Effingham County Georgia
Planning and Zoning Services

Staff Report

Subject:	Rezoning
Author:	Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department:	Development Services
Application:	RZN-26-49
Meeting Date:	November 3, 2026
Existing Zoning:	**AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)**
Proposed Zoning:	**AR-3 (Agricultural Residential; 2.5 acres or more)**
Map & Parcel(s):	318-18, 318-20, & 318-20A
Total Acreage Affected:	± 98.92 acres
Location:	Springfield Tusculum Road
Commissioner District:	Third District
Proposed Use:	Residential Subdivision
Applicant:	Kern & Co. LLC- Chad Zittrouer PO Box 15179 Savannah, GA 31416
Owner:	Joseph Mann 369 Springfield Tusculum Road Guyton, GA 31312

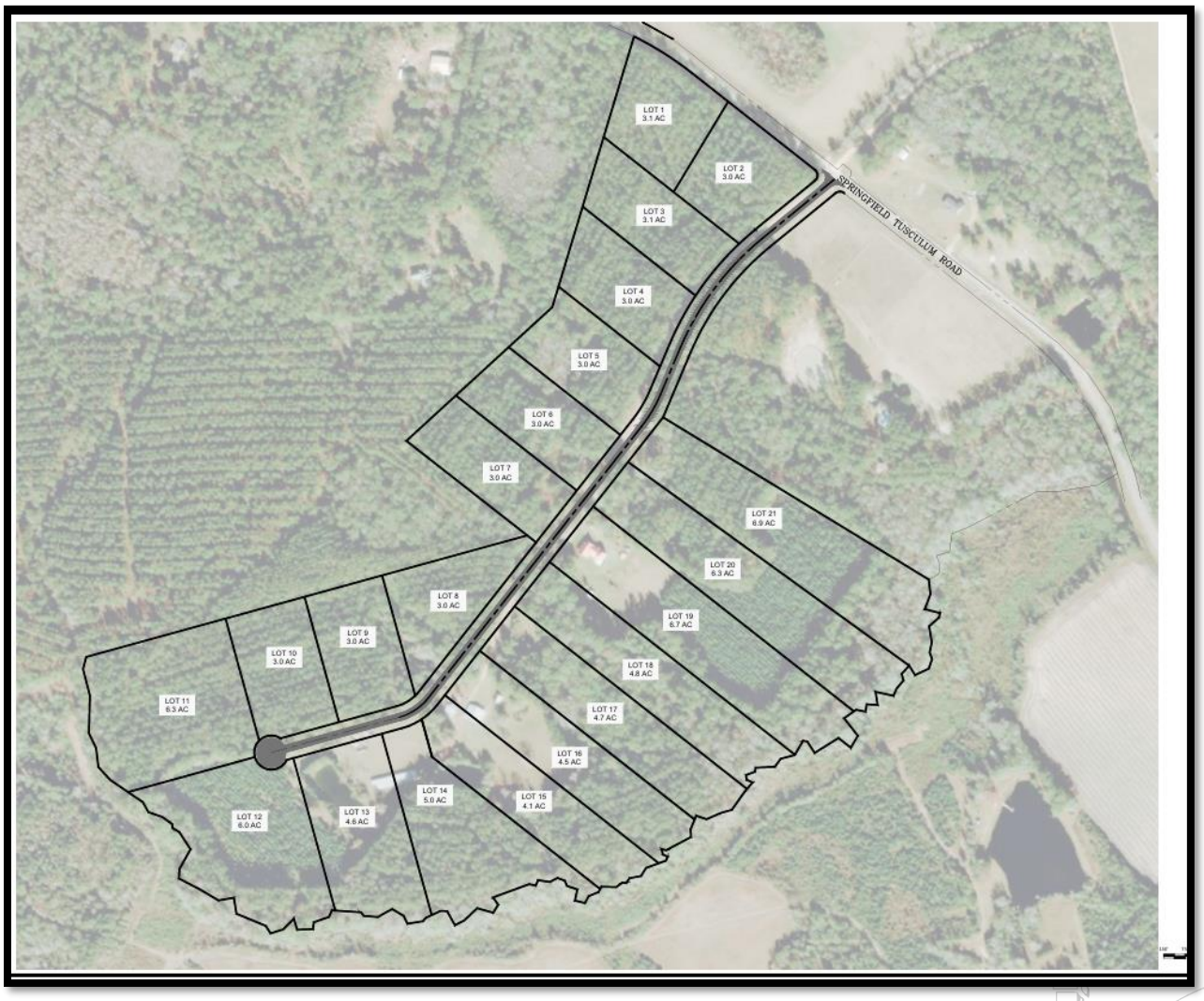
Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 98.92 acres from **AR-1 to AR-3**
Proposed Use	Residential Subdivision
Existing Use	Undeveloped Woodlands & Residential
Future Land Use	**Agricultural**
Utilities	Private well & septic system
Access	Springfield Tusculum Road

Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to rezone ±98.92 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-3 (Agricultural Residential-3)**. The request is to allow the applicant to subdivide the property into 21 residential lots for the construction of stick-built single-family homes for future sale.

