



Staff Report

Subject: Rezoning
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Application: RZN-26-36
Meeting Date: August 11, 2026

Existing Zoning: **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres)**
Proposed Zoning: **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre or more) & AR-3 (Agricultural Residential; 2.5 acres or more)**

Map & Parcel(s): 270-12
Total Acreage Affected ± 5.00 acres
Location: 563 Keith Road
Commissioner District: Third District

Proposed Use: Residential Subdivision

Applicant/Owner: Herschel Paulk
155 Lakeshore Drive
Guyton, GA 31312

Rezoning Summary:

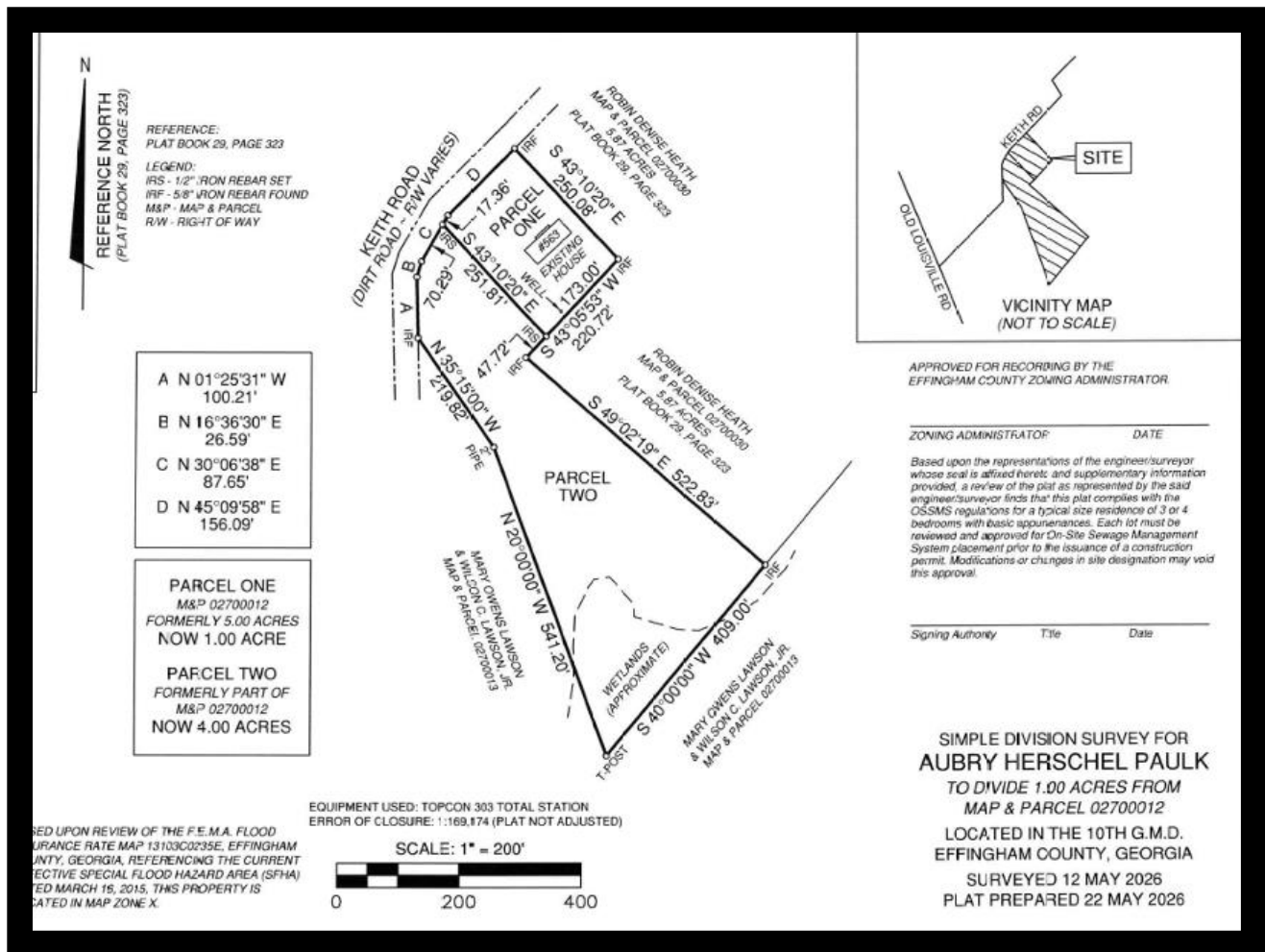
Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 5.00 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 & AR-3
Proposed Use	Residential Subdivision
Existing Use	Stick-built home
Future Land Use	Agricultural
Utilities	Private well & septic system
Access	Keith Road
Planning Board Recommendation	(August 11, 2026)- Approval Unanimously

Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately ± 5.00 acres from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)** to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2) & AR-3 (Agricultural Residential)**. This request allows the applicant to subdivide the property into two residential lots. The proposed **AR-2 lot** will contain approximately **1 acre** and will include the existing stick-built residence. The remaining approximately **4-acre parcel** is proposed to be rezoned to **AR-3** for the construction of a new home.

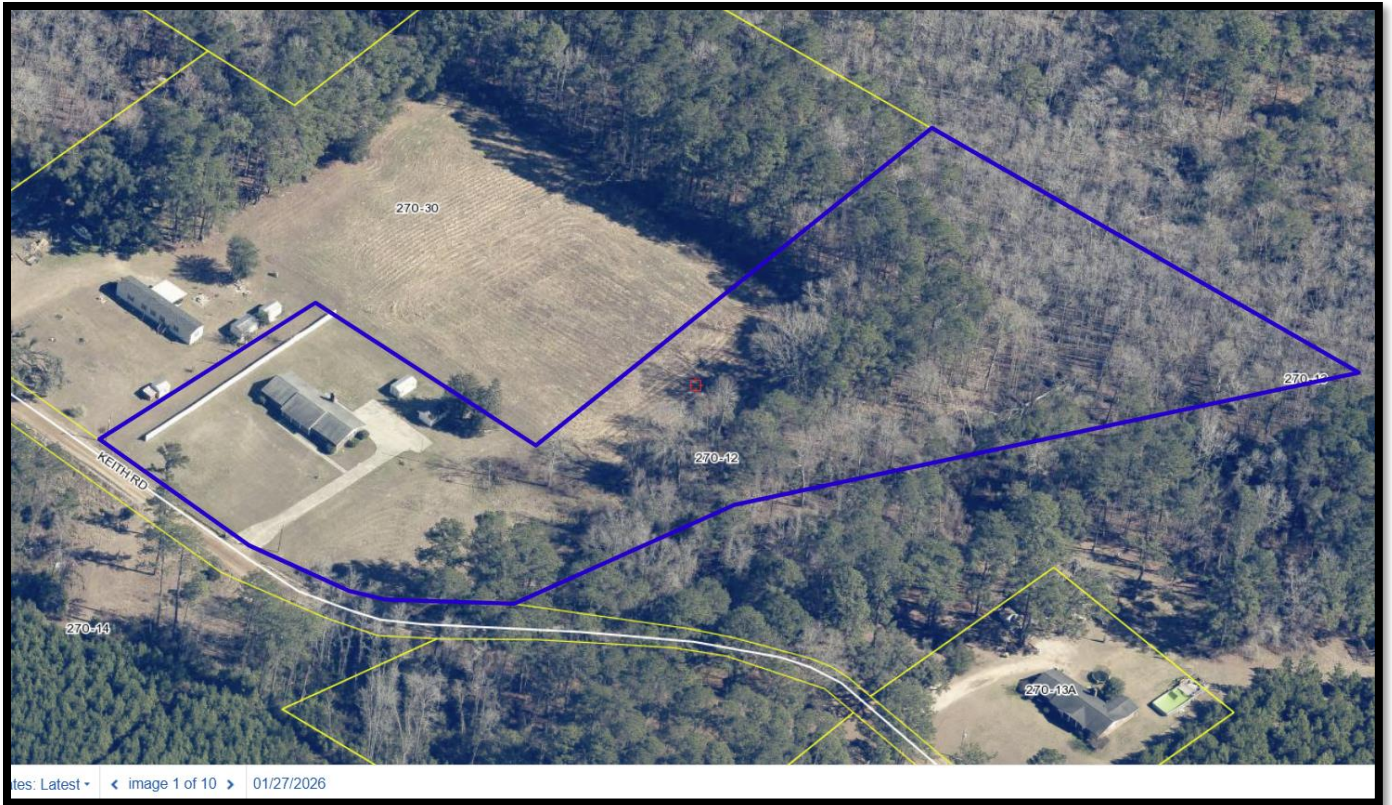
Zoning History

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



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Existing Site Condition

The subject property consists of approximately **5.00 acres** and has direct access to Keith Road. The property is currently developed with a single-family home.

County GIS mapping indicates **wetlands** on portions of the property; however, no **FEMA flood hazard** areas have been identified. Any future development will remain subject to applicable wetland and Environmental Health requirements.

Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood
• North: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• South: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• East: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre 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 consistent with the area's existing rural character.

North

- ✚ Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1& AR-2 & AR-3)
- ✚ Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

East / Southeast

- ✚ Agricultural -residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2)
- ✚ Old Louisville Estates Subdivision (AR-1)

South

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1)
- ✚ Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

