

## AGENDA

### PUBLIC HEARING OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

Walker County Courthouse Annex III, 201 S Main Street  
LaFayette, Georgia 30728

- Date:** Thursday, June 25, 2020
- Time:** Public Hearing 6:00 PM  
The Regular Scheduled Meeting will immediately follow the Public Hearing
- Invocation:** Given by Commissioner Shannon Whitfield
- Call to Order:** Commissioner Whitfield will call the meeting to order
- Pledge:** United States Flag
- Pledge:** Georgia Flag

#### Open of Public Hearing New Business:

- I. *Pruett's Supply Inc. requests a conditional use variance for property located at 2081 S. Hwy 27 LaFayette, GA. 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-490-1-005 (First Public Hearing was on June 18, 2020 at the Planning Commission Meeting.)*
- II. *DFP LLC requests a conditional use variance for property located at 0 Glentana Street Rossville, GA. 30741. Tax map & parcel number 0-133-088A (First Public Hearing was on June 18, 2020 at the Planning Commission Meeting.)*
- III. *Douglas Daugherty requests a rezone from A-1 to R-1 for property located at 312 Allgood Road Flintstone, GA. 30725. Tax map & parcel number 0-049-065 (First Public Hearing was on June 18, 2020 at the Planning Commission Meeting.)*

- IV. *Grenda Jo Thompson requests a rezone from A-1 to RA for property located at 1452 Veeler Road LaFayette, GA. 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-339-056 (First Public Hearing was on June 18, 2020 at the Planning Commission Meeting.)*
- V. *Roy Dewayne Tankersley requests a rezone from C-1 to R-2 for property located at 1901 McFarland Ave. Rossville, GA. 30741 Tax map & parcel number 0-156-094A (First Public Hearing was on June 18, 2020 at the Planning Commission Meeting.)*

***Speakers will be asked to come to the podium and state their name for the record. Please limit your comments to five minutes and keep them on the above topic.***

**Adjournment:**

Commissioner Whitfield will adjourn the Public Hearing

# WALKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Application for ~~Re-Zoning Amendment~~

Conditional Use Variance

Date 2-28-2020

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FEE \$ 150.00

Case No.

Owner's Name Pruett's Supply Inc

Mailing Address P.O. Box 585  
INCLUDE ROUTE AND BOX # IF ASSIGNED

City/Zip LaFayette, GA-30728

Phone 423-364-4422

Tax Parcel # 0-490-1-005

Street Name and Number 2081 S. Hwy 27

Current Zoning C-1

Requested Zoning

Reason for Change (Be Specific):  
So new buyer can manufacture targets - wants to move business from Tennessee

Lessee's Name IF APPLICABLE

Lessee's Address

NAME AND ADDRESS OF ALL ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS WITH MAILING ADDRESSES

- 1.
2. June 18, 2020 - approved by Planning Commission
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED, ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET

LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS  
CURRENT

FUTURE

I SWEAR UNDER PENALTY OF LAW THAT THE WITHIN INFORMATION IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE.

Owner's Signature [Signature]

Date: 02-29-2020

Date Received by the Planning Office: March 2, 2020

Planning Commission Decision/Date April 16, 2020 6:00pm Civic Center

FOR OFFICE USE

The Owner/Applicant must notify each adjoining property owner by providing them a copy of this application. Proof of notification must be provided to the Planning Office. Additionally, a sign, furnished by the Planning Commission will be posted on the subject front property line at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. Written notification must be mailed at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. This application must be fully complete prior to filing.

Applicant: Pruett's Supply Inc.

Map & Parcel: 0-490-1-005 Rezone from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

June 18, 2020 APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

**COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:**

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

The following disclosure is required of the applicant(s) by Section 36-67A-3 of O.C.G.A. The following is for disclosure purposes only and does not disqualify the petition.

