

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

**Applicant** ..... Lean On Me Recovery Residences

**Request** ..... **Special Use**

**Proposed Use** ..... Group home

**Size** ..... 0.72± acres

**Zoning** ..... Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1)

**Location** ..... **5674 Bark Camp Road** | Tax Parcel 11083  
002001

**Commission District** ..... Two

**Planning Commission Date** ..... July 21, 2025

**Staff Recommendation** ..... **Denial**, as the proposed use is inconsistent with  
the “Rural Agriculture” future land use  
designation within the Comprehensive Plan

**Record Number**.....HZCU25-0028

**Planning Commission Recommendation** .....**Withdrawal**

**Vote: 4-0**

**Excerpts from the minutes of the July 21, 2025 meeting**

**Applicant’s Presentation:**

Katie Greenway, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated the applicant has requested to withdraw.

**Motion:** *A motion to withdraw was made by Shannon Davidson and seconded by Frank Sosebee. Vote: 4-0*

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**Staff recommends DENIAL of the applicant’s request.**

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**Summary Analysis**

The applicant is requesting a special use for a group home on a 0.72± acre tract zoned Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1). Per the narrative, the group home is intended for men struggling with drug and

alcohol disorders. The subject property is currently developed with a church and the submitted narrative indicates that the building is being used as storage for Living Waters Outreach located at 5833 Bark Camp Road.

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as follows:

North: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): Hall County Murrayville Park  
East: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): Undeveloped  
South: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): Undeveloped  
West: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): Developed with a single-family home

The applicant is not proposing any alterations to the footprint of the building at this time. The narrative states that the parking lot will accommodate 15 spaces and lighting will be added for security purposes. Security cameras in the common living areas and on exterior access doors are proposed.

Per the submitted narrative, Lean On Me Recovery Residences (LOMRR) is proposed to operate Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to pre-screen applications and conduct intake for new residents. There would be two staff members on duty. The group home is intended to house up to 12 residents who will stay on site for the first three days, and will then move into a tier system of 30, 60, and 90 days: the first 30 days to become independent and gainfully employed and the next 30 days of accountability. After 60 days, they will work with sponsors in a 12 step recovery plan and prepare for weekend passes through the program. The group home will also offer group learning opportunities and individual peer recovery sessions to set goals and recognize accomplishments.

Per the submitted narrative, water will be provided by the City of Gainesville Department of Water Resources, and sanitary sewer will be provided by an on-site septic system.

**Based on the future land use plan, staff finds the requested rezoning *is inconsistent* with the Hall County Comprehensive Plan future land use designation of Rural Agriculture.** These areas should consist of active farms and agricultural enterprises and very low-density, large lot single-family residential uses of less than 0.75 dwellings per acre. Development patterns may involve larger areas of undeveloped or cultivated land characterized by large distances between buildings and deep setbacks.

### **Zoning Analysis**

When considering a zoning amendment to the zoning maps, the Planning Commission must study the need and justification for the change based on a determination of the facts applicable to the particular case, and the following general lines of inquiry must be considered:

- a) Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use, development and zoning of adjacent and nearby property; **The proposed special use of a group home is inconsistent with the use and development of surrounding properties, which are developed with a public park and single-family homes on larger lots with deep setbacks that complement the rural atmosphere.**
- b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **It is difficult to anticipate whether the proposed special use of a group home will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.**

- c) Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned; **The property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned; however, approval from the Board of Commissioners is required for a group home.**
- d) Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, schools, police protection, fire protection, public health facilities or emergency medical service; **If approved, the proposed special use is not anticipated to cause an excessive or burdensome use of the existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, schools, police protection, fire protection, public facilities, or emergency medical service.**
- e) Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the future land use plan for the physical development of the area; **The proposed special use is inconsistent with the intent of the "Rural Agriculture" future land use designation within the Comprehensive Plan.**
- f) The extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions; **Staff is unable to determine the extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions.**
- g) The extent to which the destruction of the subject property's value under the existing zoning promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public; **Staff is unable to comment on the impact of property values without a full market analysis. Multiple factors impact property values including construction types, proposed uses, and maintenance. Often it is difficult to determine the effect of a development on adjacent properties until the development is completed.**
- h) The relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner; **Staff has not identified a hardship imposed on the property owner as the property is currently zoned.**
- i) 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 subject property is currently zoned Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) and developed with a church building built in 1960.**
- j) Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal; **Staff is not aware of any changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property.**
- k) Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **As the request is a special use in the AR-1 zoning district, this amendment does not create an isolated district unrelated to surrounding zoning.**
- l) Whether the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions in the area; **There is no evidence that the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn.**

