

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

Applicant 3625 McEver Road, LLC

Request Rezone from Agricultural Residential III (AR-III, [17.110](#)) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#))

Proposed Use Self-storage facility

Size 11.36± acres

Zoning Current Agricultural Residential III (AR-III, [17.110](#)), Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)) | Proposed Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)), Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#))

Location **3625 McEver Road, 3634 & 3640 Pleasant Hill Road** | Tax Parcels 08032 000006, 000021A, & 000080

Commission District Four

Planning Commission Date December 19, 2022

Staff Recommendation **Approval with conditions based on the findings that this request meets the criteria outlined in [17.380.060](#).**

Planning Commission Recommendation.....Approval with conditions
Vote: 4-1 (Pilcher opposed)

Planning Commission Rezoning Conditions:

1. The development shall occur as depicted on the site plan presented. Minor changes can be approved by the Planning Director provided there is no increase in the square footage of storage area or number of buildings, there are no reductions in buffers, no changes in the structural design and materials, and the changes do not create the need for a variance in Hall County development standards unless approved.
2. The applicant shall be required to meet all applicable local, state, and/or federal regulations required as part of the land development process, including all GCOD standards ([17.420.050](#)). **No variances from the Hall County standards are granted as part of this request, unless specifically approved and added as conditions to follow.**
3. The applicant shall receive approval from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for a commercial driveway.
4. A Landscape Plan shall be approved by the Planning Director prior to issuance of the Land Disturbance Permit (LDP).

5. Applicant shall submit architectural elevations of all four sides of all structures for approval by the Planning Director with the following variances:
 - a. The north, west, and south walls of office building shall meet Gateway Corridor Standards.
 - b. The north and west portions of the 3 two-story buildings shall meet Gateway Corridor Standards, the east and south of the 3 two-story buildings shall have metal sidings with the color to be approved by the Planning Director.
 - c. There shall be standing seam metal roof panels with the color to be approved by the Planning Director.
6. Signage shall require a separate permit and must meet the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD) standards found in [Section 17.420.060](#); **No variances from the Hall County standards are granted as part of this request, unless specifically approved and added as conditions.**
7. The buffers shall be protected in perpetuity by a deed that follows the property. The removal or modification of this condition shall require action by the Board of Commissioners (BOC).
8. All conditions of zoning shall be made part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.
9. A 200 foot undisturbed buffer shall be parallel to Pleasant Hill Road.
10. Office hours of operation shall be from 9 am - 6 pm, Monday – Saturday and there shall be no tenant access onto the property from 12 am – 5 am, Monday – Sunday.
11. All fencing requirements by Gateway Corridor shall be met.
12. There shall be no ingress and egress along Pleasant Hill Road.

As a rezoning request to PCD, Planned Commercial Development, you are also considering the proposed use, since there are no inherent uses within this classification. The rezoning and conditional use are included in this report but a separate staff report has been prepared for the variances necessary, if the use is approved as presented. The proposed use is also a conditional use subject to Board of Commissioners because it is in the Gateway Corridors Overlay District.

Public Forum:

Bill Oberholtzer, 3709 Whiting Road, Gainesville, spoke in opposition. Concerns were zoning, size of retention pond, buffers, and site plan.

Mary Anna Jackson, 3632 Pleasant Hill Road, Gainesville, spoke in opposition. Concerns were future expansion, devaluing neighboring property, vegetation, and topography.

Gerald Kowalle, 3633 Pleasant Hill Road, Gainesville, spoke in opposition. Concerns were zoning.

Mauricio & Ellie Santos, 3654 Pleasant Hill Road, Gainesville, spoke in opposition. Concerns were expansion, disruption, and devaluing property.

Summary Analysis

The applicant is requesting to rezone 11.36± acres from Agricultural Residential III (AR-III, [17.110](#)) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)) for the purpose of developing a self-storage facility. The proposed development will contain a total of 72,000 square feet of storage space, which will be evenly

divided between three (3) two (2) storied buildings, each being 24,000 square feet in area. A 2,400 square foot office building is proposed with associated parking adjacent to the proposed access onto McEver Road. The storage area is located through a gated access point. The buildings will be constructed in such a manner that they will appear to be one-story from the south. The storage facility will have both climate controlled and non-climate controlled storage spaces. The hours of operation will be Monday – Saturday, 9:00am – 6:00pm for the office, with 24 hour access to the storage facility.

