



## Staff Report

Subject: Variance (First District)  
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner  
Department: Development Services  
Application: VAR-26-1  
Meeting Date: February 17, 2026

Existing Zoning: AR-1 (Agricultural – Residential, 5 acres or more)

Map & Parcel: 329-12

Parcel Size: .78 acres

Applicant: Brandy Gunter  
P.O. Box 102  
Meldrim, Ga 31318

Owner(s): Brandy Gunter  
P.O. Box 102  
Meldrim, Ga 31318

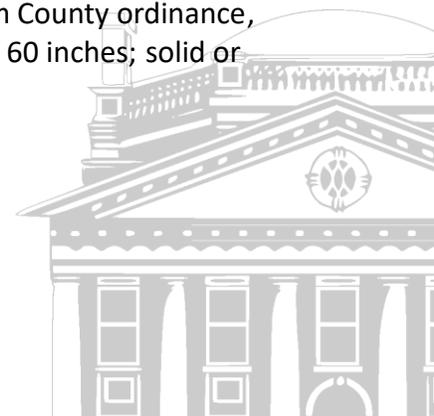
Location: 520 Old River Road  
Bloomingdale, GA 31302

### Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The parcel is located at 520 Old River Road. A single-family residence is currently on the property. The parcel is non-conforming, classified as AR-1 (Agricultural – Residential, 5 acres or more). Properties to the north are AR-1 (Agricultural – Residential, 5 acres or more), to the east is PD (Planned Development), to the west are R-2 ( Residential Multifamily- Low-density districts), and to the south are R-1 ( Single-Family residential districts).

### The Proposed Request:

The applicant has requested to construct a seven-foot wooden fence in the front yard. The applicants have explained that Old River Road is four feet higher than their property, and the car lights continue to shine into their home. According to Section 6.2 Yards of the Effingham County ordinance, For AR districts, front yard fences may be constructed up to a maximum height of 60 inches; solid or opaque fences are not permitted in the front yard.



**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.

**Comprehensive Plan:**

The parcel falls within the Agricultural – Residential area on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). This prominent use of land within this area is for single-family and multifamily dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. Residential zoning ensures that land is used appropriately for housing, considering factors like density, building types, and neighborhood character (Effingham County 2020-2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, pg. 37).

**Determination:**

Staff has reviewed the application, and the application is complete.

1. All front yard fences must be located a minimum of 10 feet from the edge of the road ( measured from the edge of pavement or improved surface).

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**Planning and Zoning Services**

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329  
(912) 754-2128  
effinghamcounty.org



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