



LUMPKIN COUNTY
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
342 Courthouse Hill
Dahlonega, GA 30533

October 13, 2025
5:30 PM

Members Present: Robin Hall, Chris Adams, David Woodward, Barbara Bosanko, Danny Clark, Trevor Eudy, Mireya Eavey

Staff Present: Vanessa McGrath, Martin Durand

CALL TO ORDER

David Woodward called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and read the Procedures for Meeting Announcement.

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Vanessa McGrath requested that item 2 under old business be moved to the last item on the agenda to give time for the applicant to make it to the meeting.

Chris Adams made a motion to approve the agenda with item 2 under old business being moved to the last item on the agenda.

Second by Robin Hall.

All members present voted in favor. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mireya Eavey made a motion to approve the September 8, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

Second by Chris Adams.

All members present voted in favor.

Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

3. **Nancy Hood and Patsy Holland on behalf of the Ralston Grandchildren are requesting a final plat approval in accordance with Sec 26-61 (Class II Subdivision) and Article VI – Final Plat Procedure. The subdivision entitled John W Ralston estate Grandchildren Property located at 8514 Dawsonville GA, Tax Parcel 023-072, and is in Commerce Corridor character area.**

Jason A. Dean of Hulsey, Oliver & Mahar, LLP spoke on behalf of the Ralston Grandchildren. He presented the Planning Commission a letter detailing the request to subdivide the land to meet the judges ordered for the property to be divided on Nov 24, 2024.

Vanessa McGrath stated the applicant submitting as a final plat for a Class II subdivision titled John W Ralston estate Grandchildren Property located at 8514 Dawsonville GA and within the Commerce Corridor Area Character Area. The applicant

is requesting 7 subdivision lots (keep within the Class II criteria of no more than 9 lots). Each lot shown has a min of 3 acre with the required setbacks. All lots will be on individual wells. All lots will be served by individual septic. The Plat meets all the requirements set out in Section 26-61 Class II Subdivision and Article VI Final.

No public comments were received.

Robin Hall asked how the lots will be accessed. Martin Durand explained that all the lots will be accessed from current roads.

Barbara Bosanko made a motion to approve the request as presented.

Second by Trevor Eudy

All members present voted in favor.

Motion passed unanimously.

- 4. Charles Blackstock is requesting a variance to Section 26-71 (5) (No lot resulting from the splitting of a platted subdivision lot may have an area less than the average acreage of all subdivision lots in the platted subdivision.**

Charles Blackstock spoke on the request. He is looking for location to build affordable homes and the cost of the building does not change so he is looking for reasonably prices property. There is a variety of lot sizes in the area and he was not even aware it was a subdivision when he purchased it.

Vanessa McGrath read Sec 26-71(a)(5) No lot resulting from the splitting of a platted subdivision lot may have an area less than the average acreage of all subdivision lots in the platted subdivision. The average acreage of the subdivision lots will be the average of all lots at the adoption of regulation, or as existing at the time of the application, whichever is smaller. The current lot is 2.58 acres. The request is for one lot at 1 acre and the second at 1.58 acres. The average lot size for the subdivision at the time of subdivision was 4.45 acres. And the average lot size in the subdivision now is 2.8 acres. All other requirements are met.

Barbara Bosanko asked when the subdivision was built. Martin Durand stated it was recorded in 1973.

Robin Hall asked what Mr. Blackstock planned to do with the property if the request was denied. Mr. Blackstock stated look for someone who could afford to build a home on that size lot.

Mireya Eavey asked Mr. Blackstock what he considered to be affordable. He stated the house and lot would be around \$300,000.

Public Hearing was opened

Pam Dietz asked Vanessa McGrath to read the requirements to approve a variance in Section 26.

Ms. McGrath read Sec. 26-355. Criteria for granting.

(a) Variances may be granted only if, on the basis of the application, investigation, and

evidence submitted by the applicant, all four of the following expressly written findings are made:

- (1) A strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of the specified standard or requirement would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship.
 - (2) These are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved or to be the intended use of the property which do not apply generally.
 - (3) The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.
 - (4) The granting of the variance would support general objectives contained within this chapter.
- (b) Variances in accordance with this article should not ordinarily be granted if the special circumstances on which the applicant relies are a result of the actions of the applicant or owner or previous owners.

Public Hearing was closed.

Robin Hall made a motion to deny the request as presented.

Second by Chris Adams

All members present voted in favor to deny the request.

Motion was denied unanimously.

5. **Tarpon Towers III, LLC is requesting a variance to Section 51-3(b)(1) requiring tower separation of 5 miles. Property located at Dahlonaga, GA, Tax Parcel 031 225 and is in Rural Places character area. This request will be heard by the Lumpkin County Planning Commission on October 13th, 2025 at 5:30 pm in the Kelley Building, Planning Commission Room, located at 342 Courthouse Hill.**
6. **Tarpon Towers III, LLC is requesting approval of a new telecommunication tower per Sec 51-5(8)b Approval Property located at 59 Hightower Church Road; Dahlonaga, GA 30533; Tax Parcel 031 225 and is in Rural Places character area.**

Andy Rotenstreich of Baker Donalson represented Verizon on locating the new Telecommunication tower and why they could not meet the requirement of being 5 miles from any other tower. The three reasons were that there is a limit to the signals, the surrounding topography and the elevation of the property. The study showed that they have a about a ½ mile location to place the tower to get the best outcome to overcome those three items. Then they had to find a property owner willing to sell property to them to build the new tower. They looked at the existing towers and they are currently on them or they would not provide the coverage needed to improve the service in the area. A diagram showing the existing deficiencies in the coverage and how that will be corrected with the new tower was presented. Mr. Rotenstreich stated the hills block a lot of the signals so they were looking for an elevation and tower height to get the signal over the hills.

