

**MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY DECEMBER 8, 2025
4:30 p.m.**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing, Monday, December 8, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201, Waycross, Georgia 31501, with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.

CALL TO ORDER	Chairman Elmer Thrift
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Barry Cox, Commissioner Jon Tindall
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT	Commissioner Timmy Lucas
STAFF PRESENT	County Manager James Shubert; Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Herzog, County Clerk Melinda Brooks
PRESS	Danny Bartlett - WJH
INVOCATION	The invocation was waived from Work Session
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	The Pledge of Allegiance was waived from Work Session

Call to Order:

Chairman Thrift called the public hearing to order at 4:30 p.m.

Road Closure/Abandonment Request

This is a request to close and abandon an alley located in block 218 of Emerson Park Subdivision (platted October 8, 1913), which runs between Nevada Avenue and New Mexico Avenue. There are no utilities located in this section of alley which is 10 feet wide and approximately 500 feet long.

Support

Chairman Thrift asked if anyone was in support of the closure. No one spoke

Oppose

Chairman Thrift asked if anyone was in opposition to the closure. No one spoke.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

Rezoning Request

This request is to rezone 355 E. Blackshear Avenue from R-50MH (Residential) to C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial). The property owner (Eagle's Nest Church) wishes to use the adjacent building for a recording studio for television, audio, and film purposes. The Planning Commission approved the request and recommended that the Board of

Commissioners do the same. Commissioner Burse asked about the two buildings. County Manager Shubert explained that the church is located next to the building to be rezoned. Only a portion of the parcel where the second building is located is being requested to be rezoned, as churches are allowed in all districts. The zoning would be for 2.151 acres of the existing 3.44-acre property.

Support

Chairman Thrift asked if anyone was in support of the closure. No one spoke

Oppose

Chairman Thrift asked if anyone was in opposition to the closure. No one spoke.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

Rezoning Request

This is a request to rezone the northern 1-acre portion of parcel number “036H03 002” from RS-Residential to A-1 Agriculture Forestry. The applicant wishes to allow a family member to place a Class A manufactured home on the rear of their property. A Class A manufactured home must be on a poured slab, have brick-and-mortar skirting, and the meter base must be mounted on the side of the home. Commissioner Burse asked if the area is currently a single-family zone. County Manager Shubert said that Class A mobile homes are allowed in R-50, R-75, and R-A1. He also explained that the north side of Calvin Road is zoned A-1, which would keep the parcel zoned the same as that side of the road.

Support

Mrs. Hodges (applicant) stated she and her husband brought the two (2) lots in question in 1998 to keep other people out. His mom lives in a neighboring lot. She has sold the two (2) lots to her grandson, so that he can move next door and help her husband (who is in his 80s) care of physical tasks around the house.

Oppose

Robert Robinson – 1720 Calvin Road

Mr. Robinson told the Commission that he opposes having the one lot left zoned for A1 to allow a mobile home. He is afraid it will devalue the surrounding property. He also noted that cows and pigs could be put on the property.

Tim Smith – 1729 Calvin Road

Mr. Smith stated he was speaking on behalf of his mother, Linda Smith, and had a power of attorney to allow him to do so. He said his parents built their home in 1985, and mobile homes were not allowed at that time. He does not want to see that change.

Roger Bunch – 1745 Calvin Road

He said he is concerned about spot rezoning, which would allow different-style homes next door to each other.

Rodney Hooks – 1755 Calvin Road

Mr. Hooks mentioned that he and all of the neighbors present at the meeting have been together for years, and he doesn't want to oppose them.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

Call to Order:

Chairman Thrift called to order the public hearing for the proposed amendment to the Ware County Zoning Text in Section 904.1 – Group Development by reducing the acres required for properties that have public water and sewer from 10 acres to 5 acres.

Rezoning Request

This request is for the rezoning of portions of parcels 051C05 012 (1.42 acres), 051C05 013 (.05 acres), and 051C05 014 (.01) from R-75 (Residential District) to C-3 (General Commercial District). This request is to clean up some split-zoned parcels and have one contiguous zone.

Support

Chairman Thrift asked if anyone supported this request. No one spoke.

Oppose

Chairman Thrift asked if anyone opposed this request. No one spoke.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

Text Amendment Request

This request is to amend Ware County Resolution: Article III Subsection 302.67 to add the definition of Utility-Scale Energy Storage; and Article VII subsections 707.5 and 706.3 to add Utility-Scale Energy Storage as Conditional Uses in A-Agriculture Forestry District and the GI-General Industrial District. County Manager Shubert explained that the power collected at solar farms has to be stored until it can be sold to power companies. The big batteries that are required to store this energy use fans to keep the batteries cool, but the noise is so loud that a 1,000 setback is required as a buffer.

Audience member Kelly Thrift asked if the batteries are lithium batteries because they pose a hazard. County Manager Shubert explained that this is actually for a battery that will store the solar power that is collected on solar farms. He noted that there are no current requests for this, but the County is trying to be proactive. The type of battery would be addressed at the time someone applied for this conditional use.

Support

No one spoke in support of the amendment.

Oppose

No one spoke in opposition to the amendment.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

Rezoning Request

This item is to amend the Ware County Code of Ordinance: Chapter 78, Article V – Ware County Solar Farm Ordinance. The current ordinance states there must be 10,000 feet between each solar farm. This is a distance of almost two miles. The request is to remove the 10,000 feet requirement. Because all solar farm applications are for conditional use, all applications for a solar farm must be approved by the Commission. The distance can be considered at the time of the application.

Support

No one spoke.

Oppose

No one spoke.

Added to Regular Meeting Agenda

CLOSURE

Commissioner Cox made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Tindall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The public hearing was closed at 5:19 p.m.

Date proposed to be approved: January 12, 2026

ATTEST:


Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk


Elmer Thrift, Chairman

1-13-2026
Date

