

Minutes*
Regular Meeting of the Florence County Board of Zoning Appeals
Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
County Complex, Council Chambers, Room 803
180 North Irby Street, Florence, South Carolina 29501

The Florence County Planning Department staff posted the agenda for the meeting on the information boards at the main entrance and lobby of the County Complex and on the information board in the lobby of the Planning and Building Inspection Department building.

The agenda was also mailed to the media.

I. Call to Order

Chairman, Brian Casey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Attendance:

Board Members Present: Chairman Brian Casey
Vice-Chairman Brenda Deas
Louie Hopkins
Craig Floyd
Wesley Martin

Board Members Absent: Jessica Wright
Kenneth Muldrow

Staff Present: Ethan Brown, Deputy Planning Director
Holly Smith, Senior Planner
Patrick Ward, IT Dept, A/V Support
Caroline Dunlap, Planner III

Staff Absent: Malloy McEachin, Esq, County Attorney
J. Shawn Brashear, Planning Director
Lisa M. Becoat, Executive Assistant/Secretary

Public Attendance: See sign-in sheet on file at the Florence County Planning Department.

III. Review and motion of the minutes:

- **Meeting of June 16, 2026**

Motion to approve the minutes as presented – Vice-Chairman Brenda Deas / **Second** – Board Member Louie Hopkins / Minutes of June 16, 2026, meeting were unanimously approved 5 to 0.

IV. Public Hearings:

BZA#2026-06 A Variance Requested By Derrick F. Owens From Requirements Of The Florence County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 30 – ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE III. – CONDITIONAL USE REGULATIONS, Sec. 30-111. – Development Standards For Unzoned Areas. (7) Setbacks. For The Property Located At 2205 Hoffmeyer Road, Florence, SC 29501, As Shown On Florence County Tax Map No. 00123, Block 01, Parcel 006.

Mr. Brown introduced the request, summarized the application and requested variance, and presented the staff report to the Board. A complete copy of the staff report and presentation are available for public review at the Florence County Planning Department and online at www.florencecountysc.gov/planning/bza/archives.php.

Property information presented by Mr. Brown included the subject property's location at the corner of Hoffmeyer Rd and Jody Rd, adjacent to the city limits of Florence. The property is located within County Council District 8, consists of approximately 8.90 acres, is owned by S & W Manufacturing c/o Richard Harrington, and is identified by Florence County Tax Map Number 00123-01-006. This property is currently Unzoned.

Mr. Brown explained that the applicant, Derrick Owens, was requesting a variance from Section 30-111(7) of the Florence County Zoning Ordinance in order to reduce the required twenty-five-foot (25') front setback for commercial development in an Unzoned area by ten feet (10'), allowing two proposed commercial buildings to be constructed using fifteen-foot (15') front setbacks. The request was made due to current development plans for the property, once an industrial use, that is now a part of a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use redevelopment in this area of Florence called, West End. He noted that the proposal includes construction of two commercial buildings oriented toward Hoffmeyer Rd and a proposed pedestrian walkway would be situated between the two buildings allowing tie-in to the existing pedestrian infrastructure along Hoffmeyer Rd.

Mr. Brown further stated that the property had been posted by Planning staff prior to the meeting and adjacent property owners had been notified in accordance with the Florence County Zoning Ordinance. He read the public call log aloud, stating that Linda Berkland had contacted the Planning department with an inquiry only.

Mr. Brown continued as he read aloud to the Board, the applicant's responses, as provided on Form 3 of the variance request application. After reading the applicant's responses verbatim, the staff presentation was concluded.

Following the staff presentation, members of the Board requested clarification from Mr. Brown in regard to the proposed setbacks. They wanted to know if they were based on the B-4, Central zoning designation's required setbacks, which was confirmed by staff that they were loosely based on the B-4 district's requirements, due to the expanding urban influence from the City of Florence.

The applicant, Mr. Derrick Owens, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Owens explained that the requested setback reduction was intended to support a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use redevelopment by locating the proposed buildings closer to the roadway (rather than behind parking areas) in order to support the design standards required for pedestrian scaled developments. He stated that the existing industrial site presents design constraints and that the proposal and requested variance, if granted, would facilitate adaptive reuse of the property while creating commercial space for future tenants.

Following the applicant presentation, members of the Board inquired about the exact width of the road-right-of-way and its relation to the location of the property line of the subject property. Mr. Owens was unsure about the exact width of the ROW, but further explained that within the requested fifteen-foot (15') setback a required bufferyard would be included and also highlighted that commercial side setbacks in Unzoned areas had a minimum requirement of ten-feet (10').

There was another question from the members of the Board related to the location and number of driveway encroachments this property currently had, either existing or planned. Mr. Owens explained the locations and number of driveway encroachments on the subject property.