The proposed subdivision will include paved roads, with each lot meeting the applicable road frontage requirements. A soil study will be required to determine the suitability of the property for individual septic systems. A 15-foot vegetated buffer is required where the proposed AR-3 zoning abuts AR-1 zoning.

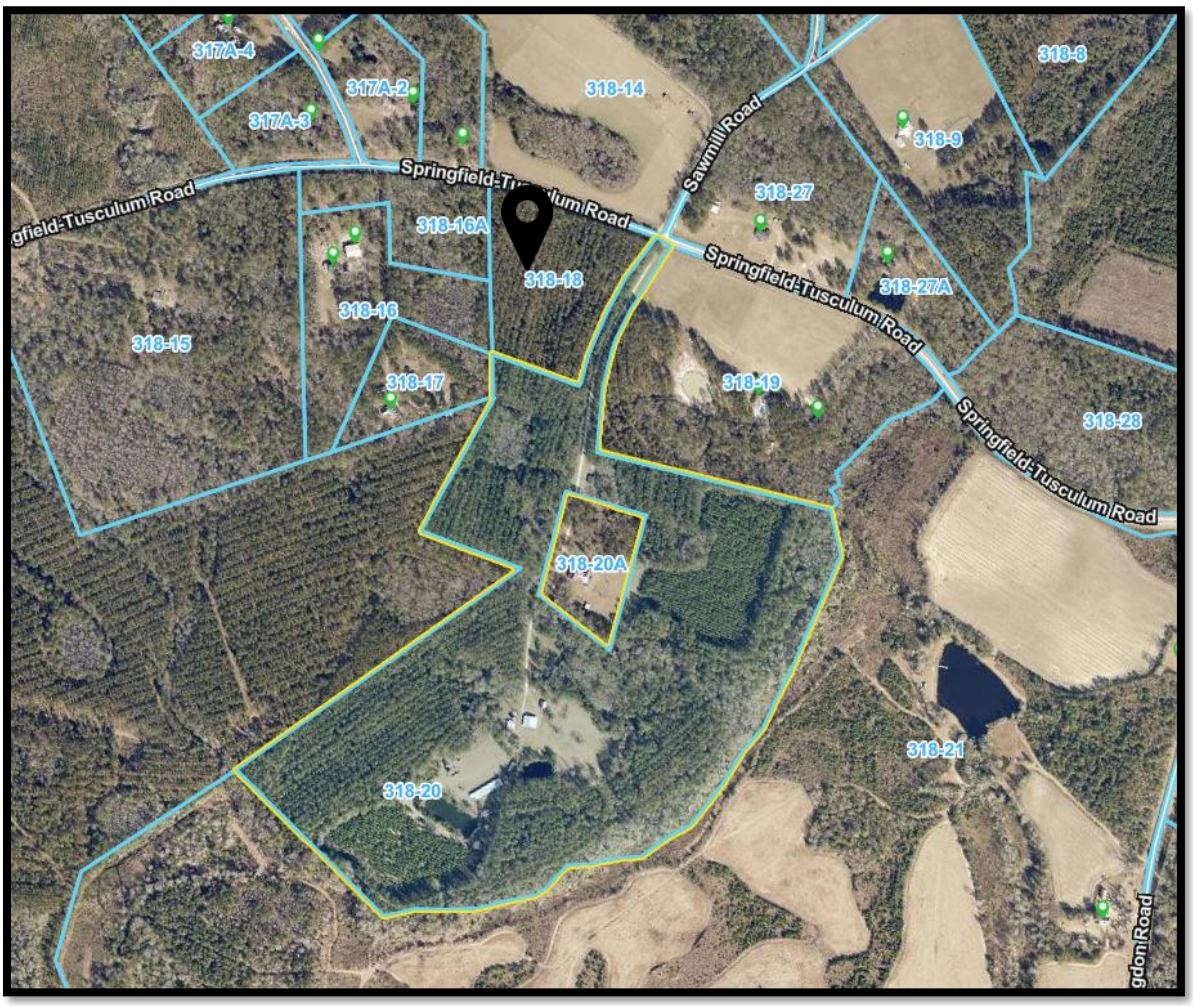


Zoning History

The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential).** There are no prior zoning cases for the following properties.

