



Lumpkin County Land Use and Development Regulations Review Committee

342 Courthouse Hill Planning Commission Meeting Room

June 29, 2026

5:00 PM

Members Present: Bobby Mayfield, Vanessa McGrath, Martin Durand, Chris Adams, Trevor Eudy, Megan Mazzola, Greg Hayes, Don Becker

Staff Present: Alan Ours

Meeting called to order at 5:00 pm

Minutes were approved by motion and raised hands.

Goal: Line-by-line review of Chapter 26, followed by Chapter 27; lay out a clear path forward; flush out ideas from all perspectives; board will make final adoption decisions.

Committee Purpose and Role

- Role: review Chapter 26 and Chapter 27 and make recommendations; no authority to create final rules.
- Recommendations go to the Board of Commissioners; county attorney reviews all proposed language before board submission.
- County subject matter experts provide technical advice but cannot discuss specific property cases.

Spreadsheet of Suggested Ordinance Changes

- The discussion items were compiled into a spreadsheet linking topics to ordinance sections (private roads, maintenance agreements, cluster mailboxes, safe pull-offs, etc.).
- The spreadsheet is a discussion tool, not approved language.
- Primary change so far: “planning director” replaced with “community development director.”
- Disagreement on proposed changes is acceptable.

Ordinance Drafting and Legal Review Process

- Process: Staff drafts text; county attorney reviews; Board of Commissioners considers.
- Suggestion to seek specialized legal code-writing support.

Development of Regional Impact

- Examples: John D. Reeves Road issue; apartments or larger residential projects (e.g., behind Petro Elementary).
- Review based on criteria such as size/number of homes; state shares info with regional communities for feedback.

Article One Review: General Provisions and Applicable Laws

- Article One covers short title, jurisdiction, content, purpose, and scope.
- Concern that listed state/federal laws are outdated or hard to find (e.g., Georgia Air Quality Act of 1978).



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- Preference to reference “current applicable federal and state law” rather than listing specific acts; legal counsel to advise.
- County ordinances cannot supersede state/federal law; referenced laws should be easy to locate.
- Conclusion: Vanessa will research listed laws and consult legal counsel on keeping, revising, or replacing references.

Article Two Review: Penalties

- Article Two focuses on penalties; no changes made.
- Violations described as misdemeanors; fines may apply daily until corrected.
- Enforcement: permits may not be issued in subdivisions until requirements are met; certificate of occupancy requirements related but not central.

Article Three Review: Subdivision Classes

- Discussion on whether there are too many classes and potential consolidation.
- Vanessa provided a chart with key parameters (tracts, parcels, lot sizes, road access, new roads, time restrictions, setbacks, Planning Commission requirements).
- County has eight classes; Class Four deleted and combined with Class Five.
- Exempt divides do not go to Planning Commission; Classes Two through Eight generally do.
- Common types: exempt divides, minor divides, Class Two, Class Seven; some classes rarely used.

Lot Size Preferences and Development Trends

- Traditional one-acre lots noted; demand increasing for larger lots and more land.
- Some buyers avoid neighbors that are close
- Smaller lots can reduce road/infrastructure needs when near county roads.

Rural Character and Agricultural Preservation

- Desire to protect open pastures and farmland.
- Agricultural preservation may require 3-acre lots when over three lots; existing protections may still fragment land.
- Suggestion to revisit character areas alongside subdivision classes.
- Coordinated review of character areas and subdivision standards needed to protect rural character.



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Class 2 vs. Class 3 Road and Density Thresholds

- Class 2: 20-foot drivable surface; can be gravel. Class 3: county-spec paved roads.
- Threshold at ~10 lots triggers variance or county-spec road requirement.
- Buyer preferences split between gravel (rural feel) and paved; maintenance agreements for private/gravel roads lack enforcement strength.
- Road standards drive class selection
- Maintenance enforcement needs strengthening.

Existing and Rare Subdivision Class Examples

- Class Eight: Industrial Park.
- Class Six: mixed use with public water, sewer, and arterial road access (e.g., Montaluce).
- Class Five: developments with green space, smaller lots, water systems (e.g., Greenwood Park, Shadow Stone, Cedar Springs, Brookwood). Project off McDonald Road pending final approval and may need extension.