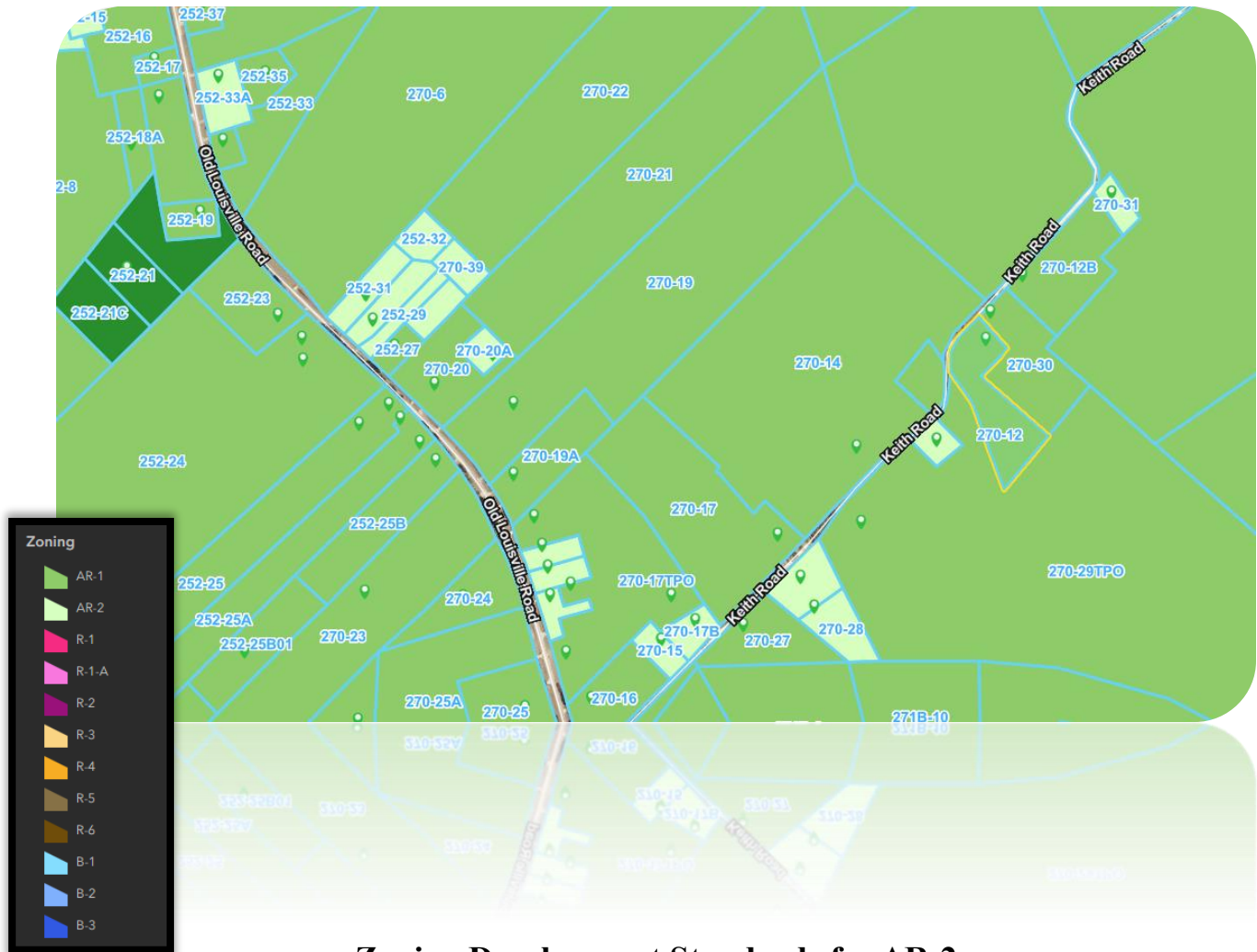
West/ Southwest

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

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Zoning Development Standards for AR-2

Minimum lot area	1 acre
Maximum number of principal residences - one	1 unit
Maximum number of accessory dwelling units - one	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
Maximum principal building height	40 feet
* Accessory structures used for agricultural purposes are exempt from the height restrictions outlined in this ordinance.	

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Zoning Development Standards for AR-3

Minimum lot area	2.5 acres
Maximum number of principal residences - one	1 unit
Maximum number of accessory dwelling units - one	1 unit
Minimum lot road frontage	100 feet
Minimum lot width at building line	150 feet
Minimum front yard setback	50 feet
Minimum rear yard setback	35 feet
Minimum side yard (interior) setback	20 feet
Minimum side yard (street/road easement) setback	50 feet
Minimum side yard (secondary street) setback	25 feet
Maximum principal building height	40 feet
*Accessory structures used for agricultural purposes are exempt from the height restrictions outlined in this ordinance.	

Zoning Classification

***Agricultural Residential 2** is established to foster rural residential living while integrating open space and conserving natural resources. 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 exclusively designated for family or estate subdivisions, ensuring that development remains consistent with the rural character*

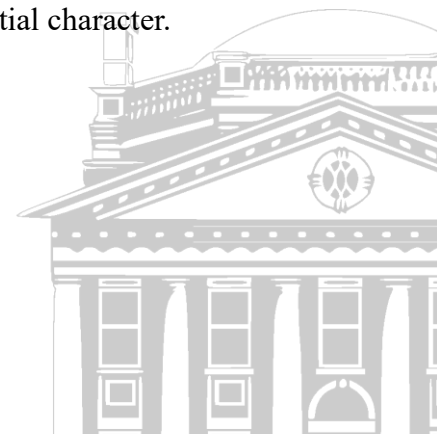
*The **Agricultural Residential 3** is designed to preserve the rural fabric of the county by allowing widely spaced residential development on large lots, with a minimum of 2.5 acres. This district prioritizes agricultural viability, low-impact development, and the conservation of open space and natural features. AR-3 discourages intensive land uses and supports a landscape-driven design approach to uphold the county's rural identity.*

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** and **AR-3 (Agricultural Residential-3)** represents a minimal increase in land-use intensity. The applicant proposes to subdivide the existing ±5.00-acre parcel into two residential lots. The proposed AR-2 parcel, consisting of approximately one (1) acre, will contain the existing single-family residence. In contrast, the remaining approximately four (4) acres will be rezoned to AR-3 to accommodate the construction of one new single-family home. Although the request reduces the minimum lot size permitted under the existing AR-1 zoning, the proposed development remains low-density. It will result in only one additional residential dwelling on the property. The proposed lot configuration is consistent with the intent of the AR-2 and AR-3 zoning districts and maintains the area's rural residential character.

