Effingham County Georgia
Planning and Zoning Services

Staff Report

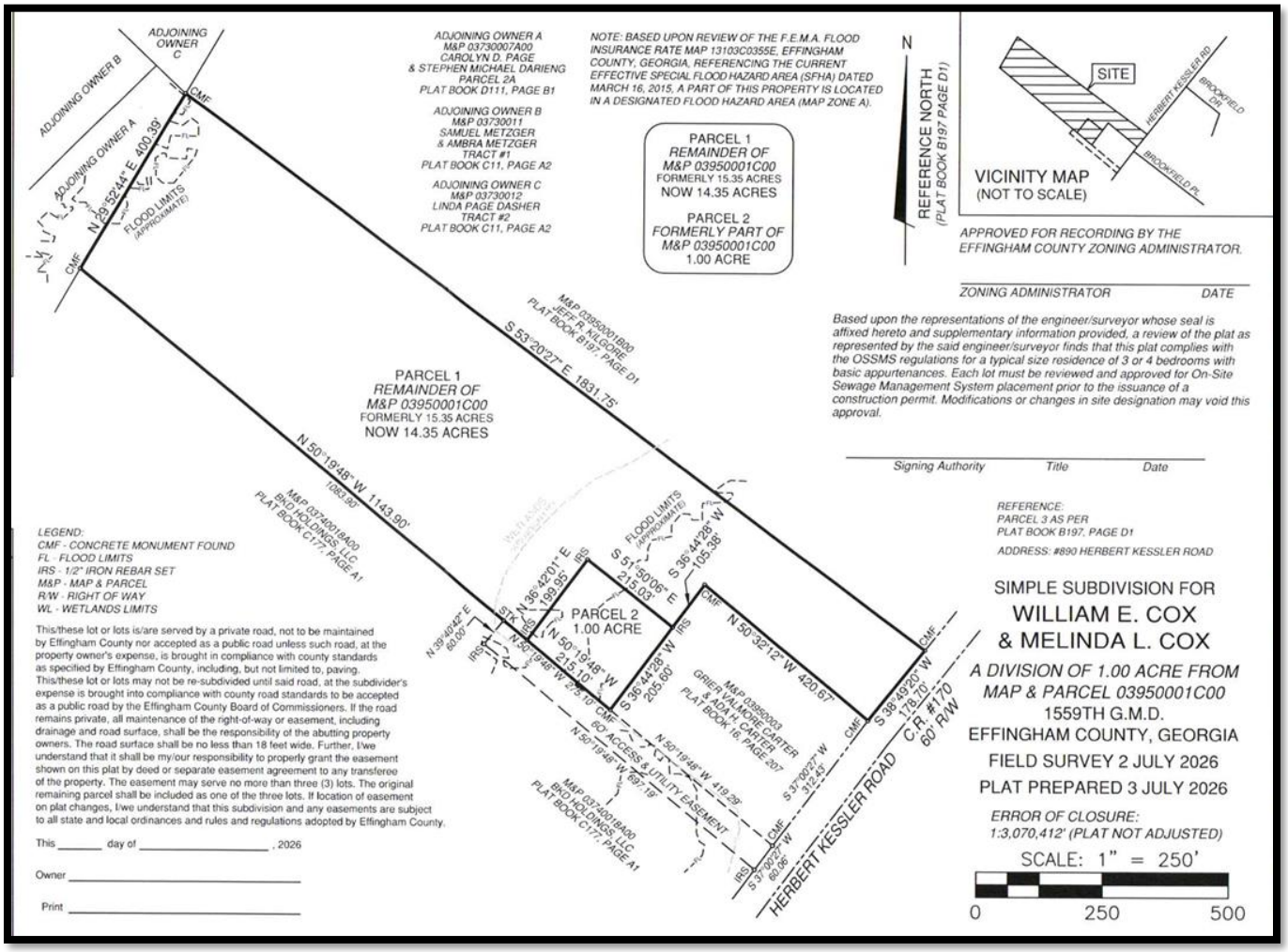
Subject:	2nd Reading- Zoning Map Amendment
Author:	Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department:	Development Services
Application:	RZN-26-42
Meeting Date:	October 6, 2026
Existing Zoning:	**AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres)**
Proposed Zoning:	**AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre or more)**
Map & Parcel(s):	395-1C
Total Acreage Affected	± 1.00 acre out of 15.35 acres
Location:	890 Herbert Kessler Road
Commissioner District:	Second District
Proposed Use:	Residential Subdivision
Applicant/Owner:	William Cox 890 Herbert Kessler Road Guyton, GA 31312