Concerns About Class Five and Green Space Developments

- Class Five's smaller lots with green space are hard to design; unusable land can count as green space.
- Requires suitable topography/site conditions; some consider these least favorite due to close lot spacing.
- Interest in overall density averaging instead of rigid lot-size requirements to match site constraints.
- Requires public water/sewer, curb/gutter, sidewalks (one side), county-spec roads, buffers, setbacks, 40% green space, no private road access, tree survey.
- Current Class 5 is overly restrictive, limiting use.

Proposal to create a Master-Planned Hybrid

- Merge into a single master-planned category enabling mixed-use or flexible residential/commercial development.
- Tailor lot sizes and uses to topography, buffers, and market needs with environmental and multi-layer reviews.
- Master-plan approach increases flexibility over rigid rules.
- Hybrid class with mixed lot sizes/densities under overall density cap and minimum acreage; example: one-acre lots near county roads, larger estate/farm lots near creeks/ponds.
- Goals: reduce infrastructure and environmental impact; preserve rural character.



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- Current rules prohibit mixing classes/chaining within one development, often forcing variances.
- A master-planned hybrid could deliver lower density, reduced infrastructure, and better land fit.
- Ideas to address with the master plan / hybrid plats: overall density caps, minimum acreage, lot mix percentages, environmental performance standards; ensure density below character area limits.
- Need baseline Planning Commission review guidelines for master plans; prefer “master plan” terminology over “variance.”
- Clear density and review criteria are required for a master-plan hybrid class.

Rethinking Variances and “Chaining” Prohibitions

- Variances seen as stifling innovation; hybrid concepts currently require variances.
- Chaining banned to prevent bypassing higher-class requirements (e.g., multiple Class 2s to avoid Class 3 roads).
- Interest in original rationale and whether controlled mixing could be beneficial if master plans are adopted.
- Reevaluate variance use and chaining prohibition within a master-plan pathway.

Private Road Maintenance Agreements: Concerns and Enforcement Challenges

- Private roads require a maintenance agreement, but criteria are vague and inconsistent with Class 5, risking future homeowner burdens.
- Personal experiences highlighted financial risks; buyers often unaware of obligations at closing.
- Government has limited ability to police homeowner payments; HOAs’ primary recourse is costly court action.
- Historical issues: unfinished roads due to developer failures; potential solution includes special tax districts for repairs.
- Request the county attorney review to establish stronger, enforceable agreement criteria; clarify deed restrictions on plats.
- New roads inspected for drainage; require 20-foot drivable surface; erosion control plans over one acre of disturbance.
- Consider limiting homes per distance of private road rather than per-subdivision caps; strengthen definitions for non-paved private roads.
- Conclusion: Current system lacks sufficient guidance and enforcement; stronger standards and mechanisms are needed.
- Tension between safety/sustainability regulations and affordability/freedom.



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- Expensive road standards can raise housing costs; goal is to maintain county character and support local builders amid limited water/sewer infrastructure.
- Over-restriction may attract large-scale developers; balance needed.
- Class 7 road width at 15 feet considered unsafe for high lot counts (e.g., 40 houses); 20 feet suggested for safety.
- County not accepting new roads for maintenance; policy set ~5–6 years ago to limit tax burden on residents.

Review Status

- Article Three partially reviewed; interest in combining Classes 5 and 6 into a master-planned category and revisiting Class 7 road width.
- Definitions to be reviewed separately and revisited later.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:16pm

Next Arrangements

- ☐ Vanessa will review and research state and federal laws listed in Article One.
- ☐ Vanessa will consult with legal counsel on whether to list specific laws or use a general reference to current applicable laws.
- ☐ Continue reviewing definitions separately and revisit later.
- ☐ Continue reviewing Article Three subdivision classes and consider consolidation; analyze combining Classes 5 and 6 under a master-planned hybrid framework.
- ☐ Draft baseline review criteria for master-plan submissions (density caps, lot mix percentages, environmental review).
- ☐ Prepare information on hybrid subdivisions for group discussion.
- ☐ Review and recommend revisions to chaining prohibitions, including original rationale.
- ☐ Assess enforcement options to strengthen private road maintenance agreements (e.g., escrows, special districts, recorded covenants).
- ☐ Revisit character area maps in parallel with subdivision class revisions to align with rural preservation goals.
- ☐ Examine minimum road width for Class 7 and related safety standards.
- ☐ Schedule next meeting for Tuesday, July 7th, at 5:30 PM to finish Article Three review and begin Article Four.