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Infrastructure

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

Road Routes: Keith Road is classified as a Local Road within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** and **AR-3 (Agricultural Residential-3)** is not anticipated to adversely affect public health, safety, or welfare. The request will allow the subdivision of the property into two residential lots, resulting in one additional single-family residence while maintaining a low-density residential development pattern. The proposed increase in residential density is minimal and is compatible with the surrounding agricultural and 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

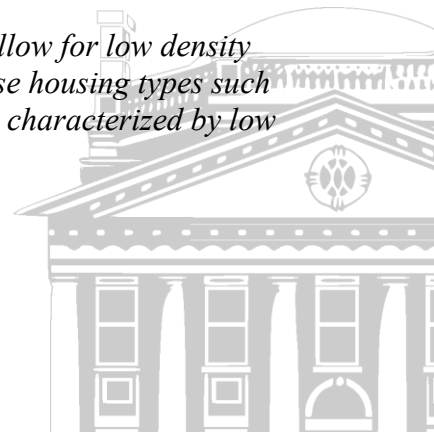
The subject property is designated **Agricultural** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. The Agricultural designation is intended to preserve agricultural lands, protect rural character, and support farming, forestry, and very low-density residential development. The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** and **AR-3 (Agricultural Residential-3)** is not fully consistent with the Agricultural Future Land Use designation because it allows for smaller residential lot sizes than are typically envisioned within this land use category. However, the request is limited in scope. It will subdivide the property into only two residential lots: one containing the existing single-family residence and one accommodating the construction of a new single-family home. The proposed development maintains a low-density residential character that is generally compatible with the surrounding rural area. Although the Agricultural Future Land Use designation generally envisions larger rural lots, the proposed rezoning is limited to two residential lots. It maintains a low-density development pattern that remains compatible with the surrounding agricultural landscape.

*The parcel is designated **Agricultural** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This category is for land dedicated to retaining the rural character throughout the county, including fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, agriculture, or commercial timber. Protection of natural resources should be at the forefront of planning for development in these areas. This category is also for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas,*

