
Formal Opposition to Rezoning – Ben Parks Rd (AR-1 to PCD)

From Jessica Baran [REDACTED]
Date Mon 3/23/2026 11:05 AM
To Planning <planning@hallcounty.org>
Cc Richard Higgins (County Commissioner) <rhiggins@hallcounty.org>; Billy Powell (County Commission) <bpowell@hallcounty.org>; Jeff Stowe (County Commission) <jstowe@hallcounty.org>; Gregg Poole (County Commissioner) <gpoole@hallcounty.org>; Kathy Cooper (County Commissioner) <kcooper@hallcounty.org>

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Please include this correspondence in the official record for the April 9, 2026 public hearing.

Dear Hall County Board of Commissioners,

My name is Jessica Lee Baran, and I am a nearby property owner writing to formally oppose the proposed rezoning of approximately 89.56 acres located at 6245, 6249 & 0 Ben Parks Road from Agricultural Residential (AR-1) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) for a "non-profit retreat center."

I have lived in this area for over 35 years. I grew up here, playing in these same surrounding properties with friends, and I know this land as a beautiful countryside made up of hardworking families, open land, livestock, and a quiet rural character that is increasingly rare. My husband is an honorable United States Marine Corps veteran, and we chose to build and maintain our life here because of the peace, privacy, and stability this community provides.

This proposed rezoning represents a significant and permanent shift in land use that would negatively impact my property, my families quality of life, and the surrounding community.

First and foremost, this request is not a minor adjustment, it is a conversion from a rural residential/agricultural designation to a commercial zoning classification. Regardless of how the proposed use is described, a retreat center introduces commercial level activity, including increased traffic, group gatherings, operational staff, deliveries, lighting, and noise. These impacts are not consistent with the expectations of an AR-1 community.

Additionally, zoning decisions apply to the land itself and not the current applicant. Even if the present proposal is described as a nonprofit use, the approval of a Planned Commercial Development would remain with the property indefinitely. If ownership changes, the organization dissolves, or the use evolves over time, the property would still retain commercial zoning, allowing for future uses that could be more intensive and disruptive than what is currently already being proposed.

There are also serious concerns regarding traffic and safety. Ben Parks Road and the surrounding road network are not designed to accommodate the increased volume and type of traffic associated with a retreat-style development. This includes not only guests, but staff, service vehicles, and potential event traffic, all of which raise legitimate safety and infrastructure concerns.

Environmental considerations are equally important to this community. This tract is located in close proximity to a river system, and development of this scale introduces risks related to stormwater runoff, erosion, water quality, and long-term ecological impact. These are not isolated effects. They extend beyond the property and directly affect neighboring landowners.

Equally concerning is the impact on nearby property values and the overall character of the area. Introducing a commercial zoning district into a rural residential setting creates uncertainty and diminishes the desirability of surrounding properties. This is a lasting change that cannot be undone once approved.

Finally, this request appears inconsistent with the existing land use pattern of the area and raises concerns about precedent. Approving this rezoning could open the door for additional commercial encroachment into agricultural and residential areas, fundamentally altering the nature of our community over time.

I am actively coordinating with other affected residents who share these concerns.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request that the Board of Commissioners deny this rezoning application.

Please include this email in the official record for the public hearing scheduled for April 9, 2026. In addition, I respectfully request that all supporting documents, studies, and materials related to this application be made available to affected property owners prior to any decision. At minimum, this application should not be considered complete or eligible for approval without supporting documentation and analysis, including but not limited to:

- Traffic Impact Study
- Stormwater and Drainage Study
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Septic/Wastewater Capacity Analysis
- Lighting and Visual Impact Study
- Noise Impact Study
- Parking and Circulation Plan
- Public Safety Impact Review
- Property Value Impact Analysis
- Detailed Site Development Plan (as required for PCD zoning)
- Future Land Use Plan Consistency Analysis
- Operational Impact Statement outlining occupancy, events, and hours of operation.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Jessica Lee Baran

6810 Jake Kemp Rd, Murrayville, GA 30564

