



(TENTATIVE) BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION AGENDA
Effingham County
Georgia
Board of Commissioners

July 18, 2023 – 4:00 PM

Effingham County Administrative Complex
Meeting Chambers

804 South Laurel Street, Springfield GA 31329

The Georgia Conflict of Interest in Zoning Action Statute (O.C.G.A. §§ 36-67A-1 et seq.) requires disclosure of certain campaign contributions made by applicants for rezoning actions and by opponents of rezoning application. A rezoning applicant or opponent of a rezoning application must disclose contributions or gifts which in aggregate total \$250.00 or more if made within the last two years to a current member of Effingham County Planning Board, Board of Commissioners, or other Effingham County official who will consider the application. The campaign contribution disclosure requirement applies to an opponent of a rezoning application who publishes his or her opposition by appearance before the Planning Board or Board of Commissioners or by any other oral or written communication to a member or members of the Planning Board or Board of Commissioners. Disclosure must be reported to the Board of Commissioners by applicants within ten (10) days after the rezoning application is filed and by opponents at least five (5) days prior to the first hearing by the Planning Board. Any person knowing failing to comply with these requirements shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

“Individuals with disabilities who require special needs to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities should contact the County Clerk at 912-754-2123 promptly to afford the County time to create reasonable accommodations for those persons.”

****PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE**

Agenda

Watch us live on our YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9wRzS6f2pHHZG3IgRk3OUQ>

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Agenda Approval** - Consideration of a resolution to approve the agenda.
- IV. Public Comments** - Agenda Items ONLY
- V. Correspondence** - Documents from this meeting are located in the Clerk's Office and on the Board of Commissioner's website.
- VI. Work Session Topics**
 - 1. Exhibition of the Effingham County Parks Master Plan, presented by POND Company
 - 2. Discussion of an Agritourism Ordinance
- VII. Adjournment**



Item VI. 1.



Effingham County Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2022



July 6, 2023



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Purpose of the Plan Update

Purpose of the Plan Update:

In January of 2015, Effingham County adopted a 15-year Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plan to “ensure that the County’s facilities continue to meet the residents needs over the next 15 years.”. In the intervening, nearly 8 years since that plan was adopted, the county has achieved a number of the recommendations, the most significant being the development of a “New Centralized Park”, that being the first phase of the Clarence E Morgan Recreational Complex and Gym. Additional improvements at the 119 Recreation Complex and Sand Hill were also achieved.

In the time since adoption of the 2015 plan, the County has seen rapid population growth, on par with what was forecasted in the plan. This growth has been concentrated in the southern portions of the county, adding pressure for more facilities to be implemented. The world also experienced the Covid19 pandemic that sent waves of change through organized recreation programs and how people view and use parks. The recreation programs participation levels have rebounded to near or better than pre-pandemic numbers, and demand remains high for quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs, to maintain Effingham County as an attractive place to live and work. Parks remain important to the overall health and wellbeing of the residents of Effingham County, and they are an important factor in the attractiveness of the County to potential new residents.

This purpose of this 2022 plan update is to provide new recommendations to continue the momentum of parks and recreation offerings in the County. The planning team looked at each existing park for ongoing maintenance and capital improvement needs, engaged the citizens of Effingham County to understand the needs and wants of the residents as it relates to parks, recreation facilities, and programs, and benchmarked the county against NRPA (National Recreation and Park Association) data for jurisdictions of similar size. Combined, this data informs the recommendations presented in this master plan update.

Parks are important to people. NRPA released their 2022 Engagement with Parks Report which provides useful insight on the perception of parks within the American public. Key findings of the report include:

- 275 million people in the United States visited a local park or recreation facility at least once during the past year, that’s better than 80% of the US population.
- Nearly three in four U.S. residents have at least one local park, playground, open space, or recreation center within walking distance of their homes; nearly 20% of the US population live in rural areas.
- 84 percent U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live
- Nine in 10 people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local government.
- Nearly three in four people agree that equity should in an *extremely or very important* goal for their local park and recreation agency.

The report goes into depth and the data can be drilled down to a number of demographic qualifiers. There is a lot of consistency in the data across the different regions of the United States and across the various demographics. Readers of this Effingham County Parks and Recreation Master Plan update should also consider reading the NRPA 2022 Engagement with Parks Report for additional detail.

The report can be found online:

<https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/engagement/>

The intent of this plan is to be transparent and concise, so that the process leading to the recommendations is clear and the recommendations are logical and easily identified for implementation in the next 10 years.



Other Relevant Plans Summary

Other Relevant Plans Summary:

Planning is a constant process where other county or regional plans are developed and may have some relationship to one another. For this project the County's 2020-2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, the County's 2021 Transportation Master Plan, the 2022–2026 Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, and the previous 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan were reviewed. The following summarizes items related to parks and recreation in each of the County non-parks and recreation plans and the SCORP. Generally, the plans are in concurrence with one another and supportive of similar concepts and goals.

2020-2040 Effingham County Joint Comprehensive Plan:

- Identified need to invest in infrastructure that improves quality of life for residents (sidewalks, street lighting, parks, etc.).
- Land use goals included: Support and expand the network of pedestrian and bicycle path connections to residential areas, public parks, natural features, surrounding communities and recreation facilities.
- General Recommendations included:
 - Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by providing requirements for areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new (private) development occurs.
 - Re-use the Atlas Sand property as a water resource and recreation area.
 - The Cities of Guyton, Springfield, and Rincon each have general recommendations and goals for expanding greenspace and parkland, and accommodating the community's recreational needs, including a recommendation for collaboration between Guyton and Springfield for a joint parks project.
 - Improve planning and communication efforts with adjacent communities and pursue opportunities for joint decision-making with regard to recreational services, public facilities, and other cultural amenities.
 - Work with Effingham County and the City of Springfield on developing a greenway and interconnecting bike and pedestrian paths. (This cross-references with recommendations in the 2021 Effingham County Transportation Master Plan.)

The SWOT analysis for the 2020-2040 Joint Comp Plan identified the following as relates to parks and recreation:

Effingham County:

- Strength: Active recreation facilities and programs
- Weakness: Direct access to nature and passive recreation
- Opportunities: Market recreational facilities (park complex)
- Atlas water reservoir

Guyton:

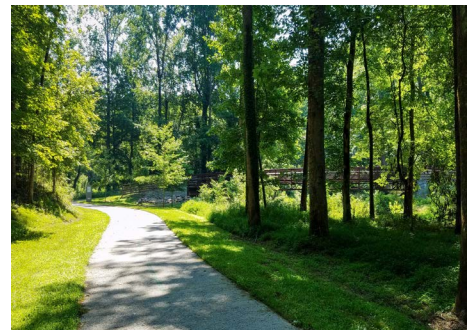
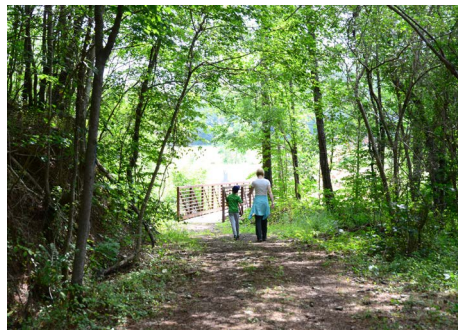
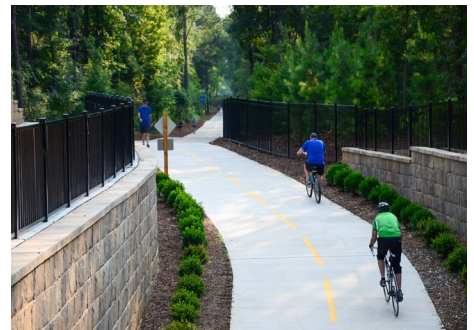
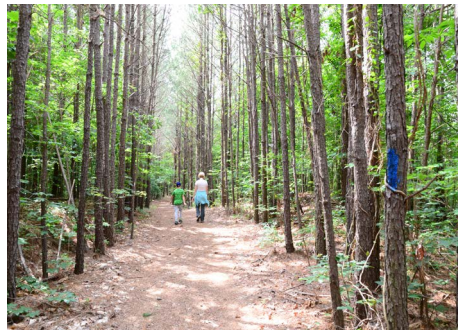
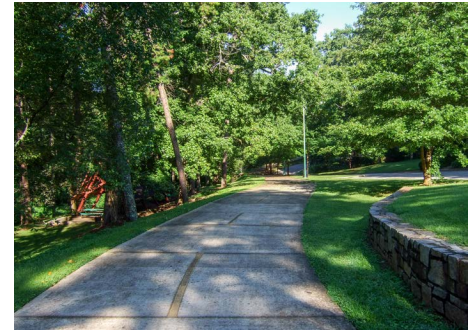
- Strength: Walking Trails; proximity to natural resources
- Weakness: Lack of recreation/sports
- Opportunities: Trail from Guyton to Springfield; Greenway and US Bike Route 1



