



Staff Report

Subject: Variance (Second District)
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

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

Map & Parcel: 465H-47B

Parcel Size: N/A

Applicant: Effingham County
804 South Laurel St
Springfield, Ga 31329

Owner(s): Ronnie Morgan
297 Road Atlanta
Bloomingdale, GA 31302

Location: 205 Melrose Place
Rincon, GA 31326

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The parcel is located at 205 Melrose Place in the Westwood Heights Subdivision. The parcel is currently a vacant lot. The parcel is non-conforming, classified as AR-1 (Agricultural – Residential, 5 acres or more). Properties to the north, south, east, and west are AR-1 (Agricultural – Residential, 5 acres or more).

The Proposed Request:

The county has initiated a variance request regarding building setbacks for undeveloped lots in the Westwood Heights Subdivision. These variance requests are intended to modify the current building setback requirements so that they align with the original setback standards outlined in the subdivision's covenants. The goal is to create consistency across the subdivision and ensure that any future development is compatible with the neighborhood's established design and layout.

Letters were sent to several property owners by certified mail. Included with this letter was an *Authorization of Property Owner* form, allowing us to proceed with the variance request on their

behalf. Based on the covenants of Westwood Heights subdivision, the variance would allow for a front setback of 25 feet and side setbacks of 5 feet.

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.



Planning and Zoning Services

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effinghamcounty.org

