



Staff Report

Subject: 2nd Reading - Zoning Map Amendment
 Author: Jennifer Rose, Planner I
 Department: Development Services
 Application: RZN-26-17
 Meeting Date: June 2, 2026

Existing Zoning: AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres)

Proposed Zoning: AR-2 (Agricultural Residential – less than 5 acres)

Map & Parcel(s): 262-21A & 262-31

Parent Parcel Size: 54.44 acres

Total Acreage Affected ±2.06 acres

Location: Nixon Chapel Road

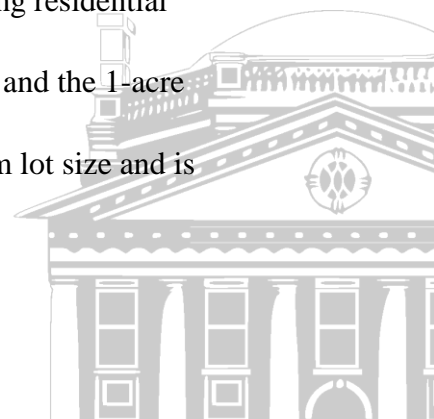
Commissioner District: 3rd District

Proposed Use: Lot conveyance and consolidation

Applicant/Owner: Layton Stone
 1700 Nixon Chapel Road
 Springfield, GA 31329

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Applicant Request	Rezone approximately ±2.06 acres from AR-1 to AR-2
Purpose	Facilitate conveyance and consolidation of two parcels into a single conforming lot
Proposed Use	Lot consolidation for residential use
Existing Use	Undeveloped / wooded land (donor tract) and existing residential homesite (receiving parcel)
Zoning Action	AR-1 → AR-2 (both the 1.06-acre conveyance area and the 1-acre receiving parcel)
Nonconformity Issue	Existing 1-acre parcel does not meet AR-1 minimum lot size and is considered legal nonconforming



Item	Description
Result of Rezoning	Eliminates nonconformity by creating a conforming lot under AR-2 standards
Future Land Use Map	Agricultural
Utilities	Private well and septic
Location	Nixon Chapel Road
Key Considerations	Resolution of nonconforming lot, minimal scope of request, no increase in density, and consistency with rural development pattern
Planning Board Recommendation	Approval (Unanimous – May 12, 2026)

Request Overview:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **2.06 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential)**, consisting of:

- **±1.06 acres to be subdivided from Parcel 262-21A, and**
- **±1.0-acre adjacent parcel (Map & Parcel 262-31)**

The purpose of the request is to allow the **conveyance and consolidation of the 1.06-acre portion with the adjacent parcel.**

Parcel 262-31:

- Is approximately **1 acre in size**
- Does not meet AR-1 minimum lot size requirements
- Is considered a **legal nonconforming lot**

Under current zoning regulations, adding acreage to a nonconforming parcel without rezoning would **expand the nonconformity**, which is not permitted.

Rezoning both the **donor tract (1.06 acres)** and the **receiving parcel (1 acre)** to AR-2 would:

- Allow the parcels to be **combined into a single conforming lot**
- Bring the property into **compliance with zoning standards**
- Maintain the **existing rural residential character**

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The applicant has indicated the property will be used for:

- Expansion of the existing residential yard
- Potential accessory structures (e.g., small pole barn)
- No additional residential dwelling units on the conveyed acreage

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The subject property consists of two parcels along Nixon Chapel Road: a 54.44-acre wooded tract (Parcel 262-21A) and a 1-acre residential homesite (Parcel 262-31). Both parcels are currently zoned AR-1.

Both parcels are currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5-acre minimum lot size)**. Parcel 262-21A is primarily **wooded and undeveloped**, while Parcel 262-31 is developed as a **residential homesite**.

Surrounding Development Pattern:

The subject property is located in a **rural area characterized by agricultural land and low-density residential development**.

A review of the Effingham County zoning map indicates surrounding properties are predominantly zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**.

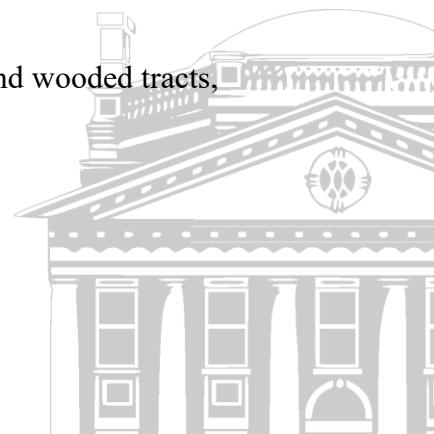
The surrounding zoning pattern is as follows:

- **North:** AR-1
- **South:** AR-1
- **East:** AR-2
- **West:** AR-1

The area is characterized by large-lot residential development, agricultural land, and wooded tracts, reflecting a rural development pattern.

