



Staff Report

Subject: Rezoning
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Application: RZN-26-34
Meeting Date: September 1, 2026

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

Map & Parcel(s): 311-11
Total Acreage Affected ± 1.46 out of 16.73-acre parent tract
Location: 1235 Corinth Church Road
Commissioner District: Third District

Proposed Use: Residential Subdivision

Applicant/Owner: Thomas Christmas
1235 Corinth Church Road
Clyo, GA 31303

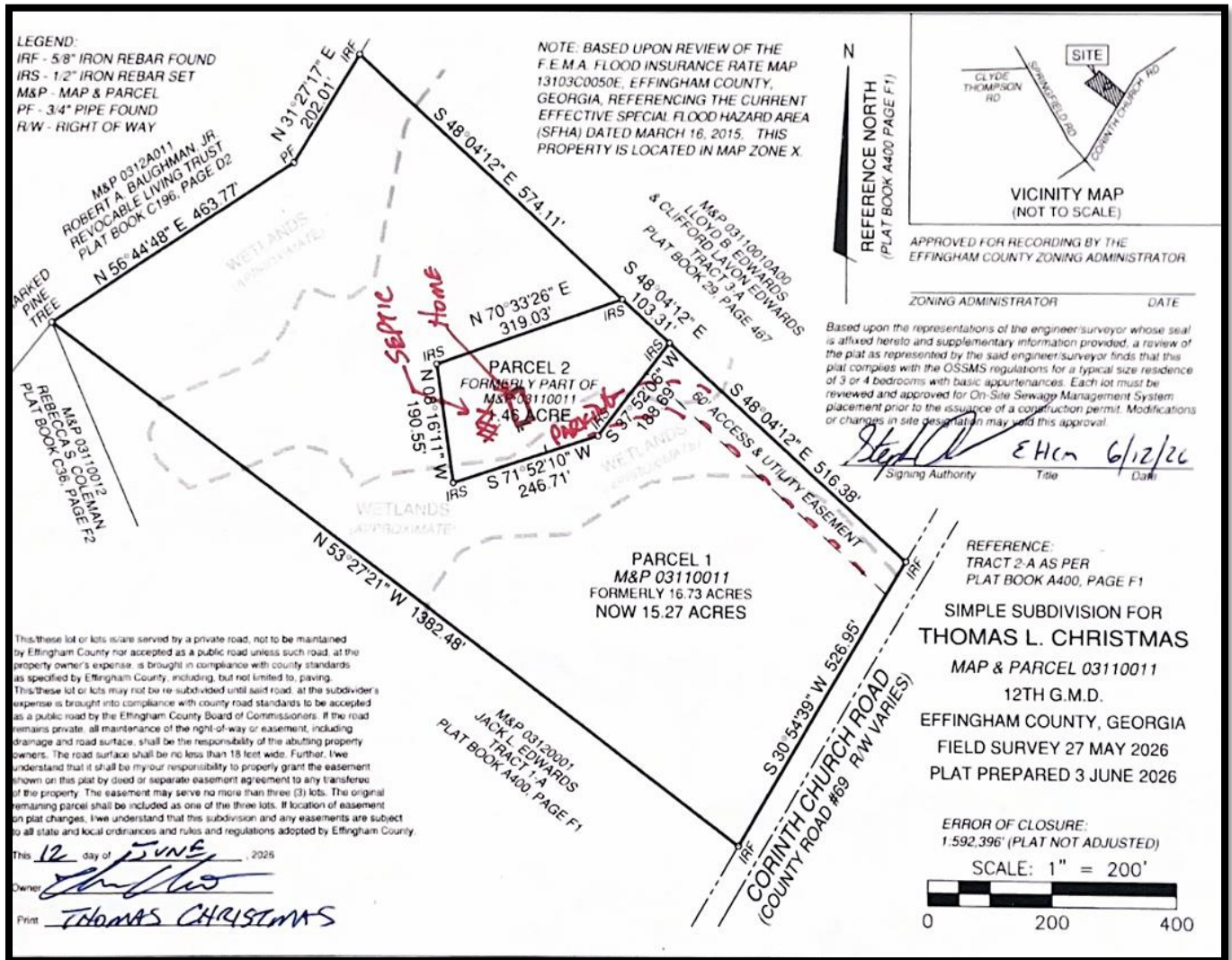
Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 1.46 acres from AR-1 to AR-2
Proposed Use	Residential Subdivision
Existing Use	Stick-built home
Future Land Use	Agricultural
Utilities	Private well & septic system
Access	Corinth Church Road
Planning Board Recommendation	(August 11, 2026) Approved unanimously with conditions



Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to **rezone** ± 1.46 acres of a 16.73-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 his children for future residential use while retaining the remaining acreage under the existing AR-1 zoning designation.



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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 **16.73 acres** and has direct frontage and access from **Corinth Church Road**. The property is currently developed with an existing single-family stick-built residence and accessory structures.

