

## PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD/LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MINUTES

The Brevard County Planning & Zoning Board met in regular session on **Monday, June 15, 2026**, at **3:00 p.m.**, in the Florida Room, Building C, Brevard County Government Center, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Board members present were Mark Wadsworth, Chair (D4); Henry Minneboo, Vice-Chair (D2); John Hopengarten (D1); Ruth Amato (D1); Ron Bartcher (D2); Robert Wise (D2); Neal Johnson (D4); Ana Saunders (D5); Erika Orriss (D3); Debbie Thomas (D4); Jerrad Atkins (D1); Eric Michajlowicz (3); and Melissa Jackson (D5).

Staff members present were Trina Gilliam, Planning and Zoning Manager; Tim Craven, Senior Planner; Alex Esseesse, Deputy County Attorney; Darcie McGee, Natural Resources; and Alice Randall, Operations Support Specialist.

Mark Wadsworth stated that if any Board Member has had any ex-parte communication regarding any application, please disclose now.

### EXCERPT OF COMPLETE AGENDA

#### **H.5. Gunnar Downes (Jenna Tindall) requests a zoning classification change from GU (General Use) to AU (Agricultural Residential). (26Z00009) (Tax Account 2405759) (District 1)**

Trina Gilliam read item H.5. into the record.

Gunnar Downes spoke to the application. He stated I moved here when he was 17 and raised in rural life. I have six kids. We have cows and stuff in Port St. John. So, we're trying to get out a little bit farther away and kind of live that rural lifestyle with the family. That's our ultimate goal. I didn't know that GU zoning meant general use. I assumed that was a pretty vague term. That is not what it means. And apparently, you can't have gardens, animals, pretty much anything on there. So, that's what code enforcement said. So, we're trying to make a zoning change to hopefully move out there and be a little more rural.

### NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Wadsworth started with Gunnar; I'm on your side right here now.

Ruth Amato inquired if there was an active code case on this property.

Mr. Downes responded there was for having stuff on the property for land clearing. I'm currently dealing with that one. I got the property from a friend and there was already a lot of stuff done. There's a lady named Mary Hill. I guess she made over 200 complaints last year on people for code enforcement violations. So realistically I think I just got caught up in it. And I guess changing zoning is also going to help with that. It's going to change what I can do to mitigate what I've already done or what I already impacted to it. It's going to cover it, make it easier to deal with what happened.

Ms. Amato asked when he purchased the property.

Mr. Downes responded with maybe two years, something like that. I just recently combined them.

Ms. Amato continued with because I think the original code case started in May of last year. And then it continued. It wasn't a small code case. And it's still open, unresolved.

Mr. Downes responded yes that one's still unresolved. We're waiting for the zoning change. And to go for a Bonafide agricultural, that changes the options of where I'm at. I combined the two lots together and the impact I did was so small compared to the size of the property. But when I combined the two together, it increased the impact. So that changed.

Ms. Amato continued with I looked at the previous pictures, freely available on the property appraiser website, you can look year by year. And I'm generally in favor of agriculture. Love agriculture. We need more of it in Brevard County and a lot more of it. I'm just generally concerned because I actually read through the very large code case on how that's going to negatively impact or possibly just getting that cleaned up for the neighbors. And is running it to AU the solution to get out of the code case. Is that what we're doing here?

Mr. Downes responded with no. I sold my house on Merritt Island. I sold that house to go build something here and move on to something else because I was in a two-bedroom mobile home with six kids. So, the whole goal was to sell that place and move on over to this place and build something new. So, that's the ultimate goal. I didn't know that there was as much legal stuff, I guess, tied up into what you can touch and can't touch. So, this was an option that was presented to me from natural resources. Natural resources said this was a good thing since you want to go for the agricultural pursuits already, that's something you already wanted to do in the first place, so if you go ahead with that we do have other stuff that we could work with you on to kind of settle everybody to make it happy for them, make it happy for me, so it kind of has a twofold thing.

Ms. Amato stated 2.5 acres, just shy have right about....

Mr. Downes responded with it should be 2.65. Yes, I combined them.

Mr. Atkins inquired what the violations were.

Mr. Downes responded it was for land clearing. I removed up like four or five palm trees >> didn't know those palm trees.... and then I mowed down a bunch of pepper trees. A good percentage of the whole front of the frontage that was on it was all pepper trees. But I removed some palm trees and then she called about the palm trees and that's really what set it off was the palm trees.

Ms. Amato stated that from the property appraiser website, if you look at it from last year to this year, it's pretty much tree lot to almost baron land. I'd consider that as more than a couple of trees.

Mr. Downes responded that those were all pepper trees. The palm trees were towards the back. If you go down the side of the water, it's got key deer and goes down from satellite and then it's got the canal. The palm trees were over here on the end of where it's cleared. I left a good percentage of the palm trees. I took out four or five of them or something and that's what he said. He went back to the map and he's like, "I can see where you removed the palm trees." He's like, "We need to figure something out for it." And it was going to be something small, put back some plants, but once I combined the lots together, apparently that changed the whole entire dynamic of it, and I didn't think it would. So that's why it's such a big deal now.

Mr. Atkins inquired if that was the only code violation. The clearing.

Mr. Downes responded with apparently you can remove the Brazilian peppers, but you still must get a land clearing permit. I didn't know. I was told they're invasive. You can just remove them, but you still need a permit to get rid of the root system.

Mr. Atkins continued with your flowchart is to rezone it to AU and then apply for Bonafide Ag Exemption and then that clears out your code enforcement, right?

Mr. Downes responded with not all of it, but I'll still put stuff back, that is what would satisfy a good portion of what they want.

Motion to recommend approval of Item H.5. by Ruth Amato, seconded by Neal Johnson. Motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT