



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

August 26, 2025

TIME: 3:00 PM

- I. WELCOME - Some items at this meeting will have a designated public hearing (noted below). Individuals are limited to one 5-minute comment period per public hearing.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The City of Opelika Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on August 26, 2025, in the Meeting Chambers, located at the Opelika Municipal Court. Certified letters have been mailed to all adjacent property owners for related issues.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Lucinda Cannon, Mayor Gary Fuller, Dr. Arturo Menefee, Mr. Sheldon Whittelsey, and Mr. Jay Walters.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman George Allen, Mr. John Sweatman, & Mrs. Leigh Whatley.

STAFF PRESENT: Mr. Matt Mosley, Planning Director
Mrs. Rachel Dennis, Planner
Mrs. Dana Gafford, Planning & Zoning Technician
Mr. Scott Parker, City Engineer
Mr. Guy Gunter, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Lucinda Cannon called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes July 22, 2025

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
SECONDER:	Sheldon Whittelsey
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

III. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS PC CASES

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. **PLAT (Preliminary Only) – Public Hearing**

1. Willow Park SD, 153 lots, Hayes Eiford, Samford Group, LLC, authorized representative for House Mountain LLC, property owner, 1150 block South Uniroyal Road.

Mr. Mosley stated that the applicant, Hayes Eiford, Samford Group, LLC Authorized Representative for House Mountain, LLC, requested to table. Letters were sent out to adjacent property owners prior to the table request. Therefore, a public hearing was called.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to table

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
SECONDER:	Jay Walters
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

2. Bridgewater Community SD, 541 lots, Hayes Eiford-Samford Group LLC, authorized representative for Jim Freeman, property owner, Logan Drive, preliminary approval.

Mr. Mosley stated that the applicant, Hayes Eiford, Samford Group, LLC representing Jim Freeman, requested to table the preliminary plat approval of 541 lots, of Bridgewater Community Subdivision. Letters were sent to adjacent property owners prior to the table request. Therefore, a public hearing will be called.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to table

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Jay Walters
SECONDER:	Arturo Menefee
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

B. PLAT (Preliminary and Final) - Public Hearing

3. Hidden Lakes West Phase 4B SD, 37 lots, Lake Condry Road/West Point Parkway, Blake Rice, BSI, Inc., authorized representative for SMB Land, LLC, preliminary and final approval.

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the preliminary/final plat approval of 37 lots of the Hidden Lakes West, Phase 4B, Subdivision. He stated that this had been approved by the Planning Commission in May 2025. The developer discovered in the final workflow, that some pins were inadvertently located in the wrong spot, which shifts some

of the property lines by one to two feet, in lots 47 through 56. The Planning Department is recommending preliminary and final plat approval subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Replace the plantings required in the 15' landscape buffer for visually screening the rear of Lots 38, 39, and 40 along West Point Parkway or submit a plan for Planning approval.**
- 2. Sidewalks are required on one side of every street.**
- 3. All utilities shall be located underground.**

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Sheldon Whittelsey
SECONDER:	Jay Walters
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

C. FINAL PLAT

- 4. Sentinel Hills SD, Phase 4, 18 lots, Mark Strozier, authorized representative for Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., property owner, Lee Road 2192, final approval.**

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the final plat approval of Sentinel Hills Subdivision, Phase 4. He stated that the proposed subdivision is located in the county but in the Opelika Planning Commission jurisdiction. The proposed 18 single-family lots range in size from 3/4 acre to 4.4 acre lots. Mr. Mosley stated that the Opelika Planning staff recommends final plat approval subject to the following:

- 1. Lots 1, 18, 13 and 12 must show courses and distances along the center of the creek. Any missing monuments should be reset. Witness pins, found or set, should show the distance from said pin to the centerline of the creek.**
- 2. The section tie is shown but there is no course or distance to the P.O.B.**

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Motion to approve final plat

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Arturo Menefee
SECONDER:	Sheldon Whittelsey

AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

D. CONDITIONAL USE - Public Hearing

5. Hayes Eiford Samford Group, LLC, authorized representative for L.A.M.E LLC, property owner, 706 Geneva Street, C-2, GC-S zoning district, townhouse/office building.

