcel is rural in character and does not contain known **wetlands, floodplains, or environmental constraints** based on County GIS mapping.

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Surrounding Development Pattern

The area surrounding the parcel consists primarily of rural residential homesteads and agricultural tracts. Development intensity remains low, with lot sizes predominantly ranging from one acre or more.

Zoning Context

The parcel is currently zoned AR-2, which requires a minimum lot size of one (1) acre. Surrounding properties are also zoned AR-2. This district supports moderately sized lots (minimum 1 acre), encouraging low-density development that blends residential uses with the rural landscape. AR-2 provides a transitional zone between more intensive development and larger-lot rural areas.

Infrastructure and Services

The property is served by a **private well and septic**, consistent with surrounding development. No public water or sewer is available in this area. Emergency access is adequate via Springfield Egypt Road.

***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.*

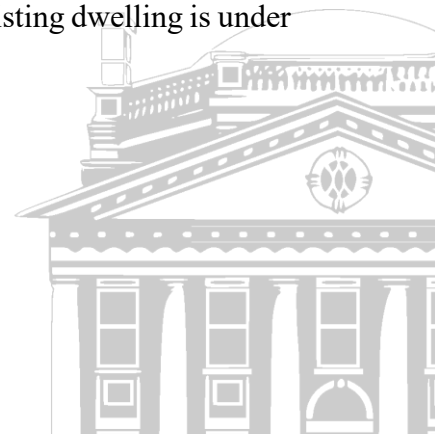
Staff Analysis of Variance Criteria

(a) Public Safety and Welfare

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

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Additionally, the temporary occupancy will remain accessory to the principal residential use and will not alter the character of the surrounding area.

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 maintaining the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

(b) Unique Conditions

The subject property is affected by specific circumstances that are not commonly shared by other properties in the area. The primary residence is currently undergoing active renovation, which has rendered the home temporarily uninhabitable. This condition creates a unique situation in which the property cannot be reasonably used for its intended residential purpose during the construction period.

(c) Hardship

The applicant is requesting relief to allow temporary occupancy of a camper on the property during the active renovation of the primary residence. The home is currently undergoing substantial repairs and improvements that render it unsuitable for safe and habitable occupancy.

The need for temporary on-site living accommodations arises from the ongoing construction activities, which may include structural work, utility interruptions, and other conditions that prevent normal residential use.

The hardship is not self-created, but rather a result of necessary renovations to maintain and improve the existing residence. Requiring the applicant to vacate the property entirely during this period would create an undue burden, particularly given the temporary nature of the situation.

(d) Consistency with the Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan

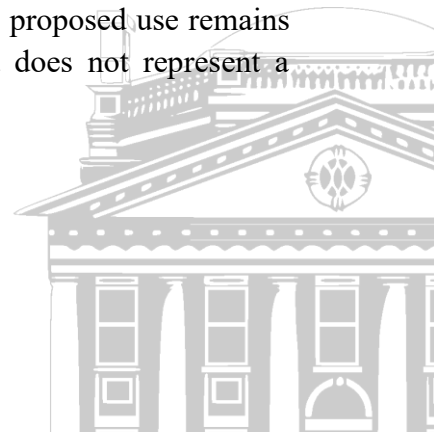
According to County ordinance *Section 3.21.1-Mobile homes, trailers, mobile home parks, and trailer parks states that parked or stored camping and recreational equipment shall never be occupied or used for living, sleeping, or housekeeping purposes.*

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

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 ordinance restrictions to allow temporary residential occupancy of campers during renovation of the primary dwelling. The proposed use remains incidental and subordinate to the principal residential use of the property and does not represent a

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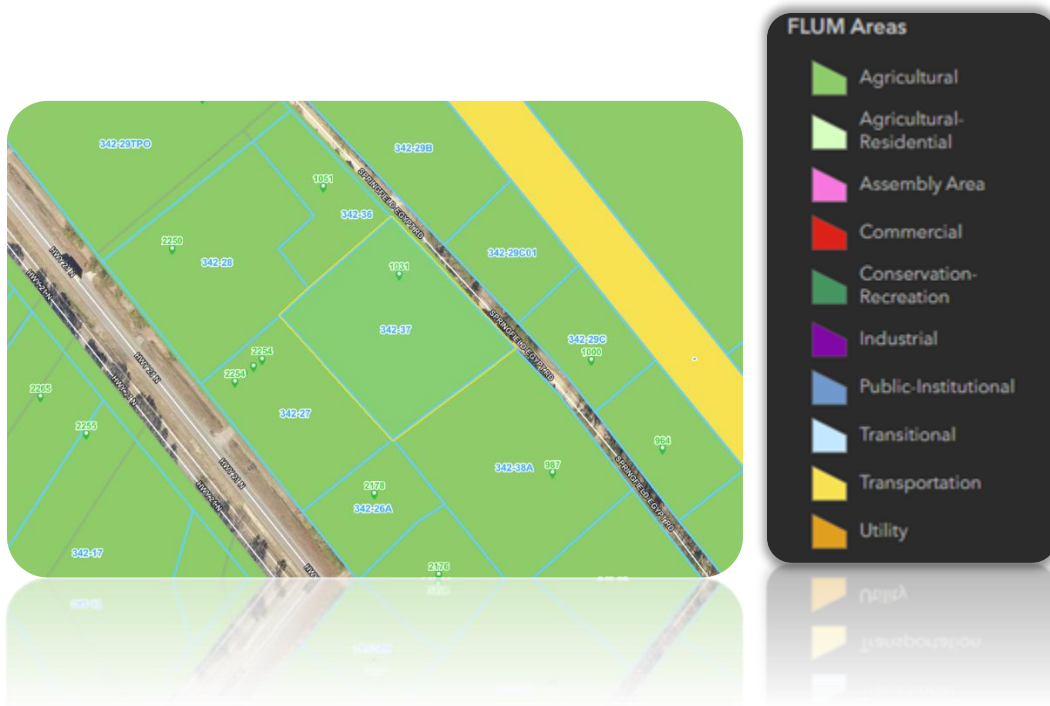
permanent change in land use. With appropriate conditions and time limitations, the request maintains the overall intent and integrity of the zoning regulations.

The temporary nature of the request ensures that it will not adversely impact the long-term character or development patterns of the area.

Approval of the variance would not vary the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

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).

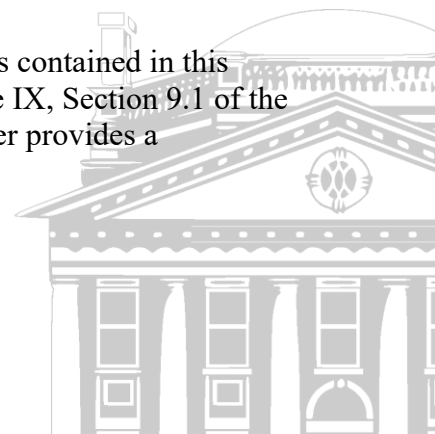


Recommendation:

Staff recommends **APPROVAL**. Based on the evidence presented and 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 camper provides a

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reasonable solution that enables the applicant to remain on-site while ensuring the timely completion of the renovation. Staff finds that the request represents the minimum necessary relief and, if approved, should be subject to the following appropriate stipulations:

1. **The RV/camper 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 camper shall be vacated and disconnected from the well and septic.

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