Vanessa McGrath stated this is a proposed new 240 ft tall telecommunication tower to be located off of Hightower Church Road. The Application is in order and the only item not met in the requirements was not being located at least 5 miles from existing towers. The tower is in between 4 existing towers. Ranging from 3.2 to 4.1 miles away. The coverage maps show a deficit in this location currently and improvement after the tower is placed. Ms. McGrath showed the Communication Towers 5-mile buffer layer that can be found on qPublic.net for Lumpkin County. This is a public website that has all the Counties GIS and

one layer that Martin Durand created and maintains is the location of all the telecommunication towers within the county and the 5-mile buffer from those sites. It shows there is a small area in the National Forest that would not be with 5 miles of an existing tower. All other requirements in Section 51 – Telecommunications were met with the application. The variance is to allow a new tower to be within 5 miles of an existing tower and since this is a new tower the Planning Commission has to vote on it.

Mireya Eavey asked about the diagrams presented and the how they determined the locations and then asked if the Planning Commission should look at this ordinance if we know there are signal issues in the county and they can get the coverage without being within 5-miles of an existing tower. She also asked if they would continue to co-locate on other towers,

Mr. Rotenstreich stated there is a lot of science that goes into the determining the locations. They have programs that look at the topography, signals and existing coverage and it finds a ½-mile area for them to look at. He felt the county did need to review the ordinance. He stated if this tower was being built to allow other providers to co-locate and if there are towers, they can utilize they always try to do that first since it is the cheaper option than building new towers.

Trevor Eudy stated this is a safety issue. There are spots in the county that do not have coverage and if you have an accident or need 911 you cannot get calls out to get help. He felt the hardship for the variance request was that the code is old and needs to be looked at.

Barbara Bosanko stated she could not believe that the existing towers were all before 2011 when this ordinance was put in place. She wondered if some those were built after and if they got variances.

Vanessa McGrath stated she could do some research on the timeline of the towers if it would help.

Chris Adams stated the 5 miles was to prevent multiple towers to close together. The technology has definitely changed and the Planning Commission needs to look at amending the code. He agreed that there is a safety issue of not having service. He did want to make sure that all the carriers will be high enough to be able to support their need.

Mr. Rotenstreich stated that the tower was designed so the bottom carrier will still be high enough to improve their service.

Robin Hall as if the applicant had sought other sites for the tower which would reduce the variance requirements. He also wants to add to the motion that the Planning Commission needs to revise the Section to change the 5 miles.

Mr. Rotenstreich stated they had sought other locations but could not find any more appropriate alternative sites.

Public Hearing was opened

Anita Spangler stated she was in opposition and that a Health and Safety Environmental survey need to be done for the people and the land. She was concerned

of the health issues that are with these towers.

Mr. Rotenstreich presented the FCC law that states the vote cannot be based on signals. The also gave the Commission handouts on: 1) cell phone radiation study by the FDA in 2019 and 2) cell tower safety 2024 study by the World Health Organization. Both studies showed that there is no health issues related to the towers. He also stated there has been studies that show that land value has no discernable difference after a tower is built.

Public hearing was closed.

David Woodward they will vote the items separately.

Robin Hall made a motion to approve the variance to allow a new tower within 5-miles of an existing tower.

Second by Chris Adams

Motion passed unanimously.

Robin Hall made a motion to approve the new telecommunication tower.

Seconded by Trevor Eudy

Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

2. **Jody Pelfrey, on behalf of Property 400 LLC, is requesting a variance from Sec. 27-2.2.3. Chart of performance standards in order to access the principal activities Vehicle Parking (Limited) by way John D Reeves Road, which has a Local Road Classification. The request pertains Tax Parcel 067 143, located off JOHN D REEVES ROAD within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District Character Area.**

Ms. Pelfrey did not attend the meeting.

Robin Hall made a motion to table the item till when Ms. Pelfrey would be able to attend.

Seconded by Danny Clark.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chris Adams requested Vanessa McGrath to seek council on what changes are need to Section 51- Telecommunications.

Mireya Eavey suggested a workshop to include to Board of Commissioners to discuss the issue within many of the ordinances

Vanessa McGrath stated she would start looking that ordinance and there are some other items that need to be reviewed and possibly changed.

David Woodward agreed that we need to review this section and he had a few items he wanted to bring up also.

Vanessa McGrath asked all of them to start making list and they would start working on updating the ordinances.

ADJOURN

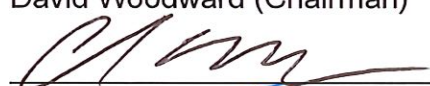
Chris Adams made a motion to adjourn.
Seconded by Robin Hall.
Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Members Present:



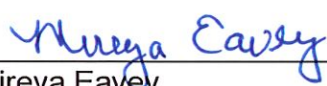
David Woodward (Chairman)



Chris Adams (Vice Chairman)



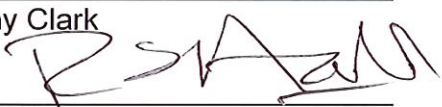
Trevor Eudy



Mireya Eavey



Danny Clark



Robin Hall



Barbara Bosanko