- m) Whether the change requested is out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood; **The proposed special use is inconsistent with the intent of the “Rural Agriculture” future land use designation within the Comprehensive Plan, and therefore out of scale with the needs of the immediate neighborhood.**
- n) Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; **A special use for a group home requires approval by the Board of Commissioners.**
- o) Whether the need for rezoning could be handled instead by a variance request to the Planning Commission; **The request for a special use could not be handled alternatively as a variance.**
- p) Whether there would be an ecological or pollution impact resulting from major modifications to the land if the request is granted; **Any land disturbance activities on the property shall be required to go through the land development permitting process, and as a result are subject to local, state, and federal regulations. As a result, there are no anticipated ecological or pollution impacts resulting from any modification to the land if the request is granted.**
- q) Whether there is reasonable evidence based upon existing and anticipated land use that would indicate a mistake was made in the original zoning of the property; **There is no indication that a mistake was made in the original zoning.**

#### **11.2.6.E - Submission requirements**

1. Any person or persons requesting a change in the official zoning map or use subject to approval of the County Commission must file an application with a plat or map of the property attached thereto, together with payment of such fees set forth in this Sec 11.2. to cover administrative and advertising costs, in the Planning and Zoning Department office. Such person or persons or their authorized agent must appear in person at the public hearing held to consider the district change. **The proposal meets the requirement. The applicant has paid the appropriate fees and understands that someone must be present at both the Hall County Planning Commission meeting and the voting meeting of the Hall County Board of Commissioners.**
2. All applications for a change of zoning classification or use subject to approval of the County Commission must include:
  - a. A narrative statement identifying the existing and proposed use of the property and addressing each of the criteria set forth in this Sec. 11.2. **The proposal provides a narrative outlining the intent of the development; however, the applicant has not prepared a response to each of the criteria listed in 11.2.6.E.2.**
  - b. A site plan drawn to scale designating the area covered by the application and identifying existing and proposed buildings and uses, adjacent existing land uses, zoning on contiguous parcels, including those across an abutting public right-of-way, and any other significant site improvements proposed to accommodate the proposed use or buffer adjacent uses, etc., or a plat of the subject property where no specific land use is proposed. In cases where only a plat or map is provided and no land use is proposed, the Planning Commission and County

Commission may evaluate the application based on the most intense possible land use permitted in the proposed district. **The proposal meets the requirement.**

- c. For any application for a slow rate land treatment system as defined in 7.6.9.D.1, additional requirements apply. **This standard is not applicable to the applicant's request**
- d. For any application proposing the development of 100 or more residential dwelling units, a traffic impact study must be submitted prior to consideration of the application by the County Commission. At the applicant's expense, the traffic impact study must be prepared by a professional engineer in accordance with requirements established by the Hall County Engineering Department. The Engineering Department must review the traffic impact study and forward any comments to the County Commission. **This standard is not applicable to the applicant's request.**

### **Development Support and Constraints**

#### **Hall County Environmental Health**

In an email dated June 16, 2025, Emily McGahee stated "Must meet all Environmental Health commercial septic system permitting requirements as public sewer is not available. 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 evaluations, and septic system installation/modification may be required after review of business plan."

#### **Georgia Department of Transportation**

In an email dated June 16, 2025, Nakia Nembhard, GDOT Civil Engineer 2, stated that GDOT coordination is not required.

#### **Hall County Public Works and Utilities**

In a memo dated June 20, 2025, Bill Nash, Director of Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

##### **Engineering:**

No comment.

##### **Traffic:**

No comment.

##### **Utilities:**

Septic area. Hall County sewer service but no sewer in area.

#### **Hall County Fire Marshal**

In an email dated June 16, 2025, John Hornick, NPQ Fire Service Plans Examiner 1, stated, "The building in its current condition does not meet fire or life safety code for a group home. If approved, site development and architectural plans will need to be reviewed and approved before any land disturbance or building permit can be issued."