

Thumbs Up Mission

Letter of Intent/Zoning Narrative

Amended March 10, 2026

Background and Purpose



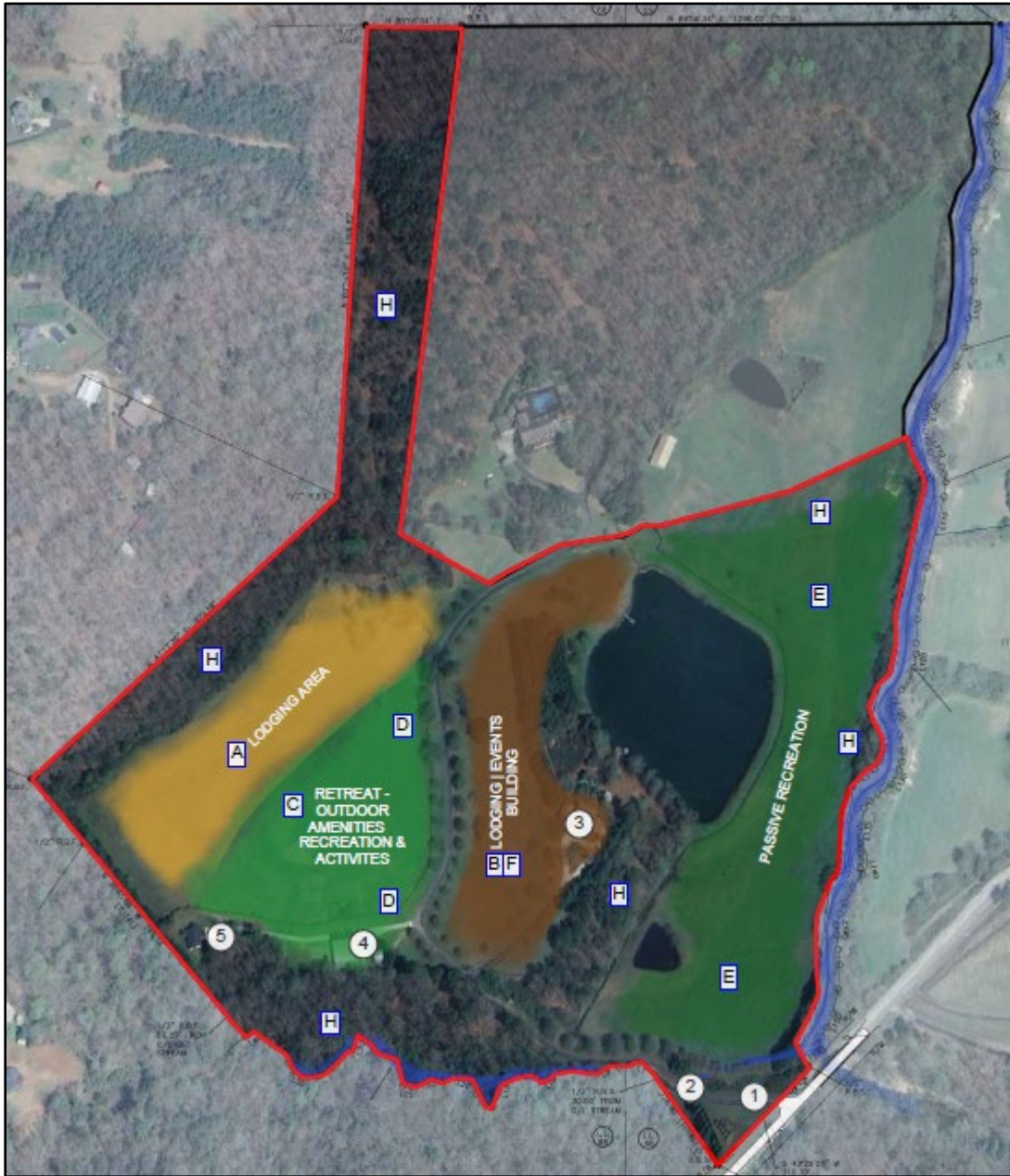
Thumbs Up Mission was established by Miles and Sharon Coker to carry on the legacy of their son Keaton Coker. Diagnosed with brain cancer at 16 years old, Keaton lived a life full of grace, generosity and strength of spirit. Although he passed at the young age of 18, his memory is the foundation for this non-profit organization which endeavors to fortify families where a parent or child is fighting cancer. Thumbs Up battles fear by infusing hope, inspiring laughter, and instilling an eternal perspective in every family served. This mission is accomplished by hosting weekend retreats at kid-friendly resort properties. To date, 24 retreats have been held, 1,458 families and 6,523 individuals have been served, and 4,855 volunteers

