A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AUGUST 4, 2026

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at 9:00 a.m., in the County Commission Chambers, Lake County Administration Building, Tavares, Florida. Commissioners present at the meeting were: Leslie Campione, Chairman; Sean Parks, Vice Chairman (via Zoom); Anthony Sabatini; Kirby Smith; and Timothy Morris (arrived at 9:39 a.m.). Others present were: Jennifer Barker, County Manager; Melanie Marsh, County Attorney; Misty Spahn, Executive Office Manager, County Manager's Office; Kristy Mullane, Chief Financial Officer; and Stephanie Cash, Deputy Clerk.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commr. Campione welcomed everyone to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting.

Pastor Jim Mory, with Union Congregational Church in the City of Tavares, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, related that she did not have any updates.

Commr. Campione mentioned that even though there were only three Commissioners on the stand, there was a quorum, and that one Commissioner was attending the Canvassing Board meeting, noting that Commissioner Parks was participating via Zoom.

CITIZEN QUESTION AND COMMENT PERIOD

Commr. Campione remarked that anyone who had joined the meeting through Zoom using their phone may press *9 to virtually raise their hand, and that anyone participating on Zoom could click the raise hand button to identify that they wished to speak. She added that everyone would have three minutes to speak, and that after three minutes, an alarm would sound to let them know that their time was up.

Mr. Rich Graham, a resident of Lake County, mentioned that he owned the property south of the Deep Woods Ranch Airport, and that he was one of the three property owners who had rights to the use of the runway from the conditional use permit (CUP). He asked that the BCC and staff would place the Embry-Riddle project on hold for a formal public hearing before the County decided that the project complied with the 2006 CUP, and opined that this was no longer the continued use of an old private grass airstrip that was simply being paved over, noting that the current plans showed the following: a paved runway; paved taxiways; two paved connectors; a large aircraft apron extension; extensive grading and drainage work; road realignments; and the substantial clearing of trees inside and outside of the airport property, which doubled the length of the runway's footprint in the Ocala National Forest when including the safe zones. He opined that what was once an occasional-use private rural runway was currently being transformed into a high-intensity aviation training facility for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and that none of the other property owners with rights to the CUP had any say in any of these changes. He commented that the current construction plans did not properly identify his easement for access or his easement for utilities; however, it depicted grading, clearing, road construction, temporary

fencing, and other items near the road that provided access to his property. He opined that this road was not optional or interchangeable, as it was the only lawful access to the landlocked properties there, and that his home, his veteran charities organization, his ecotourism operations, and his bed and breakfast facility all depended on the continuous access, as did his utilities, deliveries, emergency vehicles, and fire protection. He opined that the new proposed road gave no rights to the property, and that it was available only on a special use permit granted to the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University from the United States (U.S.) Forest Service with no rights given to the residents. He opined that since this permit expired every five years, the residents had no certainty that it would be longstanding, and said that he did not consent to the relocation, obstruction, or destruction of the existing recorded easement. He relayed his understanding that the BCC was not responsible for private title disputes; however, he opined that the County should make note of zoning or CUP compliance based on the construction plans that omitted the recorded easements listed on the property owners' deeds.

Commr. Campione opined that Ms. Melanie Marsh, the County Attorney, would know what that process would entail and whether this was something that the Board could do.

Ms. Marsh commented that site plan approval was an administrative approval, and that so long as it met the requirements of the Land Development Regulations (LDR), it would receive approval. She related that the County did not do public hearings for site plans, and that if Mr. Graham was an owner under the CUP, he could request that the CUP be reopened and file an application to amend it, which would trigger a public hearing process. She recalled that at the previous BCC meeting, there was discussion about the staff reaching out to see if Embry-Riddle would be willing to come do a presentation; however, there was currently not a vehicle for this to become a public hearing.

Mr. Graham indicated his understanding that if he came and requested a public hearing in a BCC meeting, then he could get a public hearing.

Commr. Campione opined that this may be in reference to the CUP itself, and that according to Ms. Marsh, he would have to make a formal request.

Ms. Marsh clarified that Mr. Graham would have to submit an application if he wanted to amend the CUP in some manner, and that once the application was submitted, it would go through that process, which included a public hearing.

Commr. Sabatini relayed his understanding that the site plan was administrative, and inquired if this was in Lake County code or if there was a separate law which dictated that site plans were always done at an administrative level.

Ms. Marsh explained that this was in the LDR, and said that even though some of the Cities would bring every plat and site plan to the City Commission, this was not done at the County, reiterating that as long as all the requirements of the LDR were met, then it was an administrative staff approval.

Commr. Sabatini commented that he would be in favor of making it a public item, opining that there had been much said since the Board's initial decision was made to do nothing a year prior. He opined that there should be a formal hearing to get everybody on the same page,

including the Board, staff, and the public, as there were many questions, and said that this was the first time he had heard about an easement that could be impacted by what Embry-Riddle was trying to do. He indicated his understanding that the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) had authority over what they were ultimately trying to do, and that he wanted to know all of the options. He mentioned that since he was in support of a public hearing, he would be in favor of waiving that part of the code to make the site plan process part of the agenda, opining that the BCC had this discretion. He opined that the conversation was changing every day, and said that he did not know where the Board was on exercising options to protect the Ocala National Forest.