At the conclusion of the applicant presentation, there were no members of the public in attendance who spoke in favor of the request.

Ms. Linda Burkland spoke in opposition to the request. She clarified to the Board that she wasn't necessarily opposed, she just had a few questions related to the request and stated that she resided nearby in the Windsor Forest subdivision. Her first inquiry questioned what part of the eateries would not be buildable if the variance request was not approved. Ms. Burkland also questioned whether approval of the variance could cause interference with future underground utility easements and expressed concern regarding potential future development of the property, if so.

Members of the Board provided answers, to the best of their abilities, in response to Ms. Burkland's questions. Clarification was also provided by members of the Board to Ms. Burkland explaining that the request was contained to the area within the property boundaries, beginning at the property line and inward to the proposed location of the eateries and stated they would not extend into the road right-of-way area.

No additional speakers came forward to speak in favor of or in opposition to the request, and the public hearing was closed.

Board discussion followed. Members discussed the pedestrian-oriented nature of the proposed redevelopment, compatibility with surrounding commercial development and dense urban character, as well as access to the site from Hoffmeyer Road.

Motion: A motion to approve BZA Item #2026-06 as submitted was made by Board Member Louie Hopkins, with a second by Board Member Wesley Martin. Upon final review of the applicable statutory standards by the Board, the motion carried unanimously with a vote of 5-0.

A Variance Requested By Mr. Jerry Brown & Dr. Deloris Brown From Requirements Of The Florence County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 30 – ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE VII. – GENERAL AND ANCILLARY REGULATIONS, Sec. 30-244. - Number Of Principal Buildings/Uses On A Lot. For The Property Located At 1310 N. Matthews Road, Lake City, SC. 29560, As Shown On Florence County Tax Map No. 00166, Block 31, Parcel 013.

Staff member, Mr. Brown, introduced the request, summarized the application and requested variance, and presented the staff report to the Board. A complete copy of the staff report and presentation are available for public review at the Florence County Planning Department and online at www.florencecountysc.gov/planning/bza/archives.php.

Property information presented by Mr. Brown included the subject property's location at 1310 N. Matthews Rd. lying just northwest of the incorporated limits of Lake City in Florence County, identified by Florence County Tax Map Number 00166-31-013. Mr. Brown stated that the subject property consists of approximately twenty-five (25.71) acres and is owned by Deloris Brown and Jerry Brown. The property, he continued, is zoned RU-1, Community district.

He continued to explain that the applicants were requesting a variance from Sec. 30-244 of the Florence County Zoning Ordinance to exceed the maximum number of principal residential uses permitted on a single parcel within the RU-1 zoning district. He noted that the current maximum number of principal residential uses on any parcel or lot is two (2) within the rural zoning districts which includes the RU-1 district. Mr. Brown continued explaining from the prepared staff report that Sec. 30-244 had been successfully amended in early 2026 to apply this maximum limit of two (2) primary residential uses to Unzoned areas in order to establish consistency throughout Florence County. Planning staff further clarified that this recent text amendment had no impact on the maximum number of primary residential uses allowed on this property due to the RU-1 designation, as it was limited to two (2) principal residential uses prior to the amendment passing for rural zoning districts (including RU-1).

Mr. Brown reviewed the history of the subject property, explaining that, through review of Tax Assessor records, the parcel was originally two separate parcels, but had been combined as one single parcel in 2017. He further explained that the variance request was the result of a denied permit for the setup of a manufactured home on the property, due to the two (2) existing primary residential structures on the property. However, he continued to explain, upon receiving this information and with the guidance of Planning staff, the applicants reactivated the split of the 25 acre parcel through the Tax Assessor's office, thus allowing the applicants to successfully receive a permit for the placement of a manufactured home on the reactivated TMS: 00166-31-265. Mr. Brown highlighted that this variance application was submitted after the applicant reactivated 00166-31-265 with the Tax Assessor and it was determined by Staff, the intent of the applicant, in submitting the variance request application, was to place more than two (2) primary residences on both the parent parcel as well as the child parcel (created from the recent reactivation). Mr. Brown further explained that the request was intended to allow additional residences (above the allowed two (2)) on the property or properties to accommodate family members and future farm workers

associated with the applicants' agricultural operations. Mr. Brown also noted to the Board that no photos or development plans were submitted with the applicants' variance request application.

Mr. Brown informed the Board that the property had been posted prior to the meeting and that adjacent property owners had been notified in accordance with the Florence County Zoning Ordinance. He summarized the public call log, noting that one inquiry was made from a member of the public in order to obtain general information concerning the request in addition to six other members of the public/adjacent property owners who had contacted planning staff prior to the meeting and expressed their opposition to the variance request. The overwhelming concerns from these six individuals, some of who wished to remain anonymous, stemmed primarily from the uncertainty of the applicants' plans or intentions as well as potential negative impacts approval of the request by the Board would have on the community's character.