have given their time and efforts. The weekend retreats are designed to benefit the whole family, and are a blend of unstructured free time and planned group activities. Retreats are completely free to the families and include meals, lodging, and entertainment. While this time together is priceless for the families in attendance, it also provides them with an ongoing community of support and understanding; the retreats create the strongest bonds of love and hope.

The subject property was chosen due to its idyllic location in North Hall. Conveniently located near Thompson Bridge Road and Old Dahlenega Highway, the property totals approximately 60 acres and includes the main house, a guest house, and gymnasium. The main house overlooks a small lake and features scenic views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Thumbs Up Mission intends to use the existing structures for the retreat center, as well as construct additional buildings to accommodate guests. The following chart lists the proposed uses and facilities, as well as the quantities, number of units, and existing and proposed maximum square footage. Currently referred to as Camp Keaty, in honor of Keaton Coker, Thumbs Up Mission continues to consider other naming possibilities and may ultimately choose another name once the camp is established.

PROPOSED MASTER ZONING PLAN



**Images are for illustrative purposes only and may be changed at time of development plans.*

Planned Uses

Planned Uses	Number Proposed	# of Bedrooms per Unit	Existing Facility (SF)	New Facilities (Max SF each)
Facilities				
1. Chapel	1	N/A	N/A	5,000
2. Activity / Ministry Center / Multi - Purpose / Dining	2	N/A	N/A	15,000
3. Staff Accommodations *	5	5	2	5,000
4. Pastoral Retreats *	2	20	1	15,000
5. Cabins / Cottages *	24	6	N/A	3,000
6. Lodge **	3	30	N/A	20,000
7. Day / Summer Camp	—	—	—	—
8. Gymnasium	2	N/A	4,500	10,000
9. Laundry	1	N/A	N/A	3,000
10. Camp Commons	1	N/A	N/A	6,000

The applicant requests an additional maximum of 10,000 SF for auxiliary construction, to include an additional maximum of 10 guestrooms.

Other support areas & miscellaneous structures may include: outdoor gathering areas such as patios and firepits, activity lawns, swimming pools, hiking trails and overlooks, pavilions, buildings for the maintenance of the property such as storage sheds, guardhouses, security center, boathouse, stables, and barns. The siting of these accessory structures is not shown in the concept plan and will be determined after decisions for other primary elements are made.

* Overnight accommodation structures will be built to Residential Code requirements.

** Thumbs Up Camp Keaty may include meeting rooms, snack and/or dining facilities and assembly area(s) in addition to overnight accommodations. Each will be built to Commercial Code requirements.

Camp Use Facilities

1. Chapel

A chapel is planned, although the specific location has not yet been determined. The chapel will not exceed 5,000 square feet and will be used for worship, ministry gatherings, prayer, teaching services, and other faith-based programs served by Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty.

2. Activity/Ministry/Multi-Purpose/Dining

Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty includes indoor flexible-space ministry buildings which may include commercial kitchen capabilities to be used for group meals, meetings, conferences, recreational activity, instructional programming, counseling, worship gatherings, and religious services. Up to two (2) such facilities are proposed, each with a maximum building area of 15,000 square feet.



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3. Staff Accommodations

Up to five (5) staff accommodation units are proposed. These units may include up to five (5) bedrooms per unit and are intended to provide permanent year-round housing for ministry staff and transitional ministry program leaders and their families. Staffing residents will have active ministry responsibilities and will provide onsite presence when guests or ministry participants are present.

