

To: Lowndes County Board of Commissioners

From: Richard A. Stalvey

Subject: Public Hearing: Case No. REZ-2024-01: Scheduled for February 13, 2024: 5:30 PM

Date: February 3, 2024

PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

As normal, the application request for rezoning was submitted by the party(ies) to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission and Mr. J. D. Dillard as County Planner. The application was considered and as I understand it, customary due diligence procedures were conducted. The application was submitted for consideration at the Planning Commission meeting on January 29, 2024 and, as I understand it, was denied. The public hearing is to be held during the Board of Commissioners meeting scheduled for February 13, 2024. The purpose of this discussion is to give some additional information that I believe may be informative to you prior to voting. Since I have no knowledge of how much finite detail filters down to you in advance of your vote, I am providing some of that finite information here which may be duplicative.

BACKGROUND

The rezoning application was submitted on behalf of the owners of the property located in the Northwest section of Lowndes County consisting of 1,252.61 acres, generally near the intersection of Webb Road (Old Valdosta Highway) and Salem Church Road. The property was purchased on August 10, 2021 by the Gresham Family in the name of PLB Limited Partnership. The rezoning request is for an area consisting of 10.4 acres of the total tract. While I do not have a copy of the application and any supporting documents, I was advised by telephone with a Planning Commission staff person that the rezoning request was to accommodate a project described as an “event venue” and would include a lodging facility that would accommodate up to **sixteen guests**.

While the rezoning request affects only the 10.4 acres of the total tract, the business activities (ie, hunting) will likely encompass the entire tract. When discussing this with Planning Commission staff, it was pointed out that hunting is already allowed on the entire tract. This is very true, but it will go from hunting by family and close friends to a broader commercial hunting operation to generate a revenue stream.

This is the same property owner that petitioned to have a portion of Salem Church Road and Wells Road closed in October 2021, which was denied.

FURTHER DETAIL

The Gresham Family also has tracts of land in Cook County (ten miles or less away from their Lowndes County property just off the Barney-Adel Highway). These properties are owned in the entity known as The Gresham Family Limited Partnership. On one large tract of land, the Gresham Family is operating a business in the name of Live Oak Plantation with an address of 675 Plantation Road, Adel, GA 31620. The operation has an excellent website that is accessible simply by “googling” “Live Oak Plantation”. By doing so, one can read about the operation of Live Oak Plantation, which I would encourage you to do. However, in very brief form, some of the offerings are described, in part, as The South’s Premier Sporting Destination, The Lodge (which will accommodate up to **sixteen guests**), The Cabin, Quail Hunting, Pheasant Hunting, Skeet Shooting, Hunting Rates, Fish, Golf and Conference Center.

I suspect that the project as described under “Background” above is not as encompassing as what the actual project may become. I believe that one has only to review the Live Oak Plantation website to get a flavor of what the actual project will become or I will be glad to provide you a printed copy upon request.

The properties in Cook County and Lowndes County have tax assessor addresses on file in Suwanee, GA and Stockbridge, GA. This suggests that the properties are owned by absentee owners/investors and are not full-time residents of the area.