Mr. Mosley stated that the applicant, Hayes Eiford, Samford Group, LLC authorized representative for L.A.M.E LLC., requested to table the proposed conditional use request. Letters were sent to adjacent property owners prior to the request to table. Therefore, a public hearing was called.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

Jessica Rozar, 802 Geneva Street stated that her property was directly south, adjacent to the property in question. She stated that 75% of the lot would be impervious surfaces, and inquired about where the water would go? She stated that she is concerned about streetlights, traffic and strangers from the proposed townhouses who might have the ability to see into her backyard. She had three suggestions to offer to help offset her concerns. 1. A request to flip the site plan in order for the town homes to be able to face the office and wooded lot instead of her home. 2. Better requirements from the city to address drainage. 3. Better landscaping screening for the property.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to table

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Arturo Menefee
SECONDER:	Jay Walters
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

6. Brandon M. Davis, Davis Manufacturing, LLC, authorized representative for One Dollar Wash, LLC, property owner, 310 South 6th Street, C-2, GC-S, Manufacturing and repairing utility and cargo trailers.

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for a Conditional Use request by Brandon Davis, owner of One Dollar Wash, LLC, located at 310 South 6th Street. Mr. Mosley stated that the property is currently vacant in the C2 zone, which also has a gateway corridor overlay. The applicant intends to use the property for manufacturing and repair of cargo trailers, which is adjacent to previous use in this location. Mr. Davis has addressed the Planning Staff's concerns about outdoor storage, in that: work on the trailers would be done inside the facility, storage would be handled at an office site facility, scrap metal and storage would be off-site and the for-sale trailers would be taken to a different location. He stated that the applicant meets the minimum parking requirements and that there is no opportunity for

landscaping as the property is mostly asphalt, which the zoning ordinance makes accommodation for in cases like this. The Planning Staff is recommending approval subject to the following:

- 1. No trailer sales are allowed on the subject property or other adjacent/nearby properties.**
- 2. The outside storage of trailers, materials, or equipment associated with the manufacturing or repair of trailers is prohibited on the subject property or other adjacent properties.**
- 3. Trailers manufactured or repaired must be stored inside the building at 310 South 6th Street until the trailer is moved to Wilhite Trailer Sales or another approved location.**

The dumpster location on adjacent property must not be seen from South 6th Street. If the dumpster is visible from South 6th Street, then an opaque fence and double gate are required.

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to grant conditional use approval with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Arturo Menefee
SECONDER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

E. CONDITIONAL USE EXTENSION - Public Hearing

- 7. Bradley Creasy & Lee Tharp, authorized representative for Dyas Properties, LLC, property owner, 1400 block South Fox Run Parkway, C-2, GC-P, 147-unit Build-to-Rent attached dwelling unit development.**

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the approval of a conditional use extension for Bradley Creasy & Lee Tharp, authorized representatives for Dyas Properties, LLC. He stated that the proposed 163 multifamily units in the C-2 zone had been before the Planning Commission in August 2024, where there were concerns about access as well as meeting fire requirements. The applicants are requesting more time in order to continue to work with the Fire Department and Building Inspections Department on the layout to meet City Code requirements.

Staff recommends conditional use approval subject to the following:

- 1. Provide a landscape plan showing the buffers as stated in the written report and to include parking lot landscaping to meet the regulations and foundation plantings.**

2. If the buffer along S. Fox Run Parkway is not a large undisturbed buffer, additional plantings meeting the Gateway Corridor standards will be required. Any fencing should be behind plantings or natural buffer from the street.
3. Note the materials proposed for the units. Due to the configuration and proximity of units, all four sides of the buildings should have consistent architecture meeting the Gateway Corridor cladding requirements.
4. Dumpsters must be enclosed on all sides and gated with an opaque fence at a height so that the dumpster is not seen outside the enclosure. The location and sizing of dumpsters or compactors must be coordinated with the Opelika Environmental Service Department.
5. All utilities shall be underground except overhead required transmission lines.
6. All mechanical and hvac units shall be screened from the public right-of-way.
7. Any gates will need to be coordinated and approved by Opelika public safety departments for emergency entry.

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion for approval with staff recommendations

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Arturo Menefee
SECONDER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

8. Jack Johnson, 301 Samford Avenue, C-2, GC-S, Storage World climate control facility.

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the approval of a conditional use extension for Jack Johnson of Storage World Inc., representing Opelika East, LLC. He stated that the subject property is in the C2 zone with Gateway Corridor secondary, located on Fox Run Parkway and Samford and had been approved by the Planning Commission in 2019. The applicants are requesting an extension to continue working on additional adjacent properties in order to put together a larger development package as part of the overall development construction. The Planning Staff are recommending conditional use be extended for 12 months.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

No comments.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion to grand conditional use approval

RESULT:	Passed
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MOVER:	Sheldon Whittelsey
SECONDER:	Jay Walters
DISCUSSION:	Chari Cannon stated that this item has been before the Commission for six years, and now it's time for them to do something.
	Mr. Whittelsey stated that in reading their letter, it appears that the applicant is trying to do some type of exchange, but agreed that the process has been taking a long time.
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

F. AMENDMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN and REZONING – Public Hearing

9. (a) Amendment to Future Land Use Map, 1300 block Crawford Road, 73.3 acres, Crawford Road, from a low density residential land use category to a mixed-use land use category.
- (b) Rezoning request, Hayes Eiford, Samford Group, LLC, authorized representative for David N. Rhyne, property owner, 1300 block Crawford Road, 73.3 acres, from R-1 to PUD (Crawford Reserve PUD).

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for the request of an amendment to future land use and rezoning for a piece of property located in the 1300 block of Crawford Road. He stated that the applicant is Hayes Eiford with the Samford Group representing David Ryan. The subject property is currently zoned R-1 and the request is to rezone to a planned unit development. The proposed plan is for 223 single family homes on 73 acres, located on the south corner of Crawford Road, US 169. The development would include 17 acres of open space or detention areas. The proposed lots range in size from 5,700 square feet to 6,900 square feet, which are similar to R-4 and R-5 zones, but smaller than R-1 and R-3 zones across the street. The applicant is indicating that the lots are smaller to accommodate designed amenities such as a dog park, pavilion and playground as well as two landscaped pocket parks. The Planning Staff recommends Planning Commission send a positive recommendation to the City Council to rezone the property from R-1 to PUD subject to the following:

1. Sidewalks are required on both sides of the street. Sidewalks shall be 5 feet wide.
2. All utilities shall be located underground.
3. Provide a minimum of one tree per yard for single-family lots. Corner lots provide a tree for each street. Trees may be planted in the adjacent right-of-way with city staff approval.
4. All attached single family homes shall meet the Gateway Corridor cladding requirements.
5. Vinyl or aluminum siding shall not be the primary cladding material for single-family homes.
6. Buffers shall be undisturbed unless an alternate plan is approved. The undisturbed buffers shall be supplemented in any areas where the buffer does not provide a near full screen.
7. Provide future stub-out streets to the south and west.

- 8. Approval of both two roads connecting to Crawford Road by ALDOT shall be required prior to approval of any construction plans. If the access shown cannot be provided, the PUD will be required to come back through the PUD process for approval of an alternate plan.**

Mr. Parker provided the reports for the Engineering, Opelika Water, and Opelika Power Services.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

Ezekiel Rollins, 1305 Crawford Road, stated that he feels there is already too much traffic and fears that a new subdivision would just cause more traffic and accidents. He also inquired if the proposed re-zoning would be considered spot or pocket zoning?