Within the past two years, have you made either campaign contributions totaling \$250.00 or more and/or given gifts having value of \$250.00 or more to a local government official who will be responsible for making a recommendation or decision on the application? YES ( ) NO ( ). If so, then on a separate page, please furnish the following information.

- A) The name of the local government official(s) to whom cash contribution or gift was made.
- B) The dollar amount(s) and date(s) of each campaign made by the applicant to each local government official during the two years immediately preceding the filling of the application: and
- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having a value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years:

Signature of Petitioner/Owner:

*Robert Prueitt* 02-29-2020

OWNER

DATE

PETITIONER

DATE

# WALKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## Application for Re-Zoning Amendment

*Conditional Use Request*

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE		FEE \$ <u>150.00</u>	Date
		Case No.	
Owner's Name <u>DFP LLC</u>		Mailing Address <u>P.O. Box 80243</u> <small>INCLUDE ROUTE AND BOX # IF ASSIGNED</small>	
City/Zip <u>Chatt. TN 37414</u>		Phone <u>423-802-2117</u>	
Tax Parcel # <u>0-133-088A</u>		Street Name and Number <u>1000 Glenview Street</u>	
Current Zoning <u>R-3</u>		Requested Zoning	
Reason for Change (Be Specific): <u>Container data centers</u>			
Lessee's Name <small>IF APPLICABLE</small>		Lessee's Address	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF ALL ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS WITH MAILING ADDRESSES			
1.			
2. <u>June 18, 2020 - approved by Planning Commission</u>			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8. <small>IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED, ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET</small>			
LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS		CURRENT	
		FUTURE	
I SWEAR UNDER PENALTY OF LAW THAT THE WITHIN INFORMATION IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE.			
Owner's Signature <u>[Signature]</u>		Date: <u>02-18-20</u>	
Date Received by the Planning Office:			
Planning Commission Decision/Date			

FOR OFFICE USE

The Owner/Applicant must notify each adjoining property owner by providing them a copy of this application. Proof of notification must be provided to the Planning Office. Additionally, a sign, furnished by the Planning Commission will be posted on the subject front property line at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. Written notification must be mailed at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. This application must be fully complete prior to filing.

Applicant: DFP LLC

Map & Parcel: 0-133-088A Rezone from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

June 18, 2020 APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

**COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:**

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

The following disclosure is required of the applicant(s) by Section 36-67A-3 of O.C.G.A. The following is for disclosure purposes only and does not disqualify the petition.

Within the past two years, have you made either campaign contributions totaling \$250.00 or more and/or given gifts having value of \$250.00 or more to a local government official who will be responsible for making a recommendation or decision on the application? YES ( ) NO (X) If so, then on a separate page, please furnish the following information.

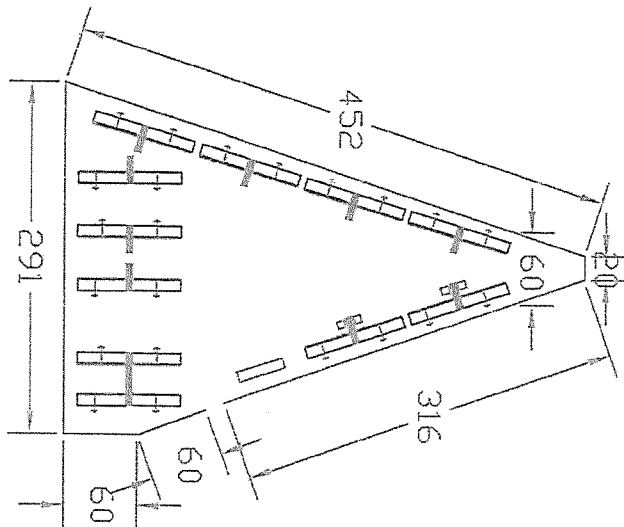
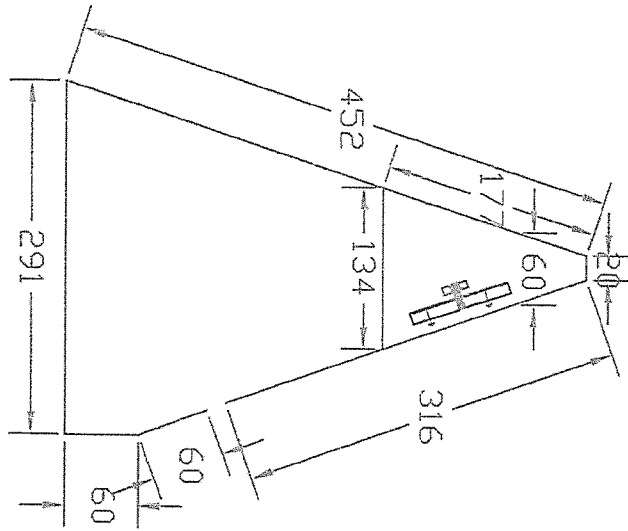
- A) The name of the local government official(s) to whom cash contribution or gift was made.
- B) The dollar amount(s) and date(s) of each campaign made by the applicant to each local government official during the two years immediately preceding the filing of the application: and
- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having a value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years:

Signature of Petitioner/Owner:

Harold B. Duff 2-10-20

OWNER DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
 PETITIONER DATE



Sheet Reference Number	T & T Digital Wiring, LLC Walker County, Ala 1000 Glentana Street Walker County, Georgia	Alcity Development, LLC Post Office Box 60243 Chattanooga, Tennessee 37414 423 602 2337	Date	Date	Revisions
			Drawn By: HBD	File No	
			Checked By:	Drawing Number	
			Reviewed By:	Contract No	

# WALKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## Application for Re-Zoning Amendment

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE		Date
		Case No.
FEE \$ 75.00		
Owner's Name <i>Douglas Daugherty</i>	Mailing Address <i>611 Signal Mountain Blvd</i> <small>INCLUDE ROUTE AND BOX # IF ASSIGNED</small>	
City/Zip <i>Signal Mountain, TN. 37377</i>	Phone <i>423 488 0435</i>	
Tax Parcel # <i>0-049-065</i>	Street Name and Number <i>312 Allgood Rd.</i>	
Current Zoning <i>A-1</i>	Requested Zoning <i>R-1</i>	
Reason for Change (Be Specific): <i>to rezone so property can be divided</i>		
Lessee's Name <small>IF APPLICABLE</small>	Lessee's Address	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF ALL ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS WITH MAILING ADDRESSES		
1. <i>June 18, 2020 - approved by Planning Commission</i>		
2. <i>w/ condition that a new drive be put in for</i>		
3. <i>the house in the back</i>		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7. <i>Sign up by Feb 27<sup>th</sup></i>		
8. <small>IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED, ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET</small>		
LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS		
CURRENT		FUTURE
I SWEAR UNDER PENALTY OF LAW THAT THE WITHIN INFORMATION IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE.		
Owner's Signature <i>[Signature]</i>	Date: <i>1/31/2020</i>	
Date Received by the Planning Office:		
Planning Commission Decision/Date		

FOR OFFICE USE

The Owner/Applicant must notify each adjoining property owner by providing them a copy of this application. Proof of notification must be provided to the Planning Office. Additionally, a sign, furnished by the Planning Commission will be posted on the subject front property line at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. Written notification must be mailed at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. This application must be fully complete prior to filing.



Applicant: Douglas Daugherty

Map & Parcel: D-049-0625 Rezone from: A-1 to: R-1

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

June 18, 2020 APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS with a new drive  
Be put in for the house in the back

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

**COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:**

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

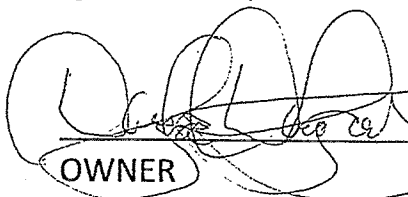
\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

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Within the past two years, have you made either campaign contributions totaling \$250.00 or more and/or given gifts having value of \$250.00 or more to a local government official who will be responsible for making a recommendation or decision on the application? YES ( ) NO (X) If so, then on a separate page, please furnish the following information.

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- B) The dollar amount(s) and date(s) of each campaign made by the applicant to each local government official during the two years immediately preceding the filling of the application: and
- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having a value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years:

Signature of Petitioner/Owner:

 1/31/2020  
**OWNER** **DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PETITIONER** **DATE**

# WALKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## Application for Re-Zoning Amendment

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE		FEE \$ <u>75.00</u>	Date <u>2-18-2020</u>
		Case No.	
Owner's Name <u>Granda Jo Thompson</u>		Mailing Address <u>1452 Veeler Rd</u> <small>INCLUDE ROUTE AND BOX # IF ASSIGNED</small>	
City/Zip <u>LaFayette, GA. 30728</u>		Phone <u>706-764-5277(H)</u>	
Tax Parcel # <u>0-339-056</u>		Street Name and Number <u>Same</u>	
Current Zoning <u>A1</u>		Requested Zoning <u>RA</u>	
Reason for Change (Be Specific): <u>to rezone so they can split the property</u>			
Lessee's Name <small>IF APPLICABLE</small>		Lessee's Address	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF ALL ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS WITH MAILING ADDRESSES			
1. <u>Brad + Deann Thompson (Brad - 423-599-0079</u>			
2. <u>306 1st Street</u>			
3. <u>LaFayette / June 18, 2020 - Planning Comm. approved</u>			
4.			
5.			
6. <u>Kelly Alexandra Neelby</u>			
7. <u>02-10-2020</u>			
8. <small>IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED, ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET</small>			
LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS			
CURRENT		FUTURE	
I SWEAR UNDER PENALTY OF LAW THAT THE WITHIN INFORMATION IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE.			
Owner's Signature <u>Granda Jo Thompson</u>		Date: <u>02-10-2020</u>	
Date Received by the Planning Office:			
Planning Commission Decision/Date <u>6:00 p.m. Walker Co. Civic Center 3-19-2020</u>			

FOR OFFICE USE

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Applicant: Greenda Jo Thompson

Map & Parcel: 0-339-056 Rezone from: A-1 to: BA

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

June 18, 2020 APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

**COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:**

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

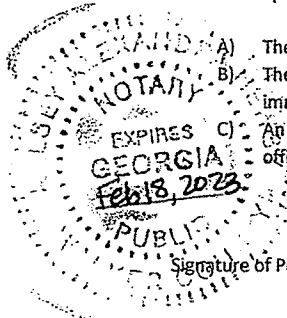
\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

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- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having a value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years:



L. Sey Alexandra Henry  
 Signature of Petitioner/Owner: 02-10-2020

Greenda Jo Thompson 02/10/2020  
 OWNER DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
 PETITIONER DATE

# WALKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## Application for Re-Zoning Amendment

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE		Date
		Case No.
FEE \$ 75.00		
Owner's Name Roy Dewayne + Susan Tankersley		Mailing Address P.O. Box 481 <small>INCLUDE ROUTE AND BOX # IF ASSIGNED</small>
City/Zip Flintstone, GA. 30725		Phone 423-227-1715
Tax Parcel # D-156-094A		Street Name and Number 1901 McFarland Ave
Current Zoning C-1	Requested Zoning R-2	
Reason for Change (Be Specific): to change back to residential		
Lessee's <small>IF APPLICABLE</small> Name	Lessee's Address	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF ALL ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS WITH MAILING ADDRESSES		
1.		
2. June 18, 2020 - approval by Planning Commission		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8. <small>IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED, ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET</small>		
LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS		
CURRENT		FUTURE
I SWEAR UNDER PENALTY OF LAW THAT THE WITHIN INFORMATION IS TRUE, CORRECT AND COMPLETE.		
Owner's Signature Roy Dewayne		Date 2/6/2020
Date Received by the Planning Office:		
Planning Commission Decision/Date March 19, 2020 Walker Co. Civic Center		

