Effingham County Georgia
Planning and Zoning Services

Staff Report

Subject:	Rezoning
Author:	Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department:	Development Services
Application:	RZN-26-46
Meeting Date:	October 13, 2026
Existing Zoning:	**AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)**
Proposed Zoning:	**B-3 (Major Commercial)**
Map & Parcel(s):	355A-8A
Total Acreage Affected	± 0.881 acres
Location:	US Hwy 80
Commissioner District:	First District
Proposed Use:	Commercial Use
Applicant/Owner:	William Randall Bell 6620 Hwy 21 Port Wentworth, Ga 31407

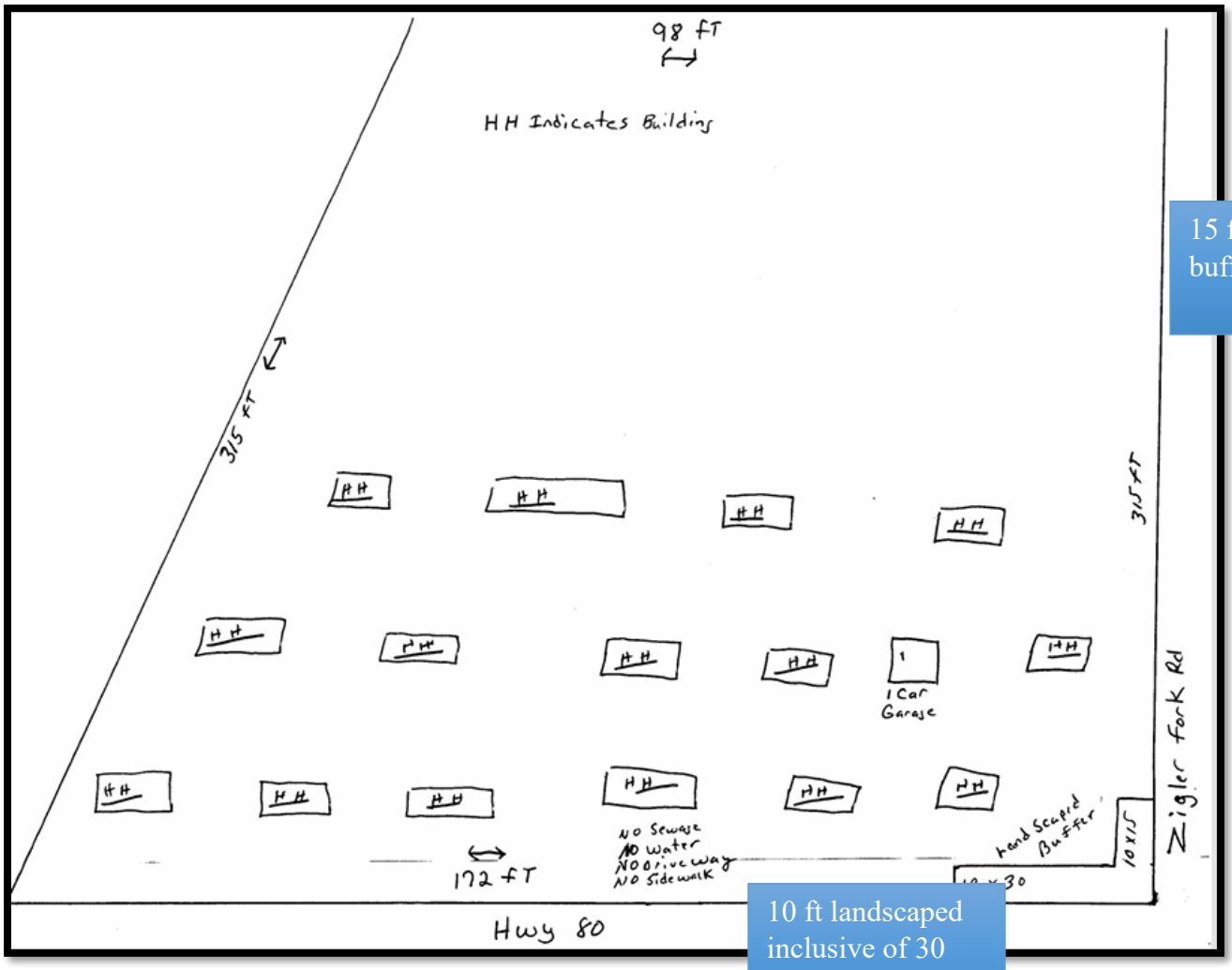
Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± .881 acres from **AR-1 to B-3**
Proposed Use	**Outdoor display and sale of sheds**
Existing Use	Accessory Structure
Future Land Use	**Agricultural Residential/ Commercial Corridor**
Utilities	Private well & septic
Access	US Hwy 80

Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately ± **0.881 acres** from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)** to **B-3 (Major Commercial)** to allow for the **outdoor display and sale of sheds**.