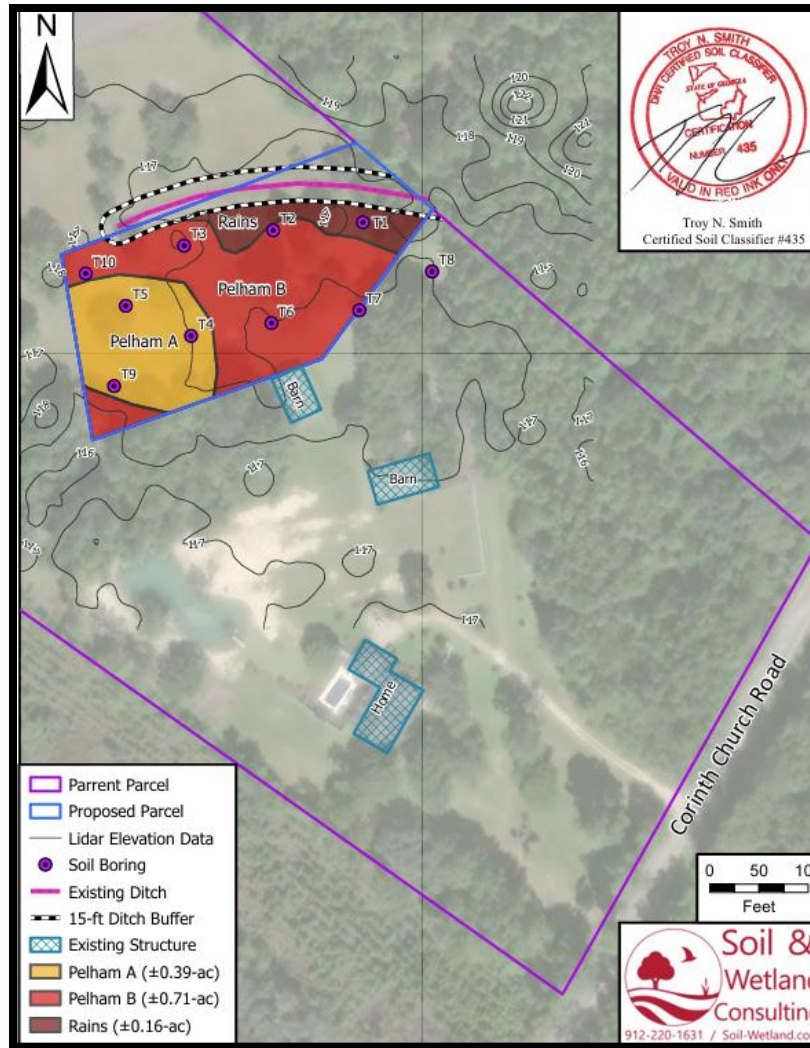
County GIS mapping indicates **wetlands** on portions of the property; however, the parcel is not located within a mapped **FEMA flood hazard area**. A soil study has also been provided.



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Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood	
• North:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre 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)

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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)

East / Southeast

- ✚ Agricultural -residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2)
- ✚ Dram Acres subdivision (AR-1)
- ✚ Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

South

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

West

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

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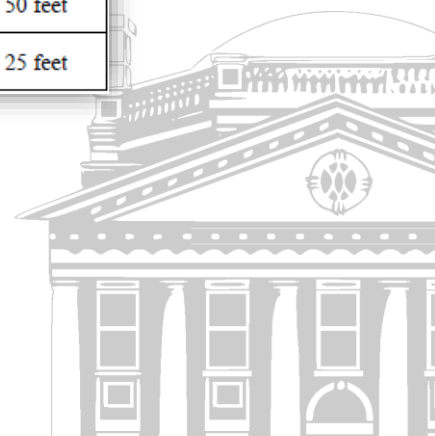


Zoning Development Standards for AR-2

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

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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 ± 1.46 acres of a ± 16.73 -acre parent tract. It is intended to allow the applicant to subdivide and convey the proposed parcel to his 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: Corinth Church Road is classified as a Local Road within Effingham County.

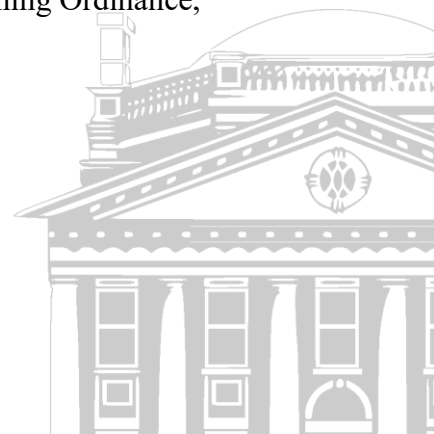
Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** is not expected to affect public health, safety, or welfare adversely. 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

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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 agricultural activities and very low-density residential development. The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2) is not fully consistent with the Agricultural designation because the AR-2 district permits smaller minimum lot sizes than those generally envisioned within this land use category.