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 1.00 acres from **AR-1 to AR-2**
Proposed Use	**Residential Subdivision**
Existing Use	Stick-built home
Future Land Use	**Agricultural Residential**
Utilities	Private well & septic system
Access	Herbert Kessler Road

Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **±1.00** acre of a 15.35-acre parent tract from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) **to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2).** The purpose of the request is to allow the applicant to subdivide the property and convey the proposed parcel to children for future residential use while retaining the remaining acreage under the existing AR-1 zoning designation.



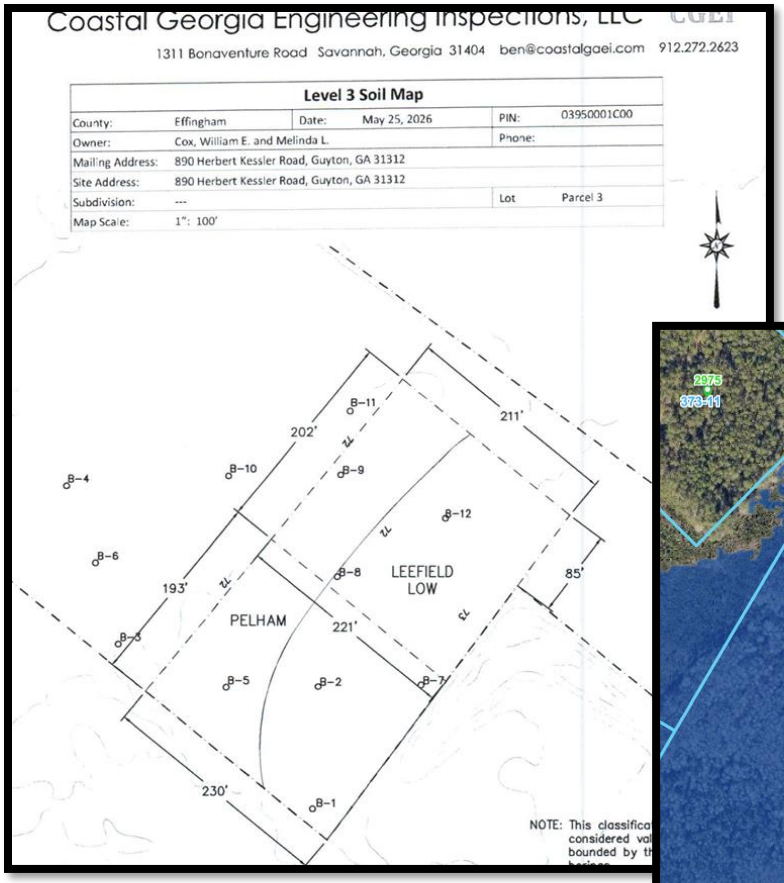
Zoning History

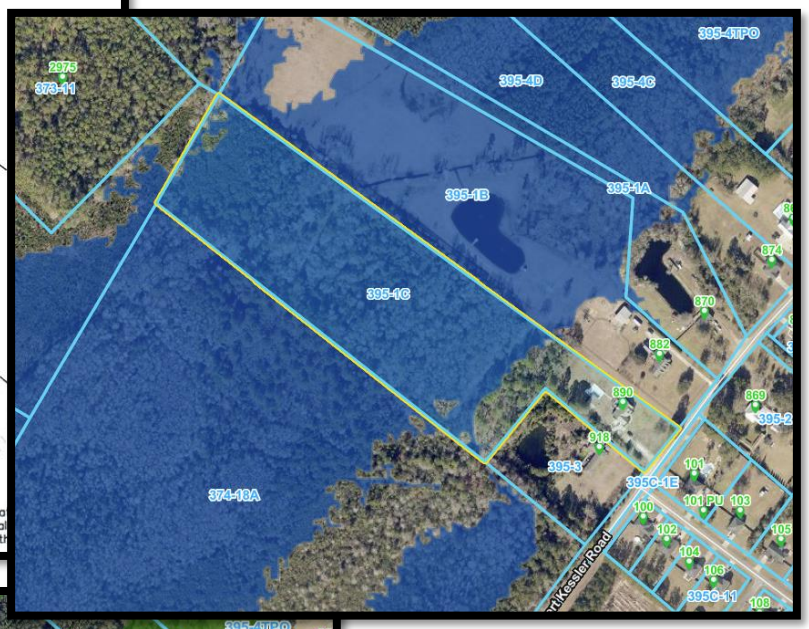
The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential).** No prior zoning cases are on record for this parcel.