The proposed rezoning would allow the subject property to be utilized for a commercial shed sales operation, including the outdoor placement and display of sheds available for purchase.



Zoning History

The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more).** There are no prior zoning cases on this property. The property is associated with the adjacent properties 355A-9A

& 355A-7A, which were rezoned from AR-1 to B-3 at the April 3, 2018 Board of Commissioners meeting.

***Code Enforcement:** There was a code enforcement complaint regarding commercial activity on a residentially zoned property. Based on progress made toward compliance, the case has been closed at this time.



Existing Site Condition

The subject property consists of approximately **0.881 acres** and is located along US Hwy 80 with direct access. The property is currently developed with one accessory structure. Future development of the property would be required to comply with the County's development regulations and applicable sidewalk requirements.

The subject parcel is a legal nonconforming lot of record. The parcel was created prior to the adoption of the current AR-1 zoning district standards, which require a minimum lot size of five (5) acres. The existing parcel contains approximately 0.881 acres and therefore does not meet the current minimum lot size requirement.

Based on **County GIS mapping**, the parcel contains no identified **wetlands, floodplains, or environmental constraints.**

Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood
• **North: B-3 (Major Commercial) & AR-1 (Agricultural Residential, 5 acres or more)**
• **South: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)**
• **East: B-3 (Major Commercial)**
• **West: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)**

The surrounding area includes a mix of single-family residential neighborhoods, rural residential homesteads, and commercial uses. Based on the zoning map provided, the surrounding area reflects a mixed but transitioning zoning pattern, described as follows:

North

- Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1)
- W J Thompson Subdivision (AR-1)
- Undeveloped (B-3)

East/ Northeast

- Portable building sales (B-3)
- Connor Homes (B-3)
- Agricultural- residential homesteads (R-1)
- Thompson Subdivision (AR-1)

South

- Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1)
- Skincare store (B-3)
- Parkers Gas Station (B-3)
- Trucking (I-1)

West

- Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1)
- Faulkville Church (AR-1)
- Chevron Gas Station (B-2)
- Mobile Home Park (R-4)



Zoning Development Standards for B-3

Requirement	Standard
Greenspace	**Minimum 15% of site area**
Sidewalks	**Required along all public street frontages**
Buffers	**30-foot vegetated buffer required on front property line and 15-foot vegetated buffer along the eastern property line**
Parking	**Determined by proposed use**
Lighting	**Must be designed to reflect light away from adjacent residentially zoned properties**

Max sq. footage for building	**N/A**

Applicable Ordinance Sections

Section 2.441- Definitions:

Screened storage yard. An outdoor area used for storing materials, equipment, or goods, which is partially or fully enclosed by a physical barrier (such as a fence or screening material) to restrict visibility and provide security. This type of storage is often used for construction materials, vehicles, industrial equipment, or waste.

Section 2.440- Definitions:

Screened storage. An area where items are stored out of direct view, using some form of screening or enclosure for privacy, security, or visual appeal. The screening can be made of fencing, walls, landscaping, or other barriers.

Section 3.4.2 – Adjacent Public Street Buffers:

"All development excluding industrial development shall maintain a ten-foot-wide landscaped buffer between any parking or loading area and an adjacent accessed public right-of-way (ROW)."

Section 5.11.3 – Sidewalk Requirement:

"Sidewalks shall be required along all public street frontages within commercial districts. If no existing sidewalk or pedestrian network is located within 500 feet of the subject property, the developer may provide a payment in lieu of construction. The payment shall be equal to the estimated cost of sidewalk installation and shall be used by the County for future pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the area."

Buffer Reduction Provision (Section 3.4, Fence-Based Reduction):

"If a privacy fence is used, the material needs approval by Development Services, the fence maximum height is seven (7) feet in height, then the adjacent buffer may be reduced by ten (10) feet — 30 feet to 20 feet for residential required buffers only."