The narrative continues to describe that for the purpose of the rezoning application, all Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)) standards, including buffer and landscaping requirements, shall apply to the development. The site plans shows a 50 foot buffer along the southern property line where it is adjacent to residentially zoned parcels. Per the narrative, the buffer shall consist of a mixture of existing vegetation, supplemented by evergreen shrubs and trees where necessary. ***The narrative notes that trees planted or retained in the buffer areas shall count towards the overall tree density unit requirements.***

The applicant's narrative states that the buildings will be constructed out of ***steel and will have corrugated sheet metal walls.*** The walls facing McEver Road will be full brick or a brick/stone combination. Per the non-residential property development standard ([17.420.050.H.2](#)) of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)), the use of a common palette of building materials should be maintained for all four sides of principal buildings to create a consistent and traditional architectural identity. Building materials used for all four sides of new or reconstructed buildings are restricted to the following: brick, stone, split-face block/concrete masonry unit (CMU) is restricted to 50 percent of the surface area of each side of a principal building, stucco is restricted to 50 percent of the surface area of each side of a building, or glass and glass block. Exposed concrete block, painted concrete block, metal, tilt/up and pre-cast concrete are prohibited materials for any exterior wall.

Within the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)), self-storage facilities require conditional use approval from the Board of Commissioners, which is being heard concurrent to this request.

No variances were explicitly requested as part of the application, but **staff has identified the need for several variances** from the non-residential property development standard ([17.420.050](#)) of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)) during the review of this request. A separate variance report is provided related to these standards.

- The narrative states that the buildings will be constructed out of steel and will have corrugated sheet metal walls. The walls facing McEver Road will be full brick or a brick/stone combination. This is inconsistent with non-residential property development standards ([17.420.050.H.2](#)) of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)), which requires the use of a common palette of building materials should be maintained for all four sides of principal buildings.
- The submitted plans indicate that the sign will be internally illuminated, which is inconsistent with non-residential property development standard ([17.420.050.F.4.a](#)) of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)) that prohibits internally illuminated signs.

Based on the future land-use plan, staff finds the *requested zoning designation is inconsistent* with the future land use map designation of Lake Area Residential within the Hall County [Comprehensive Plan](#). **Despite being inconsistent with the future land use map, there is an established commercial corridor along this portion of McEver Road. The adjacent parcel to the north is also zoned Planned Commercial**

Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)), and developed with a mini-golf course. To the south are parcels within the City of Oakwood jurisdiction, which are zoned [Highway Business District, C-2](#).

Zoning Analysis

The proposed self-storage facility is inconsistent with the [Comprehensive Plan](#) as the future land use designation is Lake Area Residential. The parcel is not part of the Lake Supportive Corridor, though the neighboring properties are commercially zoned and developed.

When considering a zoning amendment to the zoning maps, the following items must be considered:

Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property; **There is an established commercial corridor along this portion of McEver Road. The adjacent parcel to the north is also zoned Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)), and developed with a mini-golf course. To the south are parcels within the City of Oakwood jurisdiction, which are zoned [Highway Business District, C-2](#).**

Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **The zoning proposal should not have an adverse effect on the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property. Self-storage facilities traditionally are a low impact use, with those who rent a storage space visiting infrequently.**

Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has reasonable economic use as currently zoned. **The property is currently undeveloped and zoned Agricultural Residential III (AR-III, [17.110](#)). The property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned.**

Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the land use plan; **The proposed zoning of Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)) for a self-storage facility is inconsistent with the [Comprehensive Plan](#). The future land use designation is Lake Area Residential which includes low-density residential development and neighborhoods. The parcel is not part of a Lake Supportive Corridor, though the neighboring properties are commercially zoned and developed.**

The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the area in the vicinity of the property; **The appears to have been vacant as far back as GIS aerial imagery goes, 1999.**

Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **No, the change would not create an isolated zoning district. The adjacent parcel to the north is also zoned Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)), and developed with a mini-golf course. To the south are parcels within the City of Oakwood jurisdiction, which are zoned [Highway Business District, C-2](#)**

Whether the change requested is out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood; **The request does not appear to be out of scale with the needs of the County as a whole, as there is a need for additional storage facilities in the County.**

Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; **There are other properties within the County that support the proposed self-storage facility without rezoning.**

- A Planned Commercial Development (PCD, [17.180.080](#)) shall provide for the maximum attainable commercial usage of property while employing the best aspects of prior site planning and development controls to insure: protection of surrounding residential uses; safe access by motorists; minimum traffic congestion; and a development which is consistent with long-range plans of the county.
- Applications for Planned Commercial Developments (PCD, [17.180.080](#)) shall include the following required plans:

The proposed exterior lighting shall be shown.

Although not shown, the submitted narrative states that security lighting in the form of wall packs with outer shields to direct light downwards are intended to be used for the development.

All proposed signs, advertising or identification graphics shall be indicated, showing their number, size, height and location.

The submitted narrative meets this standard. The narrative describes one sign constructed at the McEver Road entrance to the property, which will be a monument style sign and meet Hall County Zoning Regulations (Title 17) standards. It should be noted that the submitted plans indicate that the sign will be internally illuminated, which is inconsistent with non-residential property development standard ([17.420.050.F.4.a](#)) of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)) that prohibits internally illuminated signs.

The type and number of uses proposed for the commercial development shall be indicated.

The submitted narrative describes the proposed use as a 72,000 square foot self-storage facility, comprised of 3 buildings plus an office.

