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Chairman Jason Sheffield, Vice-Chairman Jim Quinn, Kyle Luckie, Mike McVey,  
Shirley Stiles, Johnny Golden, Charlie Barner

**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 9, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.**  
**Opal Cannon Auditorium**  
**T. Page Tharp Governmental Building**  
102 Starksville Avenue North  
Leesburg, GA 31763

**Members Present:** Chairman Jason Sheffield, Vice-Chairman Jim Quinn, Commissioner Kyle Luckie, Commissioner Mike McVey, Commissioner Shirley Stiles, Commissioner Johnny Golden, and Commissioner Charlie Barner

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Assistant Director Amanda Nava-Estill and Office Manager/Planning Assistant Kara Hanson

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Jason Sheffield called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GEORGIA LAW REGARDING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS**

Commissioner Jim Quinn read the Georgia law regarding campaign contributions.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**(A) Selection of a Chairperson of the Planning Commission for 2025.**

Commissioner Jim Quinn made a **MOTION** to **APPOINT** Commissioner Jason Sheffield as Chairperson, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stiles. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining commissioners voting yea.

**(B) Selection of a Vice-Chairperson of the Planning Commission for 2025.**

Commissioner Kyle Luckie made a **MOTION** to **APPOINT** Commissioner Jim Quinn as Vice-Chairperson of the Planning Commission for 2025, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stiles. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining commissioners voting yea.

**(C) Announcement of the newly appointed Planning Commissioner to replace Mike McVey.**

Assistant Director Amanda Nava- Estill announced the newly appointed Planning Commissioner Renea Miller will begin her term February 2025.

**(D) Announcement of reappointment of Jim Quinn and Shirley Stiles.**

Assistant Director announced the reappointment of Commissioners Jim Quinn and Shirley Stiles and added that Commissioner Charlie Barner will be on the Smithville City Council's calendar for reappointment on January 13, 2025.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**(A) Approval of the minutes from the December 5, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting**

Vice-Chair Jim Quinn made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Mike McVey. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining commissioners voting yea.

**V. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**TEXT AMENDMENTS**

- (A) **T24-018** Harrell & Jackson Inc. has made a request to amend the AG-1 (Active Agricultural District) ordinance **Chapter 70, Article X, Section 70-312** of the **Lee County Code of Ordinances** with respect to adding “Surface Mining” as a permitted use.

**Public Hearing Discussion**

**Staff Presentation**

Assistant Director Amanda presented the staff report. She explained that Harrell & Jackson, Inc. initially submitted a Land Development for surface mining. After discussion with the Lee County Attorney Jimmy Skipper, it was understood that surface mining would need to be added as a use in the Agriculture District (AG-1), with a text amendment. Once the text amendment was submitted and reviewed, staff recommended denial on placing surfacing mining as a permitted use as the proposed use has potential to contribute to an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, schools, police protection, fire protection, public health facilities or emergency medical services in locations where surface mining activities may commence without adequate supportive roads for heavy trucks. The proposed use is also not in conformity with the policy and intent of Lee County Comprehensive Plan which promotes preservation of agricultural uses and environmental resources such as soils which support agriculture. If commissioners do proceed with allowing this use, staff recommends “surface mining” to be added as a conditional use in the AG-1 district. This would allow the Planning Commission to look at each case that is submitted individually and make a recommendation to the Board of Commission for approval or denial.

**Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.**

**Applicant Presentation**

Brian Jackson, with Harrell & Jackson Engineering, addressed the board alongside Bobby Donley, with Lanier Engineering. Bobby Donley stated that what Amanda had advised in the staff report is exactly what he sees in most counties. Commissioner Shirley Stiles asked what does surface mining entail, in which Bobby explained to her that it is very extensive process that has to go through an in depth permitting process with the EPD. This includes buffers on all sides, generate a surface mining plan, generating a reclamation plan for after the mining is complete what the location would look like. Commissioner Stiles asked if permitted, would this use be subject to all surface mining activities. Bobby Donley explained that if permitted in the AG-1 district that is correct, however, with what the staff is suggesting (conditional use approval), each case will go before the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners on a case by case basis. Chair Jason Sheffield asked why the applicant didn’t submit it as a conditional use to begin with. Amanda explained that the County Attorney suggested the applicant submit a text amendment to add Surface Mining as a use and it was communicated to the applicant in that manner. After a staff review it didn’t seem to fit as a permitted use, instead more as a conditional use. Vice-Chair Jim Quinn asked the applicant if it would be similar to Leesburg sand. Bobby Donley confirmed that currently they have a few in Lee County. Amanda explained to the commissioners that those existing mining projects may have been permitted in error, based on conversations with the County Attorney, as surface mining is not a permitted or conditional use in any Lee County zoning district. Chair Jason Sheffield asked what the limitations of surface mining are. Bobby stated the only surface mine that he has ever done included sand pits for structural pits or masonry grade sand.

**Public Supporters**

Bobby Donley  
Brian Jackson

**Public Opposition**

None

**Commission Discussion**

Vice-Chair Quinn asked if this was approved as a conditional use would it still have to come before the Planning Commission and the Board of Commission for approval in which Amanda relied yes. He also asked what would happen to the surface mines that are already established in which she answered they would be considered legal non-confirming. Commissioner Johnny Golden asked if it becomes a conditional use then he feels like if we open the door to surface mining then it's going to be difficult to pick and choose which ones will be beneficial to the County. Chair Jason Sheffield stated that he believed that making it a conditional use would prevent that from happening by seeing each case.

Commissioner Kyle Luckie made a **MOTION to APPROVE** Surface Mining as a conditional use under the AG-1 district, seconded by Mike McVey. The **MOTION** passed with remaining commissioners Jason Sheffield, Shirley Stiles, and Charlie Barner voting yea, and Jim Quinn and Johnny Golden voting no.

- (B) **T24-019** The City of Leesburg has made a request to amend the Commercial Design Standards ordinance **Article XVIII, Section 18.05** of the **City of Leesburg Code of Ordinances** with respect to amending the goals of design standards. Said section is further amended by the extraction of standards and the re-constructing of subparagraphs (a) through (e), to provide new standards for building orientation, primary entrance, rhythm, material, and other architectural features.

**Public Hearing**

**Staff Presentation**

City of Leesburg's Manager Bob Alexander presented the staff report. He stated that the City of Leesburg Council decided that they wanted to upgrade the design standards for commercial development so they hired ERA architect and Advanced Engineering to come up with new design standards. The City Council felt like the existing standards did not satisfy the needs of the community.

**Public Supporters**

Cicily Florence

**Public Opposition**

None

**Commission Discussion**

Vice-Chair Jim Quinn asked if these new standards were higher standards than the current ordinance. The City Manager responded that they were. Commissioner McVey asked if the City had already approved the amendment, in which Mr. Alexander stated they had not approved it, however, they reviewed it and approved submitting it for a recommendation. Vice-Chair Quinn had an issue with the metal siding being in view of the public right-of-way and requested all four sides of the building be masonry. Chair Sheffield asked if these would be standards for all of Leesburg and not just in the overlay district, in which he was informed that he is correct. Ms. Stiles asked about buildings that require metal garages/loading docks. Amanda explained the building will need to follow ordinance standards and building codes. Commissioner Golden seconded support to Vice-Chair Quinn's point on providing quality buildings. Chair Sheffield was concerned that requiring masonry on all four sides might cause a problem with development.

Citizen Cicily Florence addressed the board with a question. She mentioned she was not opposed she was just wondering how this would affect existing buildings to which the Vice-Chair explained it would only be new buildings the existing buildings would be considered grandfathered in.

Vice-Chair Jim Quinn made a **MOTION to APPROVE** the text amendment for the Commercial Design Standard Ordinance with the extraction of the words “visible from the public right of way” from SEC. 18.05 (d) Materials (2), seconded by Commissioner Charlie Barner. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining commissioners voting yea.