Buffer Chart

	AR-1	AR-2	AR-3	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3	PD	I-1	LI	HI
AR-1	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
AR-2	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
AR-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-1	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-2	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-4	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-5	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-6	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft
B-1	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	150 ft	50 ft	150 ft
B-2	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	150 ft	50 ft	150 ft
B-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	150 ft	50 ft	150 ft
PD	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	10 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
I-1	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft
LI	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	25 ft	50 ft	50 ft
HI	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft

Zoning Classification

The Major Commercial District (B-3) is intended to accommodate a diverse mix of commercial activities that provide both durable and convenience goods to the broader community. This district supports businesses that benefit from high visibility, easy access, and steady vehicular traffic, making it ideal for commercial uses that cater to both local residents and travelers. Strategically located along major and minor thoroughfares, ensuring direct access to well-traveled roadways and key transportation corridors. Their placement allows for the efficient movement of goods and services while minimizing disruptions to local streets and residential areas. Given the potential for increased traffic volumes and commercial activity, site design standards prioritize buffering, landscaping, and access management to mitigate impacts on adjacent properties. Proper setbacks, screening, and traffic control measures help reduce noise, glare, and congestion, ensuring a smooth transition between commercial corridors and nearby residential or lower intensity uses. Playing a vital role in supporting regional commerce, economic growth, and job creation while maintaining a balance between accessibility, functionality, and community character.

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential) to **B-3 (Major Commercial)** would increase the intensity of use by introducing a commercial operation on property currently intended for low-density residential and agricultural uses. The proposed business may generate additional customer and delivery traffic, outdoor display and storage, signage, lighting, and commercial activity.
The intensity of the use will depend largely on the number and placement of portable buildings, hours of operation, frequency of deliveries, and use of equipment for loading and unloading. Potential impacts on surrounding properties may be reduced through adequate setbacks, vegetative buffers, screening,

controlled lighting, designated display areas, and safe access. Provided the site complies with applicable parking, access, landscaping, buffering, and development standards, the proposed use may function as a moderate-intensity commercial use despite the broader range of uses permitted within the B-3 district.

Infrastructure

The property is served by **a private well and septic system, consistent with the** surrounding development.

Roadway Classification: The proposed development will access Zeigler Road, which is classified as a local road with access from United States Hwy 80, a Minor Arterial Road within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential) to B-3 (Major Commercial) to allow the display and sale of portable storage buildings is not anticipated to adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare, provided the site complies with all applicable development standards. Potential impacts may include increased customer and delivery traffic, loading and unloading activity, outdoor displays, lighting, and visual effects on nearby properties.

Safe ingress and egress, adequate sight distance, designated loading and display areas, and sufficient on-site parking will be necessary to prevent conflicts with traffic and pedestrian circulation. Required setbacks, buffers, screening, and downward-directed lighting should be provided to minimize impacts on adjacent residential or agricultural properties. All portable buildings must be securely placed and maintained so they do not create unsafe conditions.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

