

**APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL EXCEPTION VARIANCE
FROM THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE OF OCONEE COUNTY, GEORGIA**

TITLE

A Resolution granting approval of a Special Exception Variance based upon the allowances under the Unified Development Code of Oconee County, Georgia, pursuant to Article 13, Section 1303, to grant approval of a Special Exception Variance pursuant to an application requesting approval of a Special Exception Variance on property owned by Mark H. Thomas submitted on October 26, 2015.

ENACTMENT CLAUSE

Pursuant to the authority conferred by the Constitution and Laws of the State of Georgia and after consideration of an application requesting Special Exception Variance approval submitted by Williams & Associates, Land Planners P.C. on October 26, 2015 regarding property owned by said petitioners on a ±2.180 acre tract of land located on the north side of SR 15 in the 225th G.M.D., Oconee County, Georgia, (TP# C-6-20), the Board of Commissioners of Oconee County does hereby grant the following:

SECTION 1. A Resolution granting Special Exception Variance approval for the property described above and also described in the attached Exhibit "A" is hereby granted for the purpose of relief from Unified Development Code Section 603, to eliminate the requirement to construct off-street parking.

Said Special Exception Variance is subject to the following conditions: as set forth in "Exhibit A" attached hereto.

SECTION 2. Severability. It is intended that the provisions of this Ordinance be severable and should any portion be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any other portion of the Ordinance.

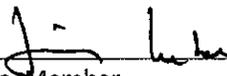
SECTION 3. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect this date.

Said Special Exception Variance application was submitted to the Oconee County Board of Commissioners and a Public Hearing was duly held by same at its regular meeting on January 5, 2016.

APPROVED, this 5th day of January, 2016.

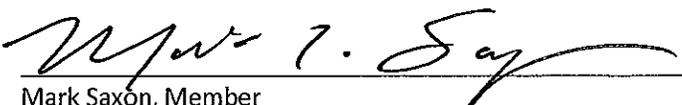
OCONEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: 
G. Melvin Davis, Chairman


Jim Luke, Member


John Daniell, Member


W. E. "Bubber" Wilkes, Member


Mark Saxon, Member

ATTEST:

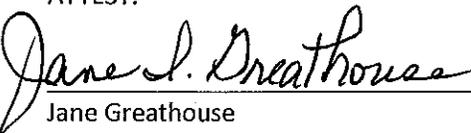

Jane Greathouse
Clerk, Board of Commissioners

EXHIBIT "A" TO SPECIAL EXCEPTION VARIANCE #6788

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NARRATIVE

Thomas Cotton Gin
A Historic Site (Commercial)
3783 Greensboro Highway
Watkinsville, Georgia

Special Exception Variance #1 - 2.180 Acres – Tax Parcel # C06-020

Narrative

The Thomas Cotton Gin is an existing historic commercial site located in the southern part of Oconee County on a 2.180 acre tract. Mr. Mark Thomas is the current property owner and will act as the primary contact person for the development. Williams & Associates has been engaged by Mr. Thomas to act as his agent in the preparation of the necessary rezoning documentation associated with this request.

The Site

The subject tract fronts on Georgia Highway 15 for approximately 335 LF. The site is predominantly open grass lawn areas with existing gravel parking and drives. Onsite structures include an existing cotton gin and an existing seed house. The topography drops gently from north east to south west, to an existing roadside swale. Existing zoning and land uses surrounding the site are as follows: to the north and east – A-1 zoned residences; to the south – GA Highway 15/Greensboro Highway; to the west – A-1 zoned Hot Thomas BBQ restaurant.

The Development

The property exists as a historic commercial site including a cotton gin with accompanying seed house. The proposed development includes renovations to the existing structures for their use and preservation. Adequate parking already exists to serve the existing buildings. A special exception variance request has been submitted which will allow the site to maintain its historic character by not requiring the existing gravel areas to be paved, stripped or lit for parking purposes. The cotton gin, built in 1875, is the last existing cotton gin in Oconee County and one of the few in the State of Georgia in its original working condition. Mr. Thomas wishes to keep the cotton gin in its original working condition and make it available for operational display at special events. The accompanying seed house, built in 1958, has been renovated to accommodate those various special events which may include school field trips, ag tourism, farm tours, as well as community events and wedding receptions. The occasional use of the seed house for church gatherings is also included as part of this request.