Ms. Marsh reiterated that at the previous meeting, the Board directed staff to reach out to Embry-Riddle, the SJRWMD, and the U.S. Forest Service to see if they would be willing to come give a presentation, noting that they were waiting to hear back from them.

Commr. Campione pointed out that there were two different issues, and that one was the site plan, opining that if there was a policy change for all site plans to come to the BCC, then this would be a significant change; however, Mr. Graham could make a formal request to reopen the CUP as one of the owners whose property was covered by the CUP. She relayed her understanding that since Mr. Graham was operating a bed and breakfast and had a business doing training exercises as well as having a nonprofit, then anything that was part of the property use would then become subject to this meeting if the CUP was opened, opining that somebody could have an issue with the use of Mr. Graham's property.

Mr. Graham remarked that the CUP was attached to his property for the runway, and that it was not attached to the property that Embry-Riddle owned, noting that his was the original property before it was split in 2006. He stated that the two southern properties belonged to him and another property owner, and that the proposed road for access was not recognized by the County as a deeded easement. He commented that what was being proposed was that they would relinquish their rights to the easement and take a U.S. Forest Service road that was going to be created that would go through the Embry-Riddle property to get to the new road that was based on a special use permit which would come up for reevaluation every five years, and opined that this would not grant them long-term security for access to their properties. He opined that it was no longer safe to drive down the current easement because of the training of student pilots, and that they were being forced off their driveway.

Commr. Sabatini opined that all of this needed to be part of the reopening of the CUP, and that instead of asking a citizen to do this, the Board should direct staff to do it, marking Mr. Graham as the applicant. He opined that the County should waive the fees for that, and said that he wanted to see if what was approved in the CUP was substantially different from what was being proposed on the current day and what the County's options were to oppose this legally if it was the will of the Board.

Commr. Smith questioned if it would be better for Mr. Graham to get with staff about this conflict with the CUP, and opined that once this conflict had been established, then it could be brought back to the Board as a full agenda item. He indicated his understanding that Mr. Graham

had an issue with where the easement may or may not be proposed, and suggested that he discuss this with staff to start the process on the CUP portion so that it could come back to the Board with all the facts.

Ms. Marsh commented that Mr. Graham had an attorney who was supposed to be working with Ms. Tara Tedrow, an attorney representing Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, to negotiate a resolution, and relayed her understanding that Commissioner Sabatini would like them to add a County initiated rezoning to reopen the CUP to the following week's agenda.

Commr. Sabatini opined that if this could not be done in seven days, then this could go on the following agenda.

Ms. Marsh mentioned that this could be added to the following week's agenda, and that the Board could vote on whether they wanted to initiate that process, noting that if this passed, then staff could notify all the interested parties and set it for a public hearing.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the County should modify the code for major site plans that had high public interest to give the BCC discretion to do those site plans, and that the legal standard for site plans was competent substantial evidence, which was almost always met. He mentioned that since this case had many claims and changes, he wanted to do a deeper review.

Commr. Campione opined that this discussion should be a workshop about how to handle site plans, and that the issue with this was that Florida law stated that the review of a site plan was supposed to be administerial in a sense that they were looking at whether the code was needed. She commented that when applicants were brought into public hearings, all of the implications that went into public meetings were then interjected, and opined that this was a separate issue that should be workshopped and discussed; furthermore, she opined that the County could look at what other agencies were doing. She opined that people deserved to have fairness and due process, and that there needed to be caution on the site plan side of it. She opined that the avenue here was to reopen the CUP, and that if this could be an item on the agenda on the following week, then there could be a discussion with all interested parties, including the two attorneys who had been having conversations about the easement. She relayed her understanding that the easement was not going to go away, and that even though there would be a relocation of where they would drive, the legal instrument would stay intact, opining that this could be discussed with the lawyers and everybody being represented with all the facts at this meeting.

Mr. Graham opined that things were progressing quickly, and said that even though he saw the plans that were being submitted, he was not included in any of the conversations. He opined that the official certified survey that Embry-Riddle's team submitted to the County was inaccurate, as it did not show the utility easement which went across the middle of the property, and that this was now being used to move plans forward without the utility easement; additionally, the plans submitted to the SJRWMD showed culverts diverting drainage leaks from Embry-Riddle's property to his property.

Commr. Sabatini opined that even though this was very relevant, it would be more appropriate for the following BCC meeting, and that Mr. Graham could have his attorney send information for the discussion.

Commr. Parks remarked that he would also like a public hearing, and opined that the process had been thoroughly vetted. He opined that with the erosion of home rule, the County had to be careful about Florida Statutes regarding what was administerial and what was not, noting that he appreciated the discussion and looked forward to the hearing.