4. Pastoral Retreats

Up to two (2) pastoral retreat residences are proposed. These will be detached or attached site-built residential structures intended primarily for temporary or extended rest, sabbatical care, renewal, study, and retreat use by pastors, missionaries, and ministry leaders. Each unit may include up to twenty (20) bedrooms. Pastoral retreats will maintain the architectural character of residential dwellings.

5. Cabins/Cottages

Up to twenty-four (24) cabins/cottages may be constructed. These are site-built structures of up to six (6) bedrooms per unit, with one to six bathrooms, kitchen space, dining area, and group discussion/activity area. Units shall be residential in character and may be clustered in locations across the property or placed in a unified area.

Cabins may temporarily house groups including but not limited to:

- a. Unrelated families with children
- b. Married couples without children
- c. Widows or widowers
- d. Same-gender college and career participants
- e. Adult-chaperoned youth
- f. Parent-chaperoned children
- g. Individuals with special needs and caregivers
- h. Pastors and spouses
- i. Ministry leadership

6. Lodges

Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty may include up to three (3) lodge facilities. Each lodge may provide temporary large-group accommodations with up to thirty (30) bedrooms per lodge, with bathroom facilities. Lodges may include meeting rooms, gathering rooms, kitchen and dining service areas, and group common areas. Lodges allow larger ministry groups to stay together in a single building rather than being divided among cabins.



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Overnight Accommodations

Overnight accommodations are intended for exclusive use by Thumbs Up Ministries and its guests and shall not be used as privately owned transitional housing, group homes, or long-term rehabilitation facilities. No overnight units will be owned or operated by unaffiliated third parties. Overnight accommodations will not be made available for general public lodging or short-term rental use (including but not limited to VRBO, AirBnB, or similar platforms).

7. Day / Overnight / Summer Camp

Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty may operate as a traditional faith-based camp for:

- Single-day events
- Overnight events
- Multi-day weekend programming
- Week-long seasonal programming

Overnight accommodations may be provided in approved lodging facilities and cottages allowable under this plan. Bathing facilities and restrooms shall be appropriately segregated by age and gender.

Camp activities may include, but are not limited to:

- dining hall service
- pavilions and outdoor instruction areas
- archery
- challenge courses
- low- and high-element ropes courses
- outdoor educational programming

Recreational vehicles (RVs) will not be accommodated. Tent camping may be permitted on platforms or ground locations as designated.

Some or none of the cottages may be dedicated to camp use seasonally. Camp programming may also include supervised trips to nearby recreational or natural resources.



8. Gymnasium

Gymnasium facilities may be used for recreational ministry, physical training, athletic events, camps, and gatherings. One existing gymnasium of approximately 4,500 square feet is present on

the property, and up to one (1) additional gymnasium facility may be constructed with a maximum 10,000 square feet.

9. Laundry Facilities

Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty may include one or more centralized laundry facilities to support camp operations and overnight lodging needs. Laundry buildings will be accessory to the approved use and are intended to provide cleaning services for linens, bedding, towels, camp uniforms, and related items necessary to maintain safe, sanitary, and healthy accommodations for guests and staff.

Laundry facilities may include:

- Commercial-grade washers and dryers
- Sorting and folding space
- Storage for linens and cleaning supplies
- Mechanical and utility service areas

Laundry buildings will be constructed to applicable building code standards and will comply with Hall County regulations, health department standards, and environmental requirements. Laundry facilities are not intended for public or community use and will serve only Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty guests, staff, and ministry operations.

The final size, number, and exact locations of laundry facilities will be determined during site development planning, ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses and efficient proximity to lodging facilities.

10. Camp Commons - Store/Food Service/Common Areas

Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty may include one or more camp stores/food service/common areas to support camp guests, ministry programming, and recreational activities. These facilities are intended to function as accessory use buildings serving only the guests, members, and staff of Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty and are not intended for public retail or restaurant operations.