Springfield:

- Strength: Greenspace/Streetscape; Recreation Complex
- Weakness: Connectivity / pedestrian connections
- Opportunities: Ebenezer Trail Development

Rincon: no parks and recreation specific SWOTs were noted



Active Recreation Facilities and Programs

Access to Nature and Passive Recreation

Multi-use Trails



The following is the proposed work program from the 2020-2040 Joint Comp Plan, for Recreation in Effingham County 2020-2024:

Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
Construct new gym at CEM Recreation Complex on HWY 21, phase I	2020-2024	County	\$4.2 million	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Construct CEM Recreation Complex on HWY 21, phase II & III	2020-2024	County	\$10 million	SPLOST	IN PROGRESS
Remodel gym at Central Learning	2020	County	\$65,000	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Construct Sand Hill playground	2020	County	\$37,000	SPLOST	???
Construct Sand Hill batting cages	2020	County	\$25,000	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Purchase soccer goals for Sand Hill	2020	County	\$7,000	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Purchase pitching machines (6) for Sand Hill	2020	County	\$10,000	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Construct McCall Rd batting cages	2020	County	\$25,000	SPLOST	PARK COMPLETELY RENOVATED
Evaluate Atlas Mine site for reservoir; Planning	2020	County	\$500,000	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Atlas Mine site reclamation; additional land purchase as needed	2020-2024	County	TBD	SPLOST	COMPLETE
Review/revise ordinances as necessary to ensure recreation areas accommodate community needs, e.g. dog park	2020-2024	County	TBD	General Fund	???

Agritourism Ordinance

“Agritourism business” means an occupation or profession which is conducted on an agricultural residentially zoned parcel, which is carried on by a principal practitioner who maintains dwellings, structures, livestock, and all agriculture and agriculture related provisions for the business on the property.

Agritourism businesses are permitted as a conditional use only in Agricultural Residential (AR-1 and AR-2) districts, an agricultural business may be permitted in said district only if it meets the following criteria:

- (a) Intent. An agritourism business is a business which is secondary or incidental to the primary use of the property for agricultural or residential purposes, and is of a service, educational, or recreational nature. An Agritourism business is intended to be of a smaller size, intensity, and scale than commercial uses which would be more commonly found in commercial or business zoning districts, and is primarily designed to towards providing local or neighborhood service to the rural-residential area in which it is located. Agritourism business activities may occur in an accessory structure detached from the principal residence or in an area outside of the dwelling. In addition, an applicant for a agritourism business must have established residency and be living in a residence upon the subject property prior to any application being filed for consideration by the zoning administrator.
- (b) A concept and site plan of the agritourism business must be provided to the county for review and approval by the Technical Review Committee. Please add the following to the concept plan:
 - Access
 - Signs
 - Parking
 - Structures
 - Well/Septic
 - Public facilities (bathrooms, hand washing stations, etc.)
 - Known future development (gift shop, planned exhibits, etc.)
 - Distance from development to adjoin property lines (buffers)
- (c) Each agritourism business must be reviewed by the Planning Board and approved by the Board of Commissioners before any activities in connection with the occupation begin. The planning board may recommend to the board of commissioners that conditions be imposed to insure the orderly operation of the proposed business and its compatibility with surrounding properties. The board of commissioners may place reasonable conditions on the proposed use as deemed necessary to insure the orderly operation of the proposed business and its compatibility with the surrounding properties.
- (d) A business plan of the agritourism business must be provided to Effingham County with the following information:
 - Description of daily, public facing, operations
 - Mission statement
 - Goals/project growth
 - Hours of operation