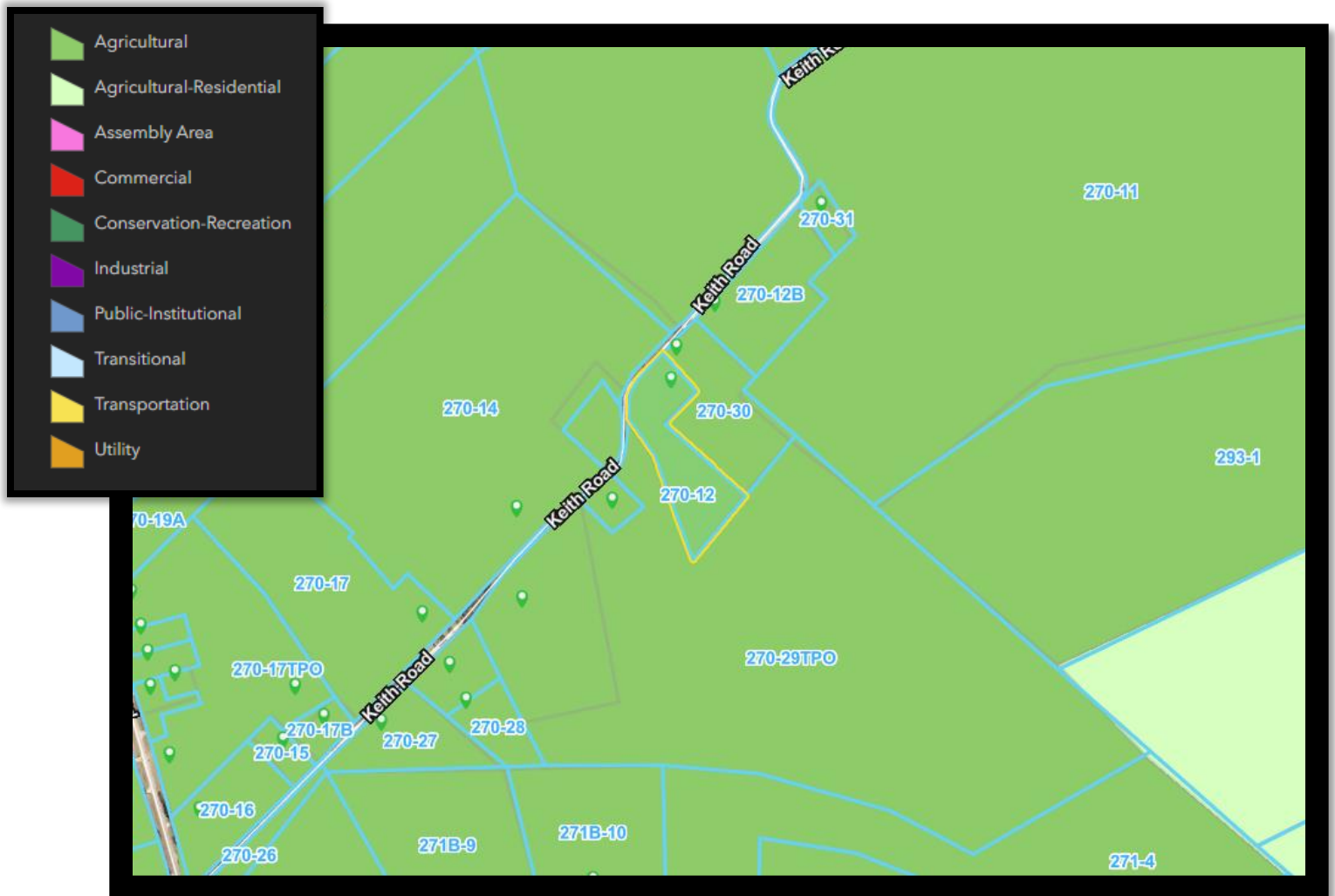
national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. This area does allow for low density residential development that is compatible with nearby agricultural uses. Mixed use housing types such as stick built or manufactured homes are permitted in these areas. Rural areas are characterized by low

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intensity development, larger lots, low pedestrian orientation and access, with a sizable amount of open space, and with a high degree of separation and deep setbacks. (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 36).



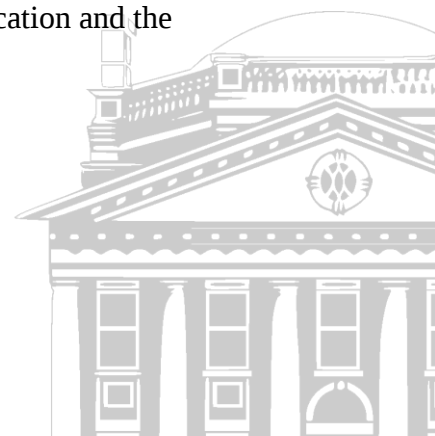
Planning Board Recommendation

At the **August 11, 2026**, Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the requested rezoning application to rezone approximately $\pm$ 5.00 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 & AR-3 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2 and AR-3.

During its discussion, the Planning Board considered the proposed zoning classification and the possibility of creating two larger lots.

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Public Comment: No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Planning Board Action

Following the discussion, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the request.

Staff Recommendation

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is compatible with the surrounding land use pattern and consistent with the intent of the AR-2 and AR-3 Agricultural Residential zoning districts. Although the request is not fully consistent with the Agricultural Future Land Use designation because it permits smaller residential lot sizes than are generally envisioned within that category, the request is minimal. The proposed development maintains a low-density rural residential pattern that is generally compatible with the surrounding agricultural landscape and is not anticipated to affect public health, safety, or welfare adversely.

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