These buildings may include:

- Snack, beverage, and light food service areas
- Merchandise and camp store retail space
- Informal seating, tables, and gathering space
- Recreational and social activity areas
- Restrooms, storage, and utility areas

Camp store/common areas are anticipated to range between 3,000 and 6,000 square feet, with the final size and number to be determined during site planning based on ministry programming needs. All facilities will comply with applicable Hall County development regulations, health standards, and building codes.

Temporary & Hardship Housing Allowances

Overnight accommodations may also be used for up to six months to assist ministry families or guests experiencing:

- Serious illness
- House loss due to fire or disaster
- Family crisis
- Other documented ministry-approved hardship needs

Temporary housing is defined as less than 30 consecutive days.

Long-term temporary housing is defined as 30 days up to a maximum of 12 months.

Use by Other Ministries

By mutual agreement, other ministry organizations, para-church organizations, faith-based entities, non-profits, or select aligned organizations may temporarily use facilities on either a recurring or one-time basis. Reasonable lodging, cleaning, and meal service costs may be charged.

Amenities

Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty may include a range of recreational, programmatic, and operational support structures to serve ministry activities, overnight guests, day programming, and seasonal camp operations. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Swimming pool and pool house
- Splash pad/water play area
- Archery range
- Athletic courts and recreation fields (including basketball, multi-use courts, etc.)
- Zipline elements
- Gymnasium facilities
- Covered and uncovered outdoor gathering areas and pavilions
- Picnic areas and seating areas
- Walking trails and hiking trails
- Exercise and fitness activity areas
- Playgrounds, play forts, and children's activity structures
- Treehouse activity areas
- Campfire and outdoor fellowship gathering areas
- Bathhouses and restroom support facilities
- Arts and crafts building/creative lodge
- Camp store and common areas
- Coffee house/social fellowship space
- Laundry facility
- Security/guard house
- Maintenance building, shop areas, and equipment storage facilities
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Paddleboarding
- Fishing

- Rock climbing/climbing wall
- Ropes courses (high & low)
- Mountain biking
- Orienteering/scavenger hunts
- Outdoor survival skills/bushcraft
- Slip-and-slide or water inflatables
- Arts & crafts
- Tie-dye shirts
- Pottery/clay sculpting
- Painting/drawing
- Woodworking
- Jewelry making
- Photography & videography
- Talent shows/skits
- Music
- Frisbee/ultimate frisbee
- Obstacle courses
- Field games (relay races, tug-of-war)
- Trampoline or bounce pillow
- Animal encounters/petting zoo
- Gardening or farming activities



Additionally, similar recreational activities may be added in the future, subject to compliance with all applicable zoning, safety, and regulatory requirements.

Select outdoor courts and fields may be illuminated for evening use. Lighting will be fully shielded, downward-facing, and designed to minimize glare, light spill, and skyglow with lights turned off immediately following activities. Illumination levels will comply with applicable lighting standards and will be positioned to avoid impact on adjacent properties.

These facilities will serve only Thumbs Up's Camp Keaty guests, members, staff, and ministry programs and are not intended for general public recreational operation. All structures will comply with applicable Hall County development regulations and building codes.

Utilities

It is anticipated that the development will be served by individual on-site septic systems, and shall meet the requirements of all environmental and health regulations which govern. Water is currently provided on the property by wells, and the applicant is considering coordinating with the City of Gainesville's Water Resources Department to extend a water line from an existing 12" line along Wade Whelchel Road.

Zoning and Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is currently zoned Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1). Surrounding properties are also zoned AR-1, and are developed with agricultural and residential uses. Wahoo

Creek runs along the eastern boundary of the property, and an unnamed stream defines the southern boundary. There is FEMA and County Studied Flood Zones in both of these areas as well (southern and eastern boundaries).