Buildings and Facilities

The buildings will be maintained with their historic aesthetic and character.

Water Supply

The project is currently served by an onsite well.

Sewage Disposal

The project is currently served by an onsite septic system.

Surface Water Drainage

The project will remain as sheet flow. Storm-water management will be in compliance with the Oconee County UDC.

Access

Access will continue from the existing driveways along GA Highway 15. No additional access or lane improvements are proposed at this time due to minimal increase in traffic volumes.

Traffic

There is no proposed significant additional traffic volume projected at this time as a result of the proposed use and renovations.

Schools

There will be no impact to county schools as a result of this development.

Schedule

The petitioners plan to complete the zoning efforts on the subject property by January 2016. The project renovations will commence immediately upon approval of these plans and approval of building renovation plans. It is anticipated that the total build-out of the project should be completed between April 2016 and May 2016.

Maintenance of Common Areas

There are no common areas for public use currently proposed for this development.

Buffers

A special exception variance has been submitted for a reduction from 50' to 0', along all property lines, for the required buffer between land uses (UDC 806).

Utilities

Existing utilities serving the site are in place. No new utilities are anticipated at this time.

Garbage Collection

Garbage collection will be handled by private contract service.

Sidewalks

No sidewalks are proposed as part of this development.

Public & Semi-public Areas

Easements for power, telephone, cable TV, and gas will be dedicated as required for existing specific utilities.

Outdoor Lighting

No lighting is currently proposed for this development.

Development Valuation

Total Completed Project Value \$40,000

Variance

A Special Exception Variance is requested from UDC Sec. 603 – Off-Street Parking. Although parking will be provided for the proposed use, the allowance of the variance for a waiver from the required off-street parking will allow for the site to maintain its historic character. There are multiple requirements within Article 6, Division 1 that, if required, would change the site drastically. Such requirements include improved parking areas and access drives with striping where currently gravel exists and is sufficient. Other requirements include lighting, landscaping, etc. A variance request from UDC Sec. 603 makes those requirements non-applicable. The allowance is solely for the purpose of the site to maintain its historic character and subsequent appeal. The cotton gin has been in existence since 1875 and the seed house since 1958. The cotton gin and seed house are to be used for special events, community events and wedding receptions. Such events will be occasionally scheduled uses and have temporary parking needs. Parking will not be required on a regular or daily basis.

Sec. 1303.03. Standards for special exception variance approval.

A special exception variance may be granted upon a finding that the relief, if granted:

a. Would not cause substantial detriment to the public good:

The allowance of a waiver from off-street parking requirements will not cause a substantial detriment to the public good because there is no advantage to the public if the lot is paved, striped and lit or not. The project is proposed for private use.

b. Would not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the environment or of other property in the immediate vicinity:

The allowance of a waiver from off-street parking requirements will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the environment or of other property in the immediate vicinity because the property has existed in its current state since 1958. The neighboring parcel has a natural buffer in place and the use is super low intensity and will only be used on occasion. No regular or daily use parking is proposed.

c. Would not diminish and impair property values within the surrounding neighborhood:

The allowance of a waiver from off-street parking requirements will not diminish nor impair property values within the surrounding neighborhood because the majority of the tracts in the immediate vicinity are agriculturally zoned. The facilities and use are not a new development and have existed onsite since 1875. By keeping the parking unpaved, unstriped and not lit, it will retain its historically agricultural setting and feel and not be made to look and resemble a commercial development.

d. Would not impair the purpose and intent of this Development Code.

The allowance of a waiver from off-street parking requirements makes sense in light of the surroundings of the adjacent property. The project is the preservation of the historic cotton gin and seed house which have served as an accessory commercial use in support of agricultural activities in the area for many years. The allowance of a waiver from off-street parking requirements does not impair the purpose and intent of the Unified Development Code, but meets the Future Character Area Designation of Agricultural Preservation.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

All that tract or parcel of land lying and being in the county of Oconee, State of Georgia, GMD 225, and described as 2.180 acre tract on a survey for Mark Thomas, by Paul & Evans Land Surveying, Inc., dated 06/12/2000, more particularly described as follows:

Starting at an iron pin along the right-of-way of GA Highway 15; said pin being the POINT OF BEGINNING.

Thence N36°36'05"E, a distance of 116.33' to an iron pin;

Thence N36°36'05"E, a distance of 110.71' to an iron pin;

Thence N36°36'05"E, a distance of 52.74' to an iron pin;

Thence S51°02'40"E, a distance of 363.19' to an iron pin;

Thence S42°36'05"W, a distance of 69.31' to an iron pin;

Thence S42°36'05"W, a distance of 197.00' to an iron pin;

Thence N53°07'00"W, a distance of 167.03' to a traverse point;

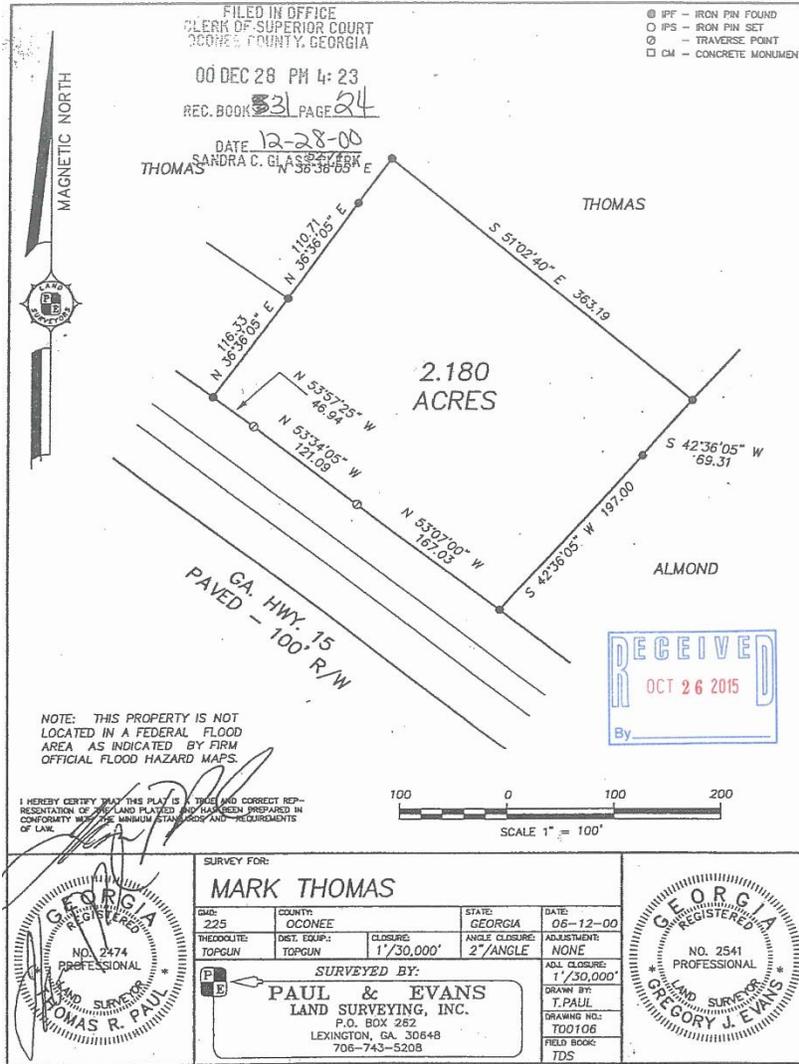
Thence N53°34'05"W, a distance of 121.09' to a traverse point;

Thence N53°57'25"W, a distance of 46.94' to an iron pin; said pin being the POINT OF BEGINNING.

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PLAT



TAX MAP