Mr. Mosley stated that there is not a clear definition of what spot zoning is under state law. In general, one typically looks at how it relates to future land use, adjacent properties, the size of the request as well as other factors. He explained that PUDs typically do not go next to other PUDs because they are a unique zoning mechanism in the ordinance which allows flexibility, providing that there are other benefits. In this case, it is currently an R-1 zone which is usually comprised of one acre lots. Across the street, is an R-3 zone which is generally comprised of 10,000 square foot lots, (which are still larger than what's being proposed here). However, in this case, the density is 3.5 units an acre in the R-3 zone. From a density standpoint, a PUD like this is very close to that density or even under the density allowed fully in an R-3 zone. There is a manufacturing zone to the south of this, which allows more commercial manufacturing type uses. This is a transitional area between residential and manufacturing. Ultimately, the decision about whether the zoning is appropriate is a recommendation from this board to the City Council. It comes down to whether the Commission feels what's being proposed here is appropriate.

Allen Garner, 1304 Crawford Road, stated he lives directly across the street from the proposed development. He believes that the proposed new subdivision does not share the character and quality of the existing homes. The biggest concern is that the current highway is dangerous. It is his belief that new development should not happen until a better highway has been built.

Sharie Garner Eiland, 1210 Crawford Road, stated that she believes there should be some communication between the City and the State about the highway. It is currently a two-lane road with large hills and double yellow lines. There are 18-wheel trucks traveling over the speed limit, sharing a road with school buses, which are loading and unloading. She stated that when the trucks travel fast over the hills, they cannot stop. She has personally been in two accidents as a result of the conditions on the highway. She stated that the size of the proposed lots and houses are not in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood.

Amanda Wooson, 1308 Crawford Road, stated she shares a driveway with Mr. Garner. She also has concerns about the road and the speed of the traffic, including 18-wheel trucks. She stated that she is a nervous wreck every day when her child gets on and off of the bus. She stated that she has witnessed people traveling at great speeds, topping the hill and having to slam on the brakes as they encountered the school bus that was obstructed by the hills. She stated that when she is trying to turn into her driveway, there are several occasions where she has had to quickly speed up out of fear that the truck behind her is going too fast to stop. She concluded by saying that if a new subdivision is inevitable, then some measures need to be taken to

address the traffic and the speed of travel on the road.

Kinara Smith, 1403 Crawford Road, stated she has lived in this area since childhood and agrees with the previous speakers and can confirm that there have been many accidents. She would like to have three questions answered: 1. What specific traffic control or safety measures will be put in place to protect children and families, especially bus riders? 2. Have you coordinated with local school districts and the Transportation Department to ensure safe bus routes with designated stops? 3. What infrastructure improvements, such as turn lanes or speed reduction measures are being included in the plan to prevent accidents on such a busy highway?

Hayes Eiford, Samford Group, LLC., stated that the road is under the jurisdiction of ALDOT, who has strict standards that developers have to meet, but they cannot engage with them until they have a clear understanding of what the zoning will be. Once the zoning is clear, then everything is contingent on ALDOT approval. He addressed concerns about the lot sizes by stating that the housing product is the same, but with a smaller lot size, which allows them to keep some of the older trees and provide shared amenity spaces while maintaining density.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Guy Gunter, City Attorney, addressed the Commission stating "The courts give the city decision makers wide discretion. A lot of times in rezonings, it's not always black and white. There are always grays in there. So, that's the reason the courts give the City, as the legislative bodies of the city-wide discretion to make these kinds of decisions. The courts have said the two most important factors are these. Number one is the proposed development consistent with the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan says low density residential. I mean, that's beyond dispute. The second important consideration, is the proposed development compatible with existing uses? That is, the neighboring uses adjacent across the street. There are a number of other factors you consider, but those are the two most important. Number three, other factors you consider would be the infrastructure, the streets, the water, the sewer, adequate to serve the development? Number four, is there a need for the development of this type in the community? So, those are basically the kind of factors you consider. And again, the courts say you have to weigh all of these factors and come up with a commonsense judgment as to what you recommend to the City Council."