FOR OFFICE USE

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Applicant: Roy Dewayne Tankersley

Map & Parcel: D-156-094A Rezone from: C-1 to: R-2

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

June 18, 2020

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

**COMMISSIONERS FINAL DECISION:**

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

\_\_\_\_\_ TABLED

\_\_\_\_\_ DENIAL

The following disclosure is required of the applicant(s) by Section 36-67A-3 of O.C.G.A. The following is for disclosure purposes only and does not disqualify the petition.

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- C) An enumeration and description of each gift having a value of \$250.00 or more made by the applicant to each local government official within the past two years:

Signature of Petitioner/Owner:

Roy Dewayne Tankersley 2/4/2020  
OWNER DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PETITIONER DATE



**ATTENDEES:**

**Planning Commission Members**

Phillip Cantrell  
Michael Haney  
Scott McNabb  
Sam Bowman  
Gerald Cook  
Sid Adams  
Susan Tankersley  
Moe Gass  
Daryl Brooks

**Walker County Planning Staff**

David Brown, Director of Codes, Inspections & Planning  
Kristy Parker, Planning Commission Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Phillip Cantrell called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**II. READING & APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 20, 2020 MEETING MINUTES:**

Chairman Cantrell asked if there were any questions or changes to the minutes and if not was there a motion to approve. Daryl Brooks made a motion to approve. Susan Tankersley seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion to approve carried.

**III. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Conditional Use Variance:**

**1. Pruetts Supply Inc.:** Mr. Robert Pruettt came forward and explained what type of business he had operated at the property for the past 30 years. Mr. David Ball came forward and stated that he would like to buy the property and relocate his business here. He manufactures archery targets and said there would be no noise nor smell. Chairman Cantrell asked if there was a motion. Sid Adams made a motion to approve. Sam Bowman seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion to approve carried.

**2. DFP LLC:** Mr. Harold Danks came forward and explained that they would like to place some data processing pods on the property at Glentana Street where they also have a solar farm. He stated that the property was in a flood zone so the pods would be placed on piers and there would be lights and fencing for security. Chairman Cantrell asked if there was a motion. Daryl Brooks made a motion to approve. Scott McNabb seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion to approve carried.

# DPH adds staff, expands contact tracing for COVID-19

From Georgia DPH

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is increasing its workforce to expand contact tracing for COVID-19 in Georgia. Contact tracing is used to identify and mitigate hotspots of infection to help prevent further spread of the virus. Currently, about 250 contact tracers are deployed throughout the state. To date, more than 3,800 individuals testing positive for COVID-19 have been contacted and nearly 13,000 contacts identified.

In partnership with the CDC Foundation, a deployment coordinator and a training and learning coordinator have joined DPH's COVID-19 response team. Together these individuals will oversee the training and deployment of hundreds of contact tracers being hired by the department. They will work closely with the 18 public health districts to ensure operational issues and staffing needs are addressed, and that performance metrics established by DPH and district leadership are met. DPH's goal is to have over 1,000 contact tracers within

weeks to strengthen its contact tracing efforts. Training is underway for 800 new contact tracers and 70 medical students and MPH candidates who joined DPH in the past two weeks. Along with the additional contact tracers, DPH is introducing a new online monitoring tool developed by Google/MTX to make contact tracing more efficient. Once a COVID-19 case is identified, public health staff work with that individual to help them recall everyone they have had close contact with and where they went while they may have

