PIKE COUNTY
Planning and Zoning Board
October 8, 2026
4:00 P.M.

WORKSHOP MINUTES

Pike County E.M.A./Storage Facility
152 Twin Oaks Road, Williamson, GA. 30292

Jason Leatherman, Chairman • Brandy Loggins, Vice-Chairman • Chad Proctor • Edward "Ed" Penland • Kacie Edwards(At Large)

I. Call to Order - Called to order at4:01 by Jason Letterman

II. Invocation

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Approval of the Agenda - Motion of Approval with changes by Chad Proctor and seconded by Brandy Loggins, All

V. Discussion:

a. Invited guess.

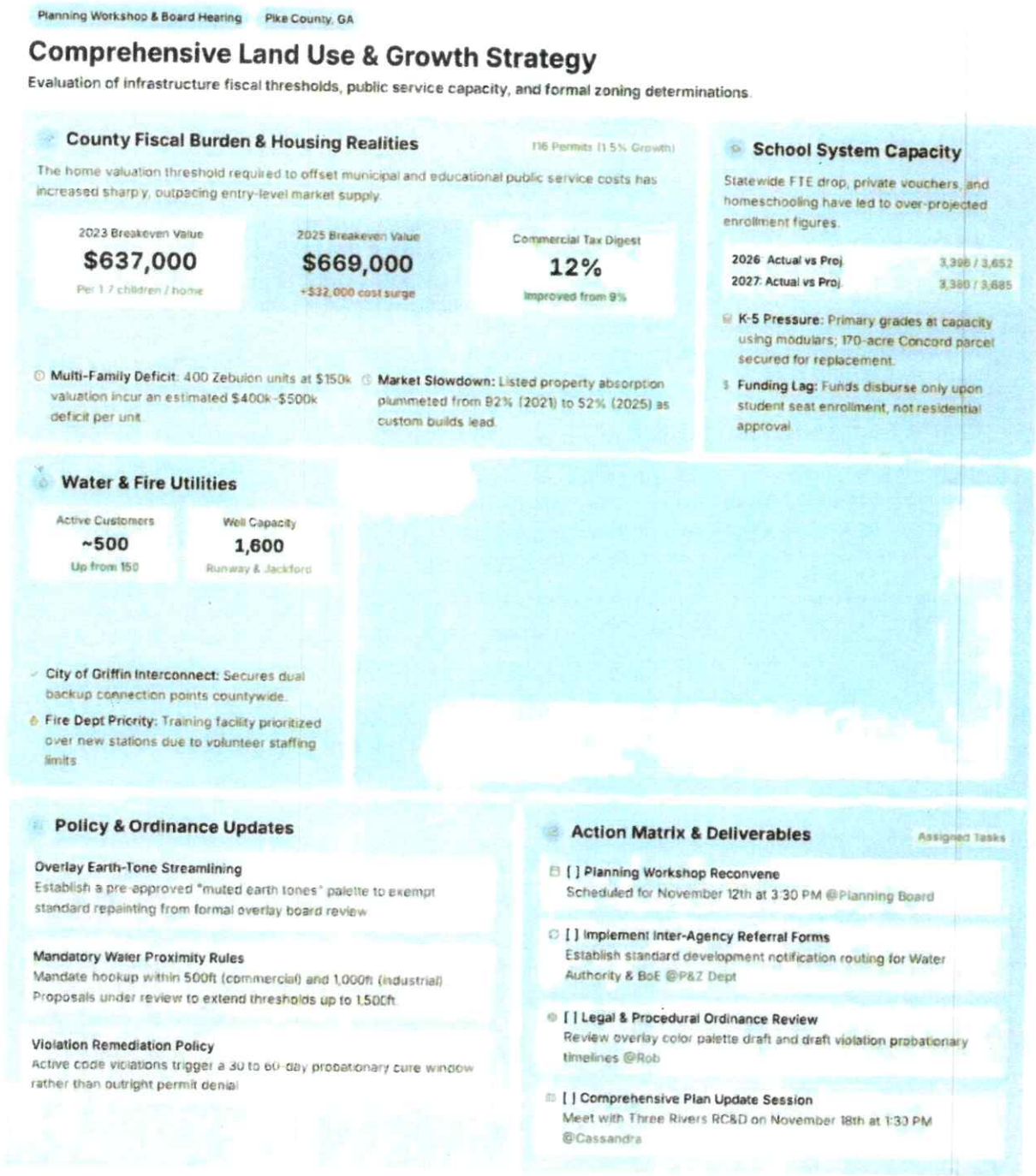
b. Updating the Pike County UDC and different ordinances and zonings.

c. Process in place for updating the Zoning Map to make current for approval.

d. Other topics that need to be taken into consideration.

VI. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 5:32 pm

10-08 Pike County Planning and Zoning Workshop and Meeting



This document outlines a workshop and subsequent planning board meeting focused on Pike County's development ordinances and land use. Key discussions included school enrollment trends, county service burdens, water authority expansion plans, and potential ordinance changes.

School System Capacity and Growth Projections

The Pike County Superintendent, who has been in the role for three years, provided an update on the school system's capacity and growth projections. A significant trend highlighted was a statewide decline in student FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) numbers for the first time in Georgia's history, a pattern also observed in Pike County. This decline is attributed to a combination of factors, including the state's private school voucher program, a substantial increase in homeschooling, and a lower birth rate. Furthermore, the high cost of building or purchasing a home in the county presents a barrier for young families, further impacting enrollment.