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately 54.3 acres of an assemblage, identified as Tract 1 on a survey by Patton Land Surveying, LLC and dated January 7, 2026. The remaining acreage of the assemblage is identified as Tract 2 and measures approximately 35.26 acres. This tract includes a residential home, metal shed, and pond. Tract 2 is not included in this rezoning application and no changes to its zoning or use are being proposed.

The Hall County Unified Development Code (UDC) was adopted on November 14, 2024 as an update to the county's ordinances. The extensive review and consideration performed by the county is reflected in the document, as it provides requirements for zoning and development processes. The UDC defines specific zoning districts and associated standards for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The type of development envisioned for Camp Keaty is fairly unique to Hall County, although a similar application was approved in 2025 for the rezoning of property in South Hall from AR-1 to PCD for a different ministry and retreat center (HZON24-0048). While the PCD zoning designation may seem incongruent with the described use, the district is intended to permit the development of property which allows for greater flexibility in development standards and site planning conditions, and encourages a mixture of uses which without proper design and planning might not be compatible with surrounding uses or zoning districts. These districts are intended to be "floating zones" that can be individually evaluated for designation. The development standards and land uses presented with the application would become the standards for the subject property.

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in December of 2024, and also serves as an important tool to guide growth within Hall County as well as assist the county commissioners in making zoning decisions. The Comprehensive Plan divides the county into six Character Areas, which designate certain areas of the county according to similar features and identifies appropriate development. The subject property is located on the boundary between Murrayville/Sardis and North Hall Character Areas. The property is identified as a Rural Neighborhood Future Land Use, which supports agricultural enterprises and low-density single-family residential uses. Although the Comprehensive Plan does not reference a retreat center in any of the Future Land Use designations, it is a unique type of use that will closely align with the agricultural character of the area. Planning staff recommended approval of HZON24-0048, noting that the proposed use is consistent with the intent of the Rural Neighborhood future land use. In fact, it is this pastoral setting that makes the site appealing for Thumbs Up Mission in their pursuit of providing respite for the families entrusted in their care. As more and more large tracts are converted into residential subdivisions, the preservation of this rural character for a retreat center benefits not only the local North Hall area, but also the county and region as a whole.

Phased Development

Thumbs Up Mission expects that the uses and facilities of the retreat center will be phased over the next 25 years. The first phase is anticipated to include the construction of two cabins/cottages. A second phase will consist of additional cabins/cottages, a multi-purpose

building to accommodate meals and gatherings, and possibly other supporting features such as pavilions, trails, the activity lawn, and a camp store. Various factors would influence future growth as outlined in the proposed uses, although the organization plans for three or four phases of development.

Changes to Zoning

The applicant requests that a change to the development or inclusion of an additional use, if any, can occur at an administrative level of review without further approval action required by the Board of Commissioners, only if the Director of Planning and Chair of the Board of Commissioners both agree in writing that a written request received from the owner for modification of uses is:

- (1) consistent with the overall purpose and function of Thumbs Up Camp Keaty, and
- (2) is minor in effect.

If the two cannot agree that the matter is consistent with the overall purpose and minor, the owner shall be notified in writing that the matter, if pursued further, merits formal review as a zoning amendment. In that case the owner may make application for formal review and consideration of the matter with public hearings by the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners. In either scenario (approval or denial of the letter request), the other members of the Board of Commissioners will be copied with the request and findings of the Planning Director and Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

Planned Uses for which zoning approval is specifically being sought include a range of day-use facilities and overnight Accommodations. These terms are general and reflect the primary products or nature of activity. Day Use Facilities will be primarily for large and small group activities during general daylight hours. Overnight Accommodations will be primarily used for small group activities during evening hours and at night. However, it is not the applicant's intention to limit use of any specific facility to a single use or specific hours.

No extended daily long-term use (year-round year-after-year use) of any facilities other than Staffing Accommodations is permitted. Uses shown may be relocated elsewhere on the site as later required for overall efficiency of operations overtime. There is no requirement that specific uses be undertaken in any specific buildings. Some building(s) or use(s) may not be built. No further county approvals shall be required to discontinue a use after its establishment or to change uses over the life of buildings.