been infectious. Contacts identified during this interview will be called by trained DPH staff indicating that they have been exposed to COVID-19 and asking them to enroll in DPH symptom monitoring and informing them that they must self-quarantine for 14 days after the exposure. The web-based portal allows identified contacts to easily answer questions about their health and their symptoms related to COVID-19. If the contact reports symptoms, the system will prompt the individual to call 911 if they are in a medical emergency or to consult with their healthcare provider if they are sick and need medical care. Individuals with mild symptoms who do not need medical care will then be provided information on how to schedule COVID-19 testing. Contacts will receive a daily text message for 14 days reminding them to report if they have symptoms through the monitoring tool, and they will also receive information about what to do if they are or become sick. Individuals who do not report daily will be contacted by DPH. For people who do not wish

to use the online system or receive texts, they can call DPH directly to report their symptoms. Confidentiality is critical to the success of contact tracing. Contact tracing in Georgia is 100% confidential — the identity of the person who tests positive and the information on those who might have been exposed will not be shared. Georgia's contact tracing does not use GPS or Bluetooth technology to track movements. The monitoring tool does not collect any data other than what is entered by the contact.

# Road tests still required for Georgia drivers amid COVID-19

By Beau Evans  
Capital Best News Service



Georgia's newest drivers will still need to pass the road test to receive their licenses later this year after state officials suspended the test in recent weeks due to concerns over coronavirus. Gov. Brian Kemp clarified the need to take and pass the test at a news conference Tuesday, May 12, despite previous guidance from the state that had suspended testing requirements for drivers including teenagers who already received learners permits. "They're still going to have to come back and take the driver's

test," Kemp said. "That was always the case," he added. "We just wanted to clarify that." An executive order Kemp issued Tuesday, May 12, makes clear the road test "was only temporarily suspended" and that drivers still need to complete it. Anyone who received a driver's license without doing so in recent weeks must take the test by Sept. 30 in order to keep their license.

According to the order, examiners with the state Department of Driver Services (DDS) must administer the test while riding in the vehicle with a testing driver or "by remote means." Drivers also need to schedule an appointment online with the agency before showing up to a DDS office to take the road test. It remains to be seen what exactly "remote" road testing entails. DDS spokeswoman Susan Sports said in an email Wednesday, May 13, that the agency "is developing a way to comply with the new executive order but [does] not have any details at this time." Nearly 20,000 teens in Georgia

had received provisional licenses without having to take the test as of May 5, the most recent day that data is available, Sports said. Those teens all had their learners permits for more than a year and most mandatory training and educational requirements, she added. The governor's previous executive order issued April 23 stated drivers would "not be required to complete a comprehensive on-the-road driving test," clearly signifying the testing requirement would be suspended for as long as that executive order was in place. That order also stated driv-

ers with learners permits (Class CP) would not need to wait the usual 12 months before being eligible to take the test for their provisional license (Class C). As of Wednesday, May 13, the DDS website noted that waiver is still in effect. The updated requirements for driver road tests come as Kemp continues winding down some social-distancing requirements for businesses like restaurants, gyms and other close-contact establishments. However, bars, nightclubs and live-performance venues will remain closed through at least the end of May.

## CHURCH

From A1

The project that church officials plan to discuss with the state fire commissioner's office once government operations return to normal after the COVID-19 outbreak. What apparently could be chalked up to differing interpretations of state and local jurisdictions and laws, mixed messages as administrations changed, and inflamed political passions have escalated to dozens of Facebook posts characterizing the county's administration as overreaching its powers and stymieing church construction efforts.

In July 2015 a faulty circuit board in an ice maker in the kitchen caused a fire at the church. After settling with the insurance company for \$1.7 million, the church received permission to rebuild under a "blanket permit" from then-sole Commissioner Bebe Heiskell's administration, said Coker, a school resource officer at Ritzland High School.