Mr. Brown continued as he read aloud to the Board, the applicant's responses, as provided on Form 3 of the variance request application. After reading the applicant's responses verbatim, the staff presentation was concluded.

Members of the Board questioned staff regarding the number of residences currently permitted on the property, the effect of recent amendments to the zoning ordinance, and whether subdivision of the property could provide an alternative means of accomplishing the applicants' objectives.

The applicant, Deloris Brown, spoke in favor of the request. Mrs. Brown explained that the property had been purchased approximately twenty years earlier with the intention of establishing a family farm and supporting multiple generations of her family. She stated that the request would allow family members and future farm workers to reside on the property while supporting the continued agricultural operations. Mrs. Brown further explained that the property had been improved over time and that the family intended to continue farming the land with the intent of becoming a self-sustaining operation. Mrs. Brown explained that her husband, Jerry Brown, was unable to attend, but she was accompanied by her son who wished to speak on his behalf, Mr. Leo Bennett.

Mr. Leo Bennett, speaking on behalf of applicant, Jerry Brown, also addressed the Board. Mr. Bennett stated that the long-term goal of the property has always been agricultural use and that approval of the request would not adversely impact surrounding property owners.

Members of the Board asked the applicants questions regarding the total number of proposed residences, future development of the property, USDA agricultural programs, and whether subdivision of the property had been considered as an alternative.

Ms. Debra Wallace spoke in favor of the request. Ms. Wallace expressed support for the applicants' family farming operation and stated that she believed the request would benefit future generations of the family.

There were no other members of the public, in attendance, who stood to speak in favor of the request.

Ms. Gracie K. Cahill spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Cahill stated that she owns property adjoining the subject property, to the northeast, which she noted was accessible by way of an existing private easement, Providential Way, that cuts vertically through the middle of the subject property and provides her access to N. Matthews Rd from her property. Mrs. Cahill expressed concerns regarding the absence of a development plan, uncertainty regarding the future number and placement of residences, potential impacts to neighboring properties, and potential negative impacts to her property value.

Mr. Irvin Nelms, Jr. spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Nelms stated that he was an adjacent property owner, to the west, and that while he was not opposed to agricultural activities on the property, he was concerned that the variance request lacked sufficient detail regarding the character of future development and the number of residences ultimately proposed.

Following additional comments by the applicants in response to questions raised during the public hearing, no additional speakers came forward to speak in favor or opposition of the request and the public hearing was closed.

Board discussion followed. Members discussed whether the applicants had demonstrated the hardship necessary to justify a variance, the lack of a submitted development plan, the potential precedent established by the request, and whether subdivision of the property represented a more reasonable alternative available to the applicants.

Motion: A motion to deny BZA Item #2026-07 was made by Board Member Wesley Martin, with a second by Board Member Louie Hopkins. Review of the applicable statutory standards concluded the applicants failed to prove an unnecessary hardship. The motion to deny carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0.

BZA#2026-08

A Variance Requested By FIRST PALMETTO AST HLDG, LLC From The Requirements Of The Florence County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 30 – ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE II. – ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS, DIVISION I.- GENERALLY, Sec. 30-30.- Table III: Zoning Setbacks. For The Properties Located Off Of Vanda Street, Timmons ville, SC. 29161, As Shown On Florence County Tax Map No. 00033, Block 04, Parcels 017 And 122.

Mr. Brown introduced the request, summarized the application and requested variance, and presented the staff report to the Board. A complete copy of the staff report and presentation is available for public review at the Florence County Planning Department and online at www.florencecountysc.gov/planning/bza/archives.php.

Property information presented by Mr. Brown included two(2) undeveloped parcels located at the corner of E. Smith St (US Hwy 76) and Vanda St, within the incorporated areas of the Town of Timmons ville, and identified by Florence County Tax Map Numbers 00033-04-017 & 122. Mr. Brown stated that the subject properties, together, consist of approximately 14.43 acres, are both zoned RU-1, Community, and are owned by First Palmetto Asset Holding, LLC. He explained that

the applicant was requesting multiple variances from Section 30-30, Table III, of the Florence County Zoning Ordinance to reduce the required minimum lot widths in the RU-1 zoning district from one hundred feet (100') to sixty feet (60'), reduce the minimum required lot area from fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet to approximately six thousand (6,000) square feet, and modify the required front, side, rear, and street-side setbacks associated with a proposed residential subdivision, as shown on the applicant's submitted sketch plan titled, Vanda Place.

