
Ben Parks Proposed Rezoning - 6245 Ben Parks and all associated Thumbs Up Planning

From Kelly Doane [REDACTED]
Date Mon 4/6/2026 9:18 PM
To Planning <planning@hallcounty.org>

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Dear Members of the Hall County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners,

We are requesting this letter be added to the meeting packet formally requesting the denial.

I am writing as a concerned resident to strongly oppose the proposed rezoning of 6245 Ben Parks Road from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) for the Thumbs Up Mission retreat center.

While I deeply respect the mission of supporting families battling cancer, this request is not appropriate for this location and poses serious concerns for those of us who live in this community.

This proposal is fundamentally incompatible with the Rural Neighborhood designation in the Hall County Comprehensive Plan. Our area has been intentionally preserved for low-density residential and agricultural use. Introducing what is effectively a large-scale, multi-use retreat complex—with lodges, cabins, dining facilities, activity centers, and camp-style programming—would permanently alter the character of our community.

The scale of this project is particularly concerning. Plans include dozens of lodging units, large assembly buildings, recreational amenities, and the ability to host significant numbers of overnight and day-use guests. This is not a small, low-impact retreat—it is an expansive, phased development that could continue growing over the next 25 years. Once approved, there is no meaningful way to reverse or contain its impact.

Residents along Ben Parks Road and surrounding areas will bear the burden of:

- Increased traffic on narrow, rural roads not designed for high-volume use
- Noise from events, outdoor activities, and large groups

- Light pollution from evening activities and illuminated facilities
- Safety concerns related to increased congestion and unfamiliar drivers

There are also serious environmental concerns. The proposal relies on large-scale septic systems and is located near streams and flood-prone areas. The long-term environmental impact on water quality, drainage, and surrounding land should not be underestimated. In addition, the historic ramifications of sensitive environments and historical sites may be destroyed forever.

Equally troubling is the flexibility built into this request. The applicant is seeking the ability to modify uses administratively, without full public hearings in some cases. This creates significant uncertainty for nearby homeowners, as the scope and intensity of the project could expand beyond what is currently presented.

Additionally, while the applicant states the facilities will not be open to the general public, the size and nature of the development closely resemble a commercial camp or event venue. Approving this rezoning sets a precedent for similar high-intensity developments in areas that are meant to remain rural.

On a personal level, I chose to live in this area because of its quiet, rural character, low traffic, and sense of community. This project threatens all of those qualities and will negatively impact property values, quality of life, and the overall integrity of North Hall.

I respectfully urge you to deny this rezoning request in full. At a minimum, this proposal should be tabled and completely re-evaluated to ensure it aligns with the Comprehensive Plan and protects existing residents, the Wahoo Creek and Lake Lanier that it feeds, our historic treasured land, and Murrayville as a whole.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to preserving the character of our community.

Sincerely,

Kelly Doane
Ben Park Resident

Sent from Gmail Mobile