Motion to table

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Sheldon Whittelsey
SECONDER:	None
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

G. TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE - Public Hearing

10. A public hearing to consider a recommendation to the City Council on proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance: Additions and revisions to definitions in Section 2.2 Definitions and revisions to 7.3 C. Use Categories (matrix table) regarding mini-warehouse uses

Mr. Mosley presented the staff report to the Planning Commission for a text amendment to the

zoning ordinance. He stated that this was a request to look at items related to mini warehouses. Mr. Mosley read the definition of min-warehouses: Mini warehouses are defined in the ordinance as a building or group of buildings in a compound that contains varying individual lockers or stalls for dead storage of consumer goods and wares where no sales or service repair facilities are permitted. He stated that mini warehouses are a use that is not allowed in the Gateway Corridor districts. The Planning Staff received a request from a property owner and their representatives to have the Planning Commission examine and potentially amend the use. The property is located on US 431, Lafayette Parkway and is zoned M-1. M-1 is Opelika's private manufacturing zone, and is not a common zone in the gateway corridors, which are usually in the C-1, C-2, C-3 or residential zones. Mr. Mosley explained that a variance for only one particular property cannot be granted under our zoning ordinance. There are two ways in which the City could handle this, if they would like to address this issue. 1. The City could remove that section of Lafayette Parkway from the Gateway Corridors. 2. The City could make mini-warehouses (which are different from climate-controlled facilities in that they are more traditional with exterior doors) a conditional use in all the Gateway Corridors. Mr. Mosley noted that the staff report outlines information as to why these facilities have been regulated. In the Planning staff's review, a positive recommendation was not given.

Chair Cannon opened the public hearing.

Evan Crawford, authorized representative for the property owner, stated that he understands the reason for the current zoning restrictions, but explained that this is a unique case. He explained that the property is very narrow and this is the only use that would make sense in such a narrow area. He stated it is his understanding that the Zoning Board of Adjustment could grant some exceptions based on location, size and shape of property and the requirements of the gateway corridor overlay if they present a substantial, unique hardship to the property owner. He stated that the owners are willing to reorient the doors and create landscaping to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing.

Motion for a negative recommendation for text amendment change to the zoning ordinance

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Sheldon Whittlesey
SECONDER:	Mayor Gary Fuller
DISCUSSION	Mr. Gunter advised the commissioners that the Commission cannot make decisions for one property, as it would affect every property in the gateway corridor. Mr. Whittlesey inquired if there was anything that could be done for this applicant. Mr. Mosley stated that our zoning ordinance does not allow a variance to use. Therefore, if the use is allowed, it would apply to the entire gateway corridor overlay.
AYES:	Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittlesey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

V. OLD BUSINESS

H. **CONDITIONAL USE - Public Hearing**

11. Dave King, authorized representative of King Automobiles, Inc., Northwest corner of Dunlop Drive & Hwy 280, C-3, GC-P, Commercial retail. *(This item was tabled at the July 22nd Planning Commission meeting.)*

No action and the item remains on the table for the September 23, 2025 meeting.

12. Dave King, authorized representative of King Automobiles, Inc., Front corner of Highway 280 Northwest corner of Dunlop Drive and Hwy 280, C-3, GC-P, Commercial retail. *(This item was tabled at the July 22nd Planning Commission meeting.)*

No action and the item remains on the table for the September 23, 2025 meeting.

VI. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 4:26 p.m.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Sheldon Whittelsey
SECONDER: Jay Walters
AYES: Chair Cannon, Walters, Whittelsey, Menefee, Mayor Fuller
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None

_____**Lucinda Cannon, Commissioner**

_____**Matt Mosley,**