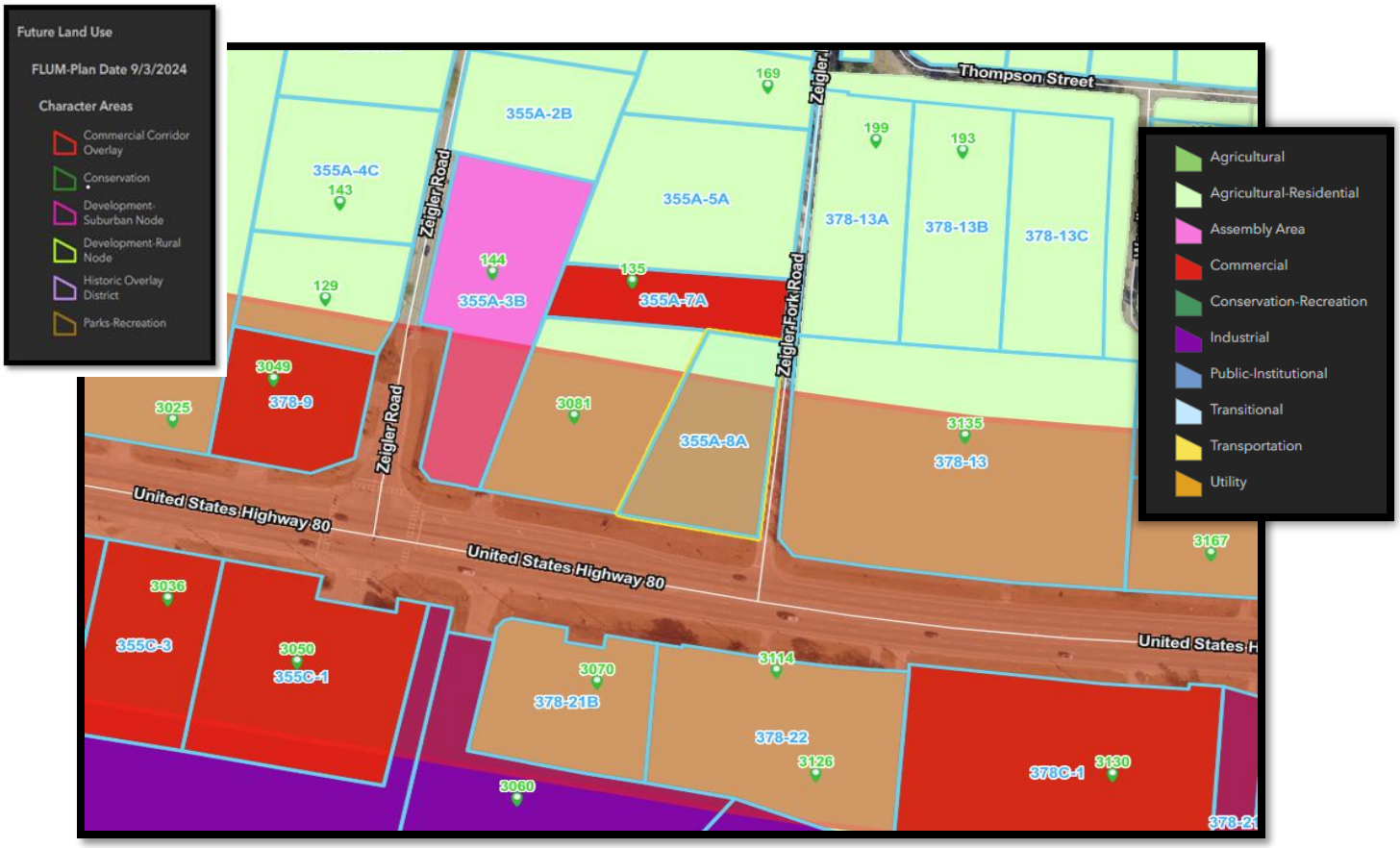
The subject property is designated **Agricultural–Residential** on the **Future Land Use Map**, which primarily supports low-density residential and agricultural uses. Therefore, the proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential) to **B-3 (Major Commercial) is not** consistent with the underlying future land-use designation.

However, the property is also located within the **Commercial Corridor Overlay**, which supports appropriately designed commercial development along designated transportation corridors. The proposed use may be compatible with the intent of the overlay if the development provides safe access, appropriate landscaping and screening, required buffers, controlled signage and lighting, and an orderly arrangement of outdoor display areas. Staff finds that the request is not directly consistent with the Agricultural–Residential designation but may be generally consistent with the commercial development objectives of the Commercial Corridor Overlay and the intent of the B-3 zoning district.

*The parcel is designated **Agricultural–Residential** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This category supports single-family and multifamily residential uses arranged within general net-density*

ranges. The intent is to ensure residential development patterns that are compatible with surrounding densities, building types, and established neighborhood character (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 37).

*The **Commercial corridor** area is characterized by highly trafficked commercial development along streets and highways. The purpose is to establish standards for the design of sites, buildings, structures, plantings, signs, street hardware, and other such improvements that are visible to the public and affect the physical development of land within specific designated transportation corridors. The Design should be pedestrian-oriented with walkable connections. Commercial corridors play a vital role in the local economy by providing goods and services to residents, creating job opportunities, and contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of the community. (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 41).*



Staff Summary

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is generally compatible with the surrounding development pattern and the intent of the **B-3 (Major Commercial)** zoning district. The request is not consistent with the Agricultural Residential designation on the Future Land Use Map; however, it is consistent with the commercial corridor overlay district.