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The proposed request includes rezoning both:

- The **1.06-acre portion being conveyed**, and
- The **existing 1-acre parcel**

Under AR-1 zoning, adding acreage to Parcel 262-31 would **expand a nonconforming condition**, which is generally not permitted.

Rezoning both parcels to AR-2 allows the combined parcel to:

- Meet AR-2 lot size requirements
- Be configured in a manner consistent with zoning regulations

Infrastructure and Services

Access to both parcels is provided from Nixon Chapel Road.

The properties are served by private well and septic systems. Any future use must comply with:

- Effingham County subdivision regulations
- Environmental Health Department requirements

The request does not introduce:

- Additional residential density
- Increased infrastructure demand

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The subject properties are designated Agricultural on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) within the Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The Agricultural designation is intended to:

- Preserve rural landscapes and agricultural uses
- Support low-density residential development
- Maintain large-lot development patterns

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Future Land Use

FLUM-Plan Date 9/3/2024

Character Areas











-  Commercial Corridor Overlay
-  Conservation
-  Development-Suburban Node
-  Development-Rural Node
-  Historic Overlay District
-  Parks-Recreation

(FLUM Node Legend)



Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

FLUM Areas

-  Agricultural
-  Agricultural-Residential
-  Assembly Area
-  Commercial
-  Conservation-Recreation
-  Industrial
-  Public-Institutional
-  Transitional
-  Transportation
-  Utility

(FLUM Legend)

Development within this designation is typically characterized by:

- Agricultural activities
- Timberland and open space
- Rural residential homesites

The request represents a minor lot adjustment within a rural setting and does not introduce additional development intensity.

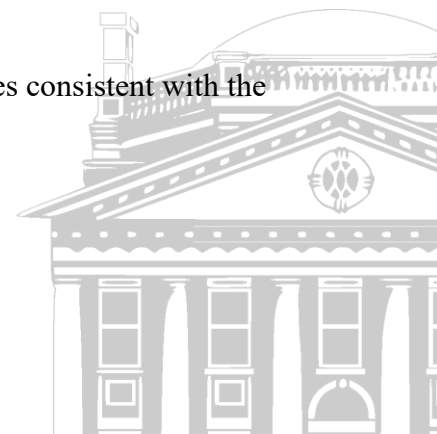
Staff Findings

Based on review of the rezoning request and supporting materials, staff finds the following:

1. **Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan**
The request aligns with the Agricultural Future Land Use designation, which supports low-density residential and agricultural uses.
2. **Compatibility with Surrounding Development**
The surrounding area consists of agricultural and rural residential properties consistent with the proposed zoning classification.

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3. **Nonconformity Consideration**

Parcel 262-31 is currently nonconforming under AR-1 zoning. Rezoning both parcels allows the lots to be combined into a configuration that aligns with zoning requirements.

4. **Infrastructure Considerations**

The request does not increase demand on infrastructure and remains served by private well and septic systems.

5. **Limited Scope of Request**

The rezoning applies only to 2.06 acres and does not introduce additional density or development intensity.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At the **May 12, 2026** Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the requested rezoning application. Staff presented the request to rezone approximately ± 2.06 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to facilitate conveyance and consolidation of two parcels into a single conforming lot.

Following discussion, the **Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the request**, citing the limited scope of the rezoning, the resolution of an existing nonconforming lot condition, and consistency with the surrounding rural development pattern.

STAFF ANALYSIS / KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The request involves rezoning approximately ± 2.06 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to facilitate conveyance and consolidation of two adjoining parcels into a single conforming residential lot. The request includes approximately ± 1.06 acres being conveyed from Parcel 262-21A to the adjacent 1-acre residential parcel identified as Parcel 262-31.

Parcel 262-31 is currently considered a legal nonconforming lot under the existing AR-1 zoning district due to its size being below the minimum five-acre lot requirement. Under current zoning regulations, additional acreage cannot be added to a nonconforming parcel without addressing the zoning nonconformity. Rezoning both parcels to AR-2 would allow the lots to be consolidated into a conforming configuration under the AR-2 district standards.

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The surrounding area is characterized by low-density residential development, agricultural land, wooded tracts, and predominantly AR-1 zoning. The request does not introduce additional residential density, commercial activity, or a new land use type into the area.

The property is served by private well and septic systems, and the request does not create additional infrastructure demand. Any future development will remain subject to Environmental Health approvals and applicable subdivision and zoning requirements.

The Future Land Use Map designates the property as Agricultural, which supports rural residential and agricultural land uses. Staff finds the request represents a limited zoning adjustment intended to resolve an existing nonconforming lot condition while maintaining the existing rural development pattern of the area.

Conditions (If Approved)

If the Board elects to approve the rezoning request, the following condition may be considered:

1. The rezoned acreage shall be combined into a single parcel (262-31), and shall not be established as separate buildable lot.

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