The church initially intended to "rebuild" the burned portion of the building, approximately one-third of the structure; however, the fire compromised the structural integrity of the steel in the remaining portion of the building, so the church had to demolish it, Coker said. Whitfield's administration took office in January 2017. The church purchased a slightly larger metal building to erect on the existing concrete slab site and worked with then-county Fire Marshal Waymond Westbrook to locate firewalls and on other steps Westbrook required to ensure the construction would remain within compliance with the permit received in 2015, Coker explained.

Church officials said incoming Fire Chief Blake Hodge characterized the cooperation and professional courtesy they had received under the previous administration as allowing them to get things done under the "good old boy system."

When county building officials became aware that construction of a "new" building was underway, without required permits and inspections, the stop work order was issued, county Planning Director David Brown said.

Walker County officials said they found no record of the permission from Heiskell's administration to which Coker referred. Coker reached out to Jeff Hogan, state fire marshal, who advised that his office could not go against the local jurisdiction, he said.

Coker said the building falls under local jurisdiction, but he believes because he asked the state fire office for help that the commissioner's office handed off jurisdiction to the state.

State Fire Inspector Jeff Goodwin with the state fire marshal's office determined that the church falls under state, not local, jurisdiction. "They (church representatives) are asking the county to do something we don't have the power or legal authority to do," explained Whitfield. The problems seem to have originated with the distinction between whether the building fell under the requirements for new construction or if it was literally a "rebuild" because it was being built on the original slab.

Existing buildings are generally grandfathered in for codes compliance, but construction of a new building is required to meet current requirements. County officials said construction of the new metal building required stamped drawings prepared by a licensed architect and hiring a licensed contractor to oversee the construction of a new building.

Whitfield's administration required a full set of architectural drawings that cost almost \$70,000, hiring a structural engineer at a cost of \$30,000, installation of a commercial type sprinkler system at around \$140,000, spraying a fire retardant material throughout the inside of the structure for about \$140,000.

"So if you do the math, they are costing this community of believers around

\$380,000 and we still can't get anything going even though we finally got a permit, due to the structural engineer putting in unachievable requirements before we sink another nail," Coker posted on May 11 on Facebook.

Coker said the building's capacity is less than the state has determined, and the church is actually exceeding many of the state fire safety requirements.

The church had to hire an architect to prepare drawings of a building that was essentially already erected. Pastor Wallin, who himself had previously been a general contractor and had been managing the build, stepped aside so that Killian would act as the project manager to oversee contractors and to communicate with the county to ensure compliance.

After reviewing the submitted plans, the state fire marshal's office determined the building's total occupancy to be 1,602 people; state fire safety codes require the structure be sprinkled, Walker County Fire Chief Blake Hodge said.

While the church membership may be smaller than the building's total occupancy, the church could host revivals and other events that draw more people, and the congregation could grow in the future, county officials said.

According to a permit, the state fire commissioner's office estimated the building has 22,750 square feet. For sale of comparison, the four-unit shopping center at 311 N. Main St., LaFayette, that includes Dollar General on one end and Workhorse Fitness Center on the other is a total 22,024 square feet, according to county tax records; this total does not include the Food City building.

As of May 15 at 5 p.m., Coker's Facebook posts had received more than 150 responses. The string includes banter about fee and permit requirements, exemption from fire safety requirements, accusations that county officials accept kickbacks and endorsements for Matt Harris, a county candidate for

commission chairperson. Harris waded into the Facebook fray, posting "I've seen all the documentation. They can start building the day 1 take off."

Coker said the church never intended to become involved in politics over this issue. He has become a Harris supporter because "he's somebody you can talk to," he added.

Whitfield is competing against Harris and Perry Lamb in the June 9 Republican primary to seek the county commission chairperson's seat. Amanda Babb posted, "Different codes for new builds and existing structures. I am not disputing that the previous authority were letting churches slide without meeting code when rebuilding, but obviously the new administration are not."