The development controls for the district shall be stated (lot coverage, setbacks, building heights, lot sizes, etc.). If standards are not specifically proposed, then the applicable standards in the suburban shopping district (S-S) shall apply.

The submitted site plan shows the setbacks for the Agricultural Residential III (AR-III, [17.110](#)) district – 40 feet from property line or 65 feet from centerline of road, whichever is greater, front; 15 feet, side. It should be noted that McEver Road is classified as an arterial road per the regulations and Hall County GIS maps; per setback requirements from arterial streets ([17.240.040](#)), no structure may be placed less than 100 feet from the center line of an arterial street (as defined in [section 17.20](#)). **The proposal meets this requirement.**

- The property falls within the **Gateway Corridors Overlay District, ([17.420](#))** which provides supplemental design standards for non-residential property development. The proposal will be subject to the standards found within [17.420.050](#) (non-residential property development standards) which relate to building materials, landscaping, and buffer requirements. Variances in the design standards found in [17.420.050.H.2.c](#) and [17.420.050.H.3](#) are required.
- **The applicant has met the submission requirements for a rezoning request ([17.380.050](#)).**

Development Support and Constraints – Departmental /agency comments

Hall County Environmental Health

An email dated December 2, 2022 from Emily McGahee states: “Must meet all Environmental Health commercial septic system permitting requirements. Further determination will be made during the civil plan review process. A detailed business plan must be submitted to Hall County Environmental Health for review.

Additional items, including, but not limited to: recorded plat, soil evaluation, and septic system installation may be required after review of business plan.”

Hall County Fire Rescue

In an email dated December 2, 2022, Lieutenant John Hornick, NPQ Fire Inspector 1, Plans Review, states:

- 1) IFC Section 507.5.1 where a building(s) is constructed and is more than 400’ from a fire hydrant on an approved fire access route fire hydrant(s) shall be installed. Fire hydrant(s) may have to be installed inside the development to meet fire code requirements.
- 2) IFC Section 506.1 access controlled gate will require a Knox key switch override device for fire department access into gated development.
- 3) IFC Section 510 emergency responder radio coverage confirmation will apply to each of the 24,000 SF buildings.

Hall County Public Works and Utilities

In a memo dated December 1, 2022, from Srikanth Yamala, Director of Public Works and Utilities, the following comments were provided:

Engineering:

This site may require a stormwater management report should the site plan indicate the proposed development meets stormwater thresholds for impervious surfaces and/or disturbed acreage. Show buffer and impervious setback from wrested vegetation, not the centerline of creek.

Traffic:

Access must be approved/permitted by GDOT.

Utilities:

No Hall County Sanitary Sewer in the area.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Per an email dated November 23, 2022, Parker Niebauer, District 1 Traffic Operations Supervisor confirmed that GDOT coordination will be required.

➤ Excerpts from the minutes of the December 19, 2022 Meeting

Applicant’s Presentation:

Randi Doveton, Planning Director, presented a summary of the request.

Tyler Smith, 340 Jesse Jewell Parkway, Gainesville, presented the request. The applicant discussed the topography of the property. The applicant pointed out that the neighboring properties were zoned for commercial business. The applicant presented their two variance requests: 1. the sides of the buildings viewable from McEver Road will comply with exterior building requirements of the Gateway Corridor Overlay Districts. Allow a variance so that sides not viewable from McEver may be constructed of other materials, provide they match the color scheme with powder coated finish; 2. Allow metal roof panels, provided they are architectural standing seam with colors and façade.

Charlie Hipple, 4763 Falling Brooke Drive, Flowery Branch, presented the request.

Public Forum:

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Planning Commission Comments:

Mr. Braswell wanted to make it clear that there would be no access to the proposed facility from Pleasant Hill Road. Mr. Varner questioned the buffer measurements between the property and Pleasant Hill Road. Mr. Hipple stated 400 feet of existing vegetation. Ms. Pilcher questioned if the three buildings were it for the property. Mr. Smith stated it was for this request and if they were able to expand they would want to come back in front of the county. Mr. Braswell questioned hours of operation. Mr. Hipple stated that staff would be onsite Monday – Friday, 9 am – 6 pm with 24 hour access seven days a week. Mr. Braswell suggested splitting the property’s zoning to avoid encroaching into the neighboring residence. Mr. Hunt suggested using buffers. Mr. Hipple suggested a 100 foot buffer towards Pleasant Hill Road. Mr. Hipple pointed out that they are not planning to have white metal buildings as seen in the renderings. Mr. Braswell stated that the building would not have access between 12 am – 5 am.

Motion: A motion to approve, with conditions was made by Mr. Hunt and seconded by Mr. Bell. Vote: 4-1 (Pilcher opposed)

Conditions:

1. *The development shall occur as depicted on the site plan presented. Minor changes can be approved by the Planning Director provided there is no increase in the square footage of storage area or number of buildings, there are no reductions in buffers, no changes in the structural design and materials, and the changes do not create the need for a variance in Hall County development standards unless approved.*
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