Existing Site Condition

The subject properties consist of a combined total of ±**98.92 acres** with access to Springfield Tusculum Road. The properties contain a residential homestead and accessory structures.



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County GIS mapping indicates the presence of wetlands on portions of the subject property; however, no FEMA-designated flood hazard areas are identified.

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)
• West: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)

North

- Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1, AR-2, & R-1)
- Boaen Road Estates Subdivision (AR-1)
- Red Maple Estates Subdivision (AR-1)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

East

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

South

- Agricultural-residential homesteads (AR-1)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

West

- Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2)

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Zoning Development Standards for AR-3

Minimum lot area Maximum number of principal residences - one Maximum number of accessory dwelling units - one	2.5 acres 1 unit 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 3 (AR-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.*

Applicable Ordinance Sections

6.2.16 Road Buffers. All major subdivisions shall provide a minimum front buffer of fifty (50) feet along all exterior public road frontages. This buffer shall be maintained in accordance with the Effingham County Buffer ordinance.

7.1.6 Trees. Tree preservation and/or planting of new trees and vegetation shall be in conformality with the Effingham County Tree Protection and Preservation ordinance.

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7.1.17 Parking. Two off-street parking spaces shall be provided for each single-family dwelling. These spaces can be in a garage, carport, or driveway accessed from the front or rear of the parcel. One additional space per every five units shall be provided for overflow off-street parking.

7.1.17.1 Requirements for AR districts, R-1, and R-4. Roads in these districts shall have a minimum of 60-foot right-of-way, with a minimum paved area as follows:
a. Twenty-two-foot road pavement width is only permitted if homes have rear alley access. Signage is required indicating that on-street parking is prohibited.
b. Twenty-eight-foot road pavement width, with parking on one side, is permitted if parking side is clearly delineated. Signage indicating parking side is required.
c. Thirty-six-foot road pavement width, with parking permitted on both sides.

7.1.18 Sidewalks. Sidewalks shall be ADA-compliant and provide sidewalk ramps at all road intersections.

Section 6.1 Number of lots vs. improvement standards:

Major Subdivision	10+	Paved streets Street signs Street lights (requirement may be waived by the Board of Commissioners) Community water supply and system (if required by EPD or Health Department) Fire Protection Appropriate sewerage system Sidewalks (requirement may be waived by the Board of Commissioners) Storm drainage system.

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential) to **AR-3 (Agricultural–Residential)** for the development of a 21-lot residential subdivision would increase the intensity of use by allowing smaller lots and a greater concentration of homes than permitted under the existing AR-1 zoning. The development would generate additional residential traffic, utility and infrastructure demand, stormwater runoff, and land disturbance compared with the existing low-density development pattern.

However, the property would remain within an agricultural–residential zoning classification, and the proposed use would continue to consist of single-family residential development. Potential impacts may

be addressed through compliance with applicable subdivision, roadway, drainage, environmental health, open-space, buffering, and development requirements.

Infrastructure

The property is served by **private well and septic systems,** consistent with surrounding development. The proposed subdivision is anticipated to utilize individual private wells and septic systems, subject to applicable Environmental Health requirements and soil suitability.

Road Classification: Springfield Tusculum Road is a minor collector road within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

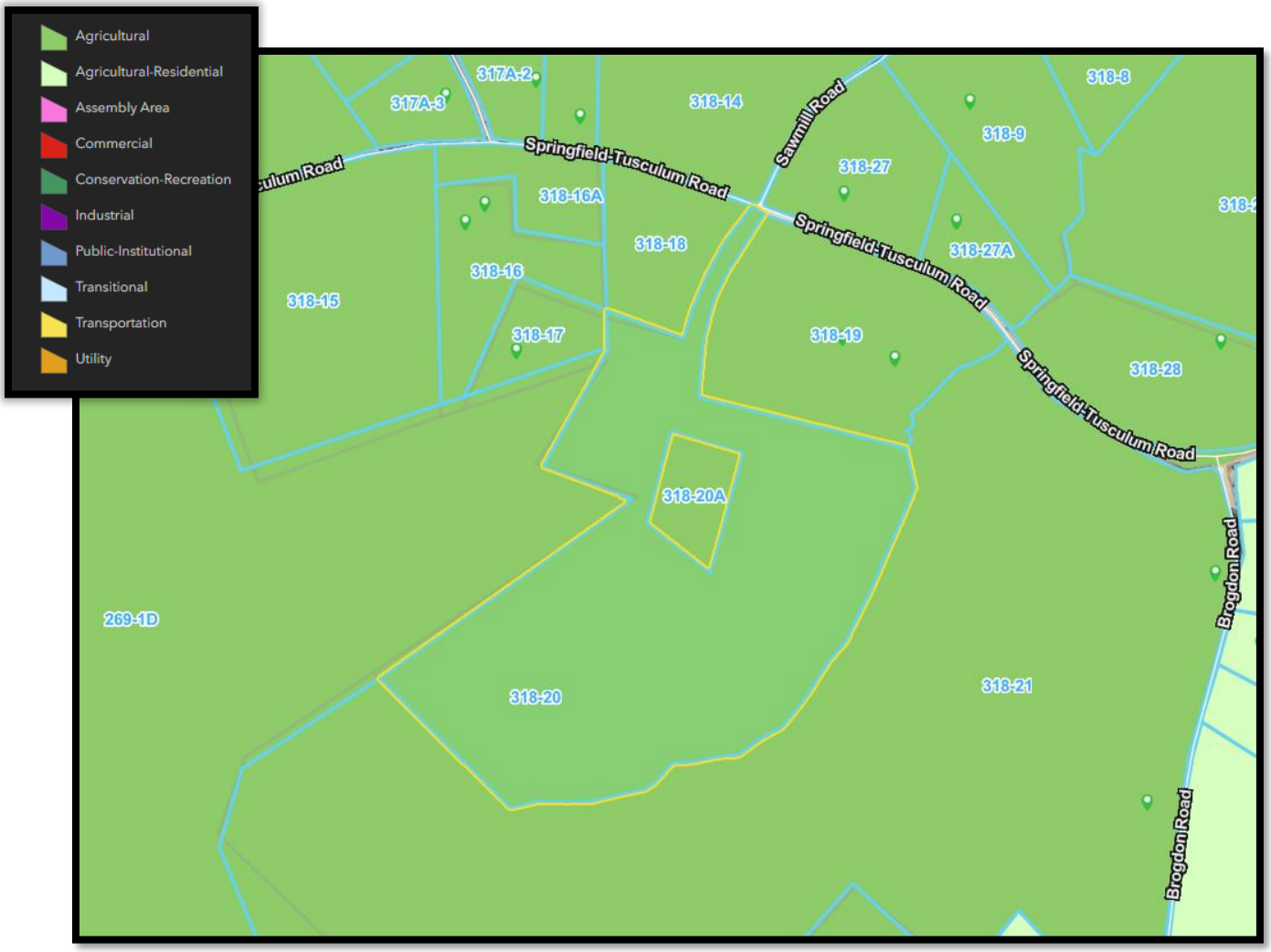
The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential) to **AR-3 (Agricultural–Residential)** for a 21-lot residential subdivision is not anticipated to adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare, provided the development complies with all applicable subdivision and development standards. The proposed subdivision will increase residential traffic, stormwater runoff, and demand for public services compared with the existing AR-1 zoning; however, these impacts may be adequately addressed through the development-review process.

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-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. It will result in a major subdivision. The proposed development maintains a low-density residential character that is generally compatible with the surrounding rural area. The Agricultural Future Land Use designation generally envisions larger rural lots, and 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 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 **October 13, 2026,** Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the requested rezoning application to rezone approximately ± 98.92 acres from AR-1 to AR-3 to allow for permitted uses in AR-3.

During its deliberations, the Planning Board discussed the proposed zoning classification and appreciated the larger lots and rural aspect.

Citizens' concerns include:

-Against smaller lots in the area
-Glad it's not one-acre lots
- More dwellings on one lot
- Property Values
- Power grid
- Wetlands and flooding
-Traffic and accidents
- Bald eagles in the area
-Watershed
-Noise
-Damaged roads
-Preserve the rural character
- A lot of outdoor shooting in the area
- Children and schools
- Crime, including pedophiles and felons

Following the public hearing and discussion, **the Planning Board voted to recommend approval of the rezoning request with the following stipulations:**

- Only stick-built homes may be placed on the property.

- A 50 ft buffer must be implemented along the backside of the northwest lots.

Staff Summary

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is compatible with the surrounding land use pattern and consistent with the intent of the AR-3 (Agricultural Residential) zoning district. The request is generally 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