- (C) **T24-020** The City of Leesburg has made a request to amend the Sign Regulations ordinance **Article XVI, Section 16.02 General provisions and definitions, Section 16.04 Permitted signs by zoning district, and Section 16.11 Legal provisions** of the **City of Leesburg Code of Ordinances** with respect to adding a new definition for “Billboard”, a new subsection (4) to establish billboard standards in the City of Leesburg, and an “Exhibit A” chart citing the existing billboards in Leesburg, Georgia as of March 2025.

**Public Hearing**  
**Staff Presentation**

City Manager Bob Alexander gave the staff report. Mr. Alexander explained that the City of Leesburg has development occurring on Walnut Street and the developer has plans to place a digital billboard in the city that is similar to the billboard in Albany by Newks. The developer will give the City 10% of the PSA. The developer Milan Patel was present to help the board understand the size of the billboard.

**Public Supporters**  
Milan Patel

**Public Opposition**  
None

**Commission Discussion**

Vice-Chair Quinn brought up the sign at Chick-fil-a for comparison. Developer Milan Patel explained that the digital billboard at Newks is a 10x10 but may look larger due to the height of the sign. Chair Sheffield asked if the City of Leesburg is conforming to the same text that is in the County in which Amanda and Mr. Alexander confirmed that it is the same text. Vice-Chair Quinn asked the City Manager why only two billboards are proposed. Mr. Alexander stated at this time they think most of the traffic is on U.S 19 and they may add more billboards at a later date, but they are only proposing two at this time. Chair Sheffield asked if the sign ordinance would be a conditional use. Mr. Alexander and Amanda explained the process in order to get the billboard approved.

Mr. Patel provided the board with his vision behind the billboard in the City.

Vice-Chair Jim Quinn made a **MOTION to APPROVE** the request to amend the Sign Regulations Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Mike McVey. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining commissioners voting yea.

- (D) **T24-021** The City of Leesburg has made a request to amend the Establishment of Zoning District ordinance **Article II** of the **City of Leesburg Code of Ordinances**, with respect to adding a new section to be known as **Section 2.04. – Overlay Zoning District**, including subsections **(A), (B), (C), and (D)**, to provide overlay zoning district procedures, standards, and requirements.

**Public Hearing**  
**Staff Presentation**

Mr. Alexander briefed the commissioners on the reasons the development authority made the recommendation to approve the overlay district. The City Council would like to add this as a text amendment into the City of Leesburg’s Ordinance with updated requirements and standards.

**Public Supporters**

None

**Public Opposition**

None

**The public hearing closed at 7:07 p.m.**

**Commission Discussion**

Chair Sheffield asked if the ordinance was being drawn up in which the Mr. Alexander explained the Overlay District standards were approved several years ago and this is the amendment modified by Advanced Engineering. He went on to explain that the old zoning overlay was not compatible with what they were trying to get accomplished and this is why they had it modified. Vice-Chair Quinn asked if the purpose of the overlay district is to preserve the area. Mr. Alexander said that was a part of it but added it is also to address new construction.

Vice-Chair Jim Quinn made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the request to amend the Establishment of Zoning District ordinance, seconded by Charlie Barner. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining commissioners voting yea.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Mike McVey made a **MOTION** to **ADJOURN**, seconded by Commissioner Charlie Barner. The **MOTION** was unanimous with remaining Commissioners voting yea. The meeting adjourned at 7:15p.m.

**Note:** all meetings are audio recorded and are filed in the Planning & Zoning Department

Meetings of the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners are open to the public.

Georgia law requires that all parties who have made campaign contributions to any member of the Board of Commissioners in excess of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) within two (2) years immediately preceding the filing of this request, and who desire to appear at the public hearing in opposition to the application, shall, at least five (5) days prior to the public hearing, file a campaign contribution report with the Lee County Planning Commission.

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