Existing Site Condition

The subject property consists of approximately **15.35 acres** and has direct frontage and access from **Herbert Kessler Road**. The property is currently developed with an existing single-family stick-built residence.

County GIS mapping indicates wetlands on portions of the property and a mapped FEMA Zone A flood hazard area. A soil study has also been provided.





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804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
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Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood
• North: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• South: R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
• East: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• West: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)

The area surrounding the subject property is predominantly rural in character and consists primarily of large agricultural tracts, rural residential homesteads, and scattered smaller residential parcels. The surrounding development pattern reflects a mix of agricultural uses and low-density residential development that is consistent with the area's existing rural character.

North/Northeast

- Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1& AR-2)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)
- PD undeveloped

East / Southeast

- Agricultural -residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2)
- Vacant Commercial (B-2)
- Myrtlewood subdivision (R-1)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

South

- Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1& AR-2)
- Brookfield Subdivision (R-1)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

West

- Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1& AR-2)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

Zoning Development Standards for AR-2

Minimum lot area Maximum number of principal residences – one Maximum number of accessory dwelling units – one	1 acre 1 unit 1 unit
Minimum lot road frontage	100 feet
Minimum lot width at building line	100 feet
Minimum front yard setback	50 feet
Minimum rear yard setback	25 feet
Minimum side yard (interior) setback	15 feet
Minimum side yard (street/road easement) setback	50 feet
Minimum side yard (secondary street) setback	25 feet

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Zoning Classification

Agricultural Residential 2 *is established to foster rural residential living while integrating open space and natural resource conservation. 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 intense development and larger-lot rural areas, maintaining moderate spacing between homes and limited pedestrian activity to preserve the rural atmosphere. This district is designated exclusively for family or estate subdivisions, ensuring development remains consistent with the rural character.*

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) **to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** represents a limited increase in land-use intensity. The request applies only to approximately ±1.00 acres of the parent tract. It is intended to allow the applicant to subdivide and convey the proposed parcel to children for future residential use while retaining the remaining acreage under the existing AR-1 zoning designation.

Although the AR-2 district permits a smaller minimum lot size than AR-1, the request does not facilitate a large-scale increase in residential density. Instead, it creates one additional residential parcel while preserving the majority of the parent tract under its existing agricultural-residential zoning. The proposed rezoning maintains the area's low-density rural character and is consistent with the intended use of the AR-2 zoning district for limited residential development.

Infrastructure

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

Roadway Classification: Herbert Kessler Road is classified as a local road and provides access to Midland Road, which is classified as a Minor Collector within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** "is not anticipated to adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare. The request is minimal and is intended to create one additional residential parcel for future family use while retaining the remaining acres under the existing AR-1 zoning designation. The proposed increase in residential density is minimal and is compatible with the surrounding rural residential character of the area. Any future subdivision and residential construction will be required to comply with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Environmental Health requirements.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is designated **Agricultural Residential** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM).** This designation supports agricultural activities, rural residential development, and low-density housing while preserving the County's rural character. The requested rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential) is generally consistent with the Agricultural Residential land use designation, as both zoning districts accommodate low-density residential development. Although AR-2 permits smaller minimum lot sizes than AR-1, the proposed rezoning remains compatible with the Comprehensive Plan's intent by supporting rural residential growth while maintaining the area's agricultural-residential character.

*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).*

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At the **September 8, 2026,** Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the requested rezoning application to rezone approximately ± 1.00 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow permitted uses in AR-2.

During its discussion, the Planning Board considered the proposed zoning classification, easement access, and wetlands.

Citizen concerns included:

- Wetlands

Planning Board Action

Following the public hearing and deliberation, the Planning Board voted to **approve** the rezoning request.

Staff Summary

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is compatible with the surrounding land use pattern and consistent with the intent of the AR-2 (Agricultural Residential) zoning district. The request is consistent with the Agricultural Residential designation of the Future Land Use Map. It supports the Comprehensive Plan's goal of accommodating low-density rural residential development while preserving the character of the surrounding area.