- Visitor capacity
 - Emergency evacuation plan
- (e) Any required State or Federal licensing shall be obtained and kept in good standing. An Effingham County Occupational Tax Certificate must be obtained and renewed annually.
- (f) Any additions or alterations to the residence which will be used for the agritourism business must be of an architectural style in keeping with surrounding residential and agricultural development. Any structure built to house the business must be located to the side or rear of the residence, unless it is at least 100 feet from the front property line and meets all applicable side and rear setbacks. The structure must be readily and easily usable for customary agricultural and residential uses.
- (g) Only one nonilluminated sign not to exceed 16 square feet is permitted, location to be approved by the Zoning Administrator and/or designee. Location of the sign must be at least 15 feet from all property lines.
- (h) Property on which the agritourism business is proposed must have frontage on a public road, or be granted exemption from the condition during approval from the Board of Commissioners.
- (i) Parking for customers/clients must be provided on-site, and the location of the parking exhibited during approval of the application.
- (j) Hours of operation shall be limited to daylight hours, except when exemption is granted by the Board of Commissioners during the approval process, or as outlined in section (m) below.
- (k) Operations of an agritourism business shall adhere to Effingham County Code of Ordinances, Part II, [Chapter 30], Article II, *Noise Control*.
- (l) Agritourism business shall be located on property containing at least five acres of land
- (m) Special or Seasonal Events. At such time as the agritourism business may wish to rent space for a private party, seasonal event, or any other activity which temporarily occurs outside the implicit scope of operation, the County Manager or designee may approve, or defer to a public hearing, so as to obtain approval from the Board of Commissioners.
- (1) *General operating regulations*. The following operating regulations shall be enforced by the permittee:
- (a) No musical entertainment, either live or recorded, utilizing sound amplification equipment, shall be in violation of [Chapter 30], Article II, *Noise Control*.
 - (b) No event shall be presented between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise approved by the board of commissioners.
 - (c) Camping on site by persons attending an event is permitted; provided that no on site camping shall be permitted more than two days prior or two days after an event.
 - (d) Handicapped access shall be provided to activities that are open to the public.
 - (e) Events and activities shall be accessible to emergency and service vehicles.
 - (f) Adequate toilet facilities per the Department of Environmental Health and trash receptacles shall be provided for all events.
 - (g) The burden of preserving order during the concert or special event is upon the permittee.
- (2) *Revocation of use*. The board of commissioners may revoke permission for any proposed event or order that an event be discontinued immediately if, in the sole judgement of the board of commissioners, the event will disrupt traffic within the unincorporated area of Effingham County beyond practical solution; the event will interfere with access to fire stations and fire

hydrants; the event will require the diversion of so many public employees that allowing the event would unreasonably deny service to remainder of the county; or the event might otherwise interfere with the welfare, peace, safety, health, good order and convenience of the general public.

(3) *Exemptions.* The following special events are exempt from the provisions of this article:

- (a) Special events occurring upon a city or county-owned sports facility, including without limitation, a ball field, tennis court or pool, provided that the special event constitutes a use for which the sports facility was intended, and regardless of the number of attendees;
- (b) Special events hosted by a church on property owned by the church, but only if the property is used on a regular basis, at least bi-monthly, to conduct worship services, and regardless of the number of attendees;
- (c) Events hosted by a school on property owned by the school or a governmental entity, provided that the property is used on a regular basis, at least weekly, to conduct classes; and
- (d) A governmental agency acting within the scope of its agency.

(n) Examples of uses permitted (as Agritourism Businesses):

- 1. On-farm sales
- 2. Pick your own
- 3. Agricultural crafts/ gifts sales
- 4. Fee fishing/Hunting
- 5. Wildlife viewing and photography
- 6. Equine related activities
- 7. Wagon Rides
- 8. School tours
- 9. Garden/Nursery Tours
- 10. Farm Technical Demonstrations and sales (canning, weaving, soap-making, etc.)
- 11. Winery Tastings or tours
- 12. Corn mazes
- 13. Haunted attractions
- 14. Small, private zoological attraction or sanctuary