Mr. Brown stated that the proposed development would be reviewed as a subdivision through the Planning Commission at a later date in July and that the Board's consideration was limited to the requested relief from the minimum lot size, lot width, and setback requirements of the RU-1 zoning district.

Mr. Brown informed the Board that the property had been posted prior to the meeting and that adjacent property owners had been notified in accordance with the Florence County Zoning Ordinance. He noted that one member of the public, who identified himself as Mr. William Jones, the Mayor of Timmonsville, had contacted Planning staff prior to the meeting and expressed plans to attend and speak at the meeting in regard to the variance request.

Mr. Brown then distributed correspondence Planning staff had received from the Town of Timmonsville Administrator after being notified of the requested variance. Following distribution of the correspondence to the Board, Mr. Brown read the letter aloud. Mr. Brown continued by also providing the applicant's responses supplied on Form 3 of the variance request application. After reading this information aloud, the Staff report was concluded by Mr. Brown.

Members of the Board questioned staff regarding the proposed development standards, permitted housing types, and the relationship between the requested variances and future subdivision approval(s).

The applicant, Mr. Gary Finklea, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Finklea explained that the property is located within an area served by public water and sewer (available from the City of Florence) and which was adjacent to existing residential development with similarities in housing characteristics. He stated that the proposed subdivision would consist of individually platted residential lots served by paved streets with curb and gutter and that all required subdivision approvals and engineering reviews would be completed through the County's development review process and thus comply with their development standards. Mr. Finklea noted that any manufactured homes placed within the subdivision would be permanently affixed to foundations and de-titled in accordance with applicable law, thus, increasing the tax base of the Town of Timmonsville.

Members of the Board questioned the applicant regarding roadway construction, utility infrastructure, lot dimensions, housing types permitted within the development under the current zoning district versus other County zoning districts, and compliance with applicable subdivision regulations. Further clarification was request from the Board concerning various housing-types and in what districts they were allowed uses, based on the current zoning ordinance.

No speakers came forward to speak in favor of the request.

Mayor of the Town of Timmonsville, Mr. William Jones, spoke in opposition to the request. The Mayor expressed his concerns regarding increased crime and the lack of law enforcement oversight within the current manufactured home park development that is adjacent to the subject properties. He continued by stating that the City of Florence's infrastructure was already at capacity in this area and new development would place too much strain on the already strained sewer and stormwater systems. Mr. Williams stated that he was not opposed to traditional, stick-built residential development in this area. He stated that over half of the population of Timmonsville were senior citizens and they were also in opposition of the request.

Ms. Alisha Washington spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Washington stated that she owns property across from the proposed development and expressed concerns regarding existing neighborhood conditions, infrastructure, compatibility with surrounding residential development, and the potential impacts of the proposed subdivision.

Mr. Ali Carter, representing the Town of Timmonsville, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Carter discussed existing residential development within the Town, infrastructure considerations, and concerns regarding the requested variances.

Mr. Finklea was provided an opportunity to respond to comments raised during the public hearing. Ms. Washington was subsequently permitted a brief rebuttal before the public hearing was closed.

Board discussion followed. Members discussed the extent of the requested dimensional variances, the Board's authority under the Florence County Zoning Ordinance, the relationship between the requested variances and future subdivision approval, available infrastructure, and whether the request satisfied the standards required for approval of a variance. Members also discussed alternative development options available under the existing ordinance.

During Board discussion, members emphasized that the Board's authority was limited to consideration of the requested dimensional variances and did not extend to approval of a subdivision plat, engineering plans, housing type, or other future development approvals. Board members noted that the proposed residential use was governed by the Florence County Zoning Ordinance and that any future development of the property would remain subject to all applicable subdivision regulations, engineering review, zoning compliance, permitting requirements, and other provisions of the Florence County Code of Ordinances. Discussion focused on whether the requested lot size, lot width, and setback variances satisfied the standards for granting a variance under the Florence County Zoning Ordinance.

Motion: A motion to approve BZA Item #2026-08 as submitted was made by Board Member Wesley Martin, with a second by Board Member Louie Hopkins. Upon review of the applicable standards, the motion carried by a vote of 3-2, with Chairman Brian Casey and Board Members Wesley Martin and Louie Hopkins voting in favor, and Board Members Brenda Deas and Craig Floyd voting in opposition.

VI. Adjournment

There was no further discussion, questions, or business to be addressed by the Board. With that, Chairman Brian Casey asked for a motion to adjourn. Board Member Louie Hopkins moved to adjourn the meeting and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Holly Smith

Approved by:

J. Shawn Brashear, Planning Director

*These minutes reflect only actions taken and do not represent a true verbatim transcript of the meeting.