Whitfield said contrary to Coker's assertions, his administration has not treated Corinth Baptist Church any differently than other church. Sunnyside Baptist Church met all requirements for an addition, including providing plans.

Coker equated the plans supplied with Sunnyside Baptist to a diagram of the floor plan on a sheet of paper, rather than a full set of architectural plans as Corinth Baptist was required to supply. Some comments support the county's position.

Babb, in another post, wrote, "Just because this establishment is a church does not give the right to violate building/safety code. The irony is that the church already burned once. Yes, it is a lot of money, but safety is more important."

"I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say if Shannon (Whitfield) gave you permission without being up to fire code that could make the county liable if something bad happen. Then again he would be the bad guy," Tony Vidalez posted. "These codes were in place for a reason. If he let you guys bypass the system he would have to do it for everyone."

The vast majority of com-

ments offered encouragement to Corinth Baptist and said the county should have done more for the church.

Sandy Wise Lac reminded church members about David's triumph over Goliath the giant.

Others offered their prayers and blessings to Corinth Baptist's members.

Angie Moore Parvell wrote, "Sorry for all your troubles. Whitfield should have went to bat for your church."

Whitfield said he feels his administration has helped the church and neighboring residents. The water main that serviced Corinth Road lacked sufficient water pressure to supply the sprinklers that state law required.

LaFayette had planned in a few years to upgrade the main to an 8-inch main; the county split the \$80,000 cost for the city's water main upgrade with the city to fast track the upgrade, thereby shortening the church's construction timeline.

"We have a \$40,000 investment in that community," Whitfield explained. In addition to enabling the church to have properly functioning sprinklers, the increased water capacity allowed fire hydrants to be closer to the houses near the church, lowering the ISO rating and insurance costs those residences,

Hodge said. The codes have been written this way because people have been killed in fires, the fire chief stated.

"To ignore that (fire safety risk) is not logical to me," he said.

The only remaining permitting hurdle is to submit a sprinkler plan, which the church can do when reaching the appropriate point in construction, he said.

"It's going to be a beautiful building," Whitfield said. Construction has hit another wall, according to church officials, not only because of the fire-retardant material requirement, but also because the engineer is requiring the footings be exposed from a feet down and then filled with concrete.

Church officials lament the fact that Corinth Baptist once had 17 thriving ministries. Now the church is cramped into a much smaller building that will not accommodate all of those activities, and a lot of the youths who had been involved with the church are no longer participating.

The financial and emotional toll this issue has taken on the congregation "has been absolutely devastating to this ministry," Pastor Wallin said. "I think absent that fire chief, we'd be in the building by now," Coker concluded.

### PUBLIC NOTICE WALKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING Thursday, June 18th, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. Walker County Civic Center Rock Spring, GA 30739

The Walker County Planning Commission will meet and review the following requests:

- New Business:**  
**Conditional Use Variance:**
1. Pruetts Supply Inc. requests a conditional use variance for property located at 2081 S. Hwy 27 LaFayette, GA. 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-490-1-005
  2. DFP LLC requests a conditional use variance for property located at 0 Glenatta Street Rossville, GA. 30741. Tax map & parcel number 0-133-038A
- Rezones:**
1. Douglas Daugherty requests a rezone from A-1 to R-1 for property located at 312 Allgood Road Flintstone, GA. 30725. Tax map & parcel number 0-049-065
  2. Brenda Jo Thompson requests a rezone from A-1 to RA for property located at 1452 Vecier Road LaFayette, GA. 30728. Tax map & parcel number 0-339-056
  3. Roy Devayne Tankersley requests a rezone from C-1 to R-2 for property located at 1901 McFarland Ave. Rossville, GA. 30741. Tax map & parcel number 0-156-094A

The second hearing on these requests will be held on June 25, 2020 at 6:00PM at the Walker County Courthouse Annex III located at 201 S. Main Street LaFayette, GA. 30728

For further information please call Walker County Planning & Development at 706-638-4048.

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