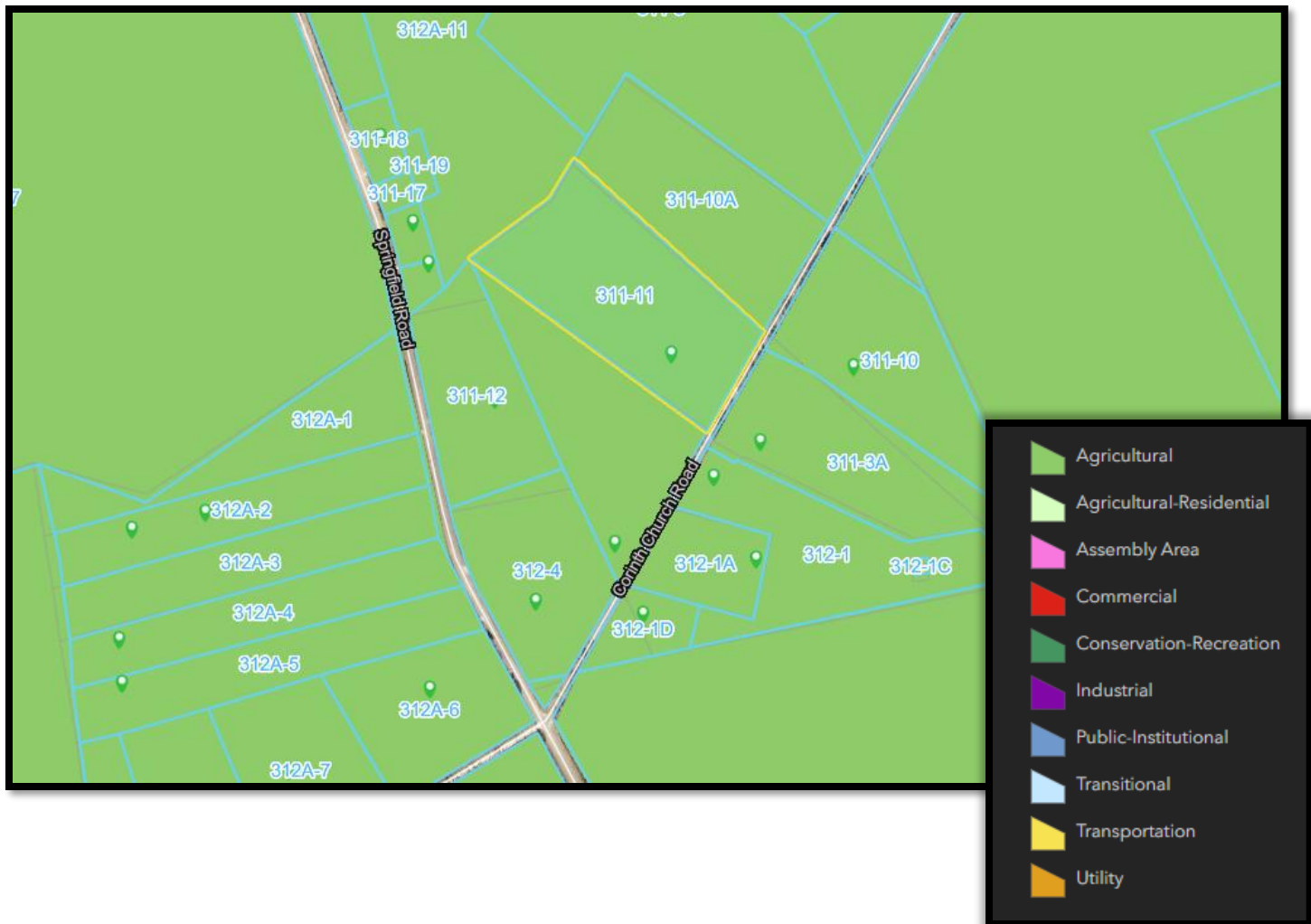
However, the request is limited to approximately ± 1.46 acres of a larger ± 16.73 -acre parent tract. It is intended to create one additional residential parcel for family use while retaining the remaining acreage under the existing AR-1 zoning designation. The proposed rezoning represents a minimal increase in residential density and preserves the majority of the property in a low-density agricultural-residential setting.

*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 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).*

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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 $\pm$ 1.46 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2.

During its discussion, the Planning Board considered the proposed zoning classification, the possibility of creating a larger lot or utilizing AR-3 zoning, the intent of the proposed family subdivision, and concerns regarding future subdivision of the property.

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

Planning Board Action

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Following the discussion, the Planning Board voted **unanimously to recommend approval of the request with the following conditions:**

- 1. The original parent tract shall not be subdivided to create more than five (5) additional lots.**

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 (Agricultural Residential-2) zoning district. Although the request is not fully consistent with the Agricultural Future Land Use designation due to the smaller minimum lot size permitted in the AR-2 district, staff finds that the limited scope of the request, the retention of the majority of the parent tract under AR-1 zoning, and the proposed family subdivision generally support the Comprehensive Plan's objective of accommodating low-density rural residential development while preserving the rural character of the surrounding area.

The proposed rezoning will allow the applicant to subdivide a ± 1.46 -acre parcel from the existing parent tract and deed it to family members, while retaining the remaining acreage under the existing AR-1 zoning designation. The request represents only a minor increase in development potential and is compatible with the surrounding pattern of agricultural and rural residential properties. Staff does not anticipate that the proposed rezoning will adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare of the surrounding community.

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