Forecasts have consistently overestimated actual enrollment. For example, in 2026, the projected enrollment was 3,652, but the actual number was 3,396. Similarly, for 2027, the projection was 3,685, while the actual enrollment in August was 3,380. Currently, K-5 grade levels are at full capacity, a situation that predates the current superintendent and necessitated the use of modular buildings. In contrast, the high school (grades 9-12) has available space due to increased dual enrollment. The school board maintains a policy of keeping class sizes as low as possible.

Future infrastructure plans include a new elementary school, as the current primary school is approaching 40 years of age, at which point the state mandates significant remodeling to continue its use. The board has already purchased a 170-acre property on Concord as part of a 5-10 year projection for this new school. However, a major challenge is that public education funding is based on current student enrollment, not projected growth. This means the school system receives no funding for new housing developments, such as the recently approved 340 apartments in Zebulon, until students from those homes are actually enrolled. The superintendent expressed a strong desire for the Board of Education to be consulted on all new development applications, particularly those involving tax abatements, to better anticipate and plan for the impact on school resources.

County Growth, Housing, and Financial Burden Analysis

The workshop included a detailed analysis of Pike County's growth, housing market, and the financial impact of new development on county services. A review of the Unified Development Code (UDC) since its last update showed 22 rezonings, 12 special uses, and 8 variances had been processed. In the current year, 116 new residential construction permits were issued, representing a manageable 1.5% growth rate.

A key point of discussion was the financial "burden per household." The analysis revealed that the value of a house needed to cover the cost of county services for its residents is increasing. In 2023, a house valued at $637,000.00 to cover service cost associated with a household of 1.7 children; and in 2025 the cost increased to $675,000.00.

On a positive note, the county's tax digest is slowly shifting toward a healthier balance. The ratio of industrial, commercial, and utility properties has increased from 9% to 12% of the tax base, with residential properties now making up 88%, an improvement from the previous 91%. In terms of housing affordability, 57% of homes in Pike County are valued under $250,000.00 which is below the calculated affordable housing threshold.
The real estate market is experiencing a significant slowdown in demand. In 2021, 92% of all listed properties sold, but by 2025, that number had dropped to 52%. While median and average sales prices have seen only a gradual increase over the past five years, the market has shifted, with sellers now offering more concessions, rate buy-downs, and pre-sale remodels to attract buyers. Current construction is dominated by higher-priced custom homes rather than large-scale tract developments.

Water and Fire Service Infrastructure and Expansion

This section covers updates on the county's essential water and fire services, focusing on infrastructure capacity and expansion plans. The Water Authority reported significant customer growth, increasing from around 150 to nearly 500 customers in the last two years. The system's primary wells at 'Runway' and 'Jackford' can each serve 750-800 customers. A crucial development is a new contract with the City of Griffin, which provides a reliable backup water source and allows for two new water line connections anywhere in the county.

Several major infrastructure projects are underway, funded by ARPA money, which must be spent and completed by the end of the year. These include a water connection to Griffin on Winston Avenue Road and line expansions on Highway 41 and Coggins/Williamson Avenue Road. The authority is targeting future growth areas for new water line connections, including Bottom Road, the area near the schools on Highway 362, and Flat Shoals. This expansion strategy, particularly in

previous service delivery complexities with municipalities. The county continues to pay approximately $170,000 annually on bond debt from a 2003-2004 infrastructure project

The discussion then shifted to fire services. The Fire Chief expressed concerns about maintaining adequate response times in the growing Hollonville and Molina areas, suggesting the county should negotiate with developers for land donations for new fire stations. However, it was also noted that the department's top priority is a new training facility, as staffing and funding for the largely volunteer force are significant constraints that limit the operational capacity of new stations.

Proposed Ordinance Amendments and Process Violations

The workshop addressed several proposed amendments to the county's development ordinances and debated procedural issues. One proposal aims to streamline the overlay district review process by establishing a pre-approved color palette of "muted earth tones." Property owners using these colors for repainting would be exempt from the review process, while any other color choice would require a formal variance.

Another significant change involves mandating water connections for new developments. The proposal requires commercial properties within 500 feet and industrial properties within 1,000 feet of a public water line to connect. For properties outside these distances, the Board of Commissioners would negotiate a cost-sharing agreement with the developer. This sparked debate, with some members suggesting the distances might be too short and could be extended to 1,000 or 1,500 feet to better attract development. A consensus was reached that all development applications should be forwarded to the water authority for review as part of the standard process

A key procedural issue discussed was how to handle applications for properties that are already in violation of existing codes. The board agreed on a policy to either postpone a final decision until the violation is corrected or to make compliance a condition of any approval, rather than rejecting the application outright. There was also a suggestion to add a formal probationary period of 30 to 60 days to the ordinance, giving applicants time to remedy violations after being served a notice.

Action Items

Cassandra to meet with Three Rivers RC&D on November 18th at 1:30 PM regarding the Comprehensive Plan update.

Cassandra - Planning and Zoning Department

Generate a monthly report from Planning and Zoning for the Board of Education detailing new development and growth data, including year-over-year trends

Generate a year-over-year annual permit report moving forward to allow for trend analysis.

Implement a referral form for the Planning Department to notify the Water Authority, School, Sheriff and Fire Department of all new development applications to assess service availability and infrastructure needs. (Subdivisions and Commercial mainly)

Incorporate the proposed code violation remediation policy and probationary compliance timeline into the draft ordinance.

Create a standardized procedural form for development applications requiring their submission to the water authority for feasibility review and input

Planning Board

Reconvene for a workshop/meeting on November 12th at 3:30 PM.

Cassandra will write and get everyones thoughts and have Rob review

Review the proposed overlay district color palette ordinance changes to identify potential procedural or legal conflicts.

Review the proposed color palette ordinance for the overlay district to ensure there are no issues.