Ms. Lisa Hayden, a resident of Lake County, recalled that in June 2025, Ms. Tedrow said that upon the closing of this property, she would file an agreement with limitations and stipulations on what the university would be allowed to do, and that this had not happened. She commented that Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University was amending this CUP, rather than Mr. Graham, who was abiding by the original CUP, opining that it should be their responsibility to apply for an amendment. She opined that Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University was broadening everything, and expressed appreciation for the Board's support.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Mr. Ray Powers, with the Lake County Historical Museum, recalled that in the previous year, they had sponsored a poster contest for young people fifth grade and under to use art to show why they were proud of being Americans, and that in the current year they did this again. He commented that many of the winners were in attendance, and that there was more artwork at the Lake County Historical Museum, opining that they had great participation. He related that he would announce the first and second-place winners in the contest, and that the second-place winners would receive a Lake County history book and $25, while first place winners would receive a Lake County history book and $100. He stated that the second-place winners included the following: Ms. Camilla Ruiz, who was in the second grade at Pine Ridge Elementary; Ms. Amira Fricke, who was in the third grade at Pine Ridge Elementary; Mr. Robert Matthews, who was in the fourth grade at The Villages Elementary; and Mr. Theodore Underwood, who was in the fifth grade at Pine Ridge Elementary. He relayed that the first-place winners included the following: Ms. Phoenix James, who was in the second grade at The Villages Elementary; Mr. Kevin Polanco, who was in the third grade at Fruitland Park Elementary; Ms. Imogen Krug, who was in the fourth grade at Pine Ridge Elementary; and Ms. Kylee Padilla, who was in the fifth grade at Pine Ridge Elementary.

ANNEXATION REPORT

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Director for the Office of Planning and Zoning, commented that he had three annexation reports, and that the annexation for the City of Tavares included the following: it was 19 acres east of County Road (CR) 561 and south of Southridge Industrial Drive; the current County future land use (FLU) was Industrial; the proposed City FLU was Industrial; the site was already developed with three industrial buildings; and the proposed development included 135,000 square feet of commercial and industrial buildings.

Commr. Campione opined that it looked consistent with the County map.

Mr. Fitzgerald agreed, and remarked that it was in the City of Tavares Industrial Park. He then related that the next annexation was in the City of Fruitland Park and included the following: it was 45 acres east of U.S. Highway 27 and south of South Grays Airport Road; the current County zoning was Agriculture, Rural Residential (R-1), and Community Commercial (C-2); the proposed

City zoning was Planned Unit Development (PUD); the County FLU was Urban Low, which was four units per acres; the City FLU was a combination of medium density and low density; the proposed development included a 46 acre parcel already within the city; and the intent was to develop it with a proposed 308 unit single-family subdivision, which would be less than four units per acre, noting that it would be consistent with the County Urban Low density.

Commr. Campione opined that it looked consistent, and wondered if it would cause any road issues.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that Lake County staff had looked at this, and that there were no objections. He then stated that the Merritt Ranch property annexation included the following: it was 445 acres located south of CR 48 and west of North Austin Merritt Road; the proposed use was 523 single family homes; the current Lake County zoning was Agriculture; the proposed City zoning was PUD; the current Lake County density was one dwelling unit per five acres; and the proposed City density was about 1.17 dwelling units per acre. He showed the concept plan, and noted that staff had no record of being noticed of the annexation. He mentioned that the City of Leesburg had already reviewed the approval of the land use and zoning, and that they were transmitting that land use to the State, noting that he could not find where staff was noticed 10 days prior to the advertising for this annexation.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the County should possibly sue them.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that the County had to be noticed 10 days in advance.

Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed this, and opined that the Board could choose to object to this annexation.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that the County was asking the Cities not to annex rural properties; however, she opined that one unit per acre was better than four units per acre. She commented that she was in favor of objecting.

Commr. Sabatini opined that this area was seeing much development, and that the traffic was going to be very bad. He remarked that he was in favor of sending a letter as well as sending an immediate email saying that the BCC was objecting and considering a legal challenge based on lack of notification.

Commr. Campione opined that usually the County could just let the City of Leesburg know, and that they would redo everything in order to comply; however, the County had to put them on notice and ask the City to fix it.

Commr. Smith inquired what densities the properties around the subject property had.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied they were in the City of Leesburg, and that he did not have their FLU map; however, the City's FLU for this property was Estate Residential.

Commr. Smith wondered if the City of Leesburg was trying to match the FLU of the area around the property.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that he would have to do more research on what the City of Leesburg's FLU map currently was and what was surrounding the property, as he did not have that information.

Commr. Sabatini asked if this property was closer to the City of Groveland than to the City of Leesburg.

Commr. Campione remarked that it was in that area where the jurisdictions started to come together.

Mr. Fitzgerald related that the City of Leesburg staff was working on this.

Commr. Smith stated that he would like to have information about the surrounding lands, noting that he was in favor of sending a letter saying that the BCC had questions on this annexation.

Commr. Morris arrived at 9:39 a.m.

Commr. Parks commented that there had been discussion about having an overallocation of residential units across the county, and questioned if the units created in this annexation would add to this number; furthermore, he would like to know the details on the open space and what this would look like according the City's code. He added that he was in favor of objecting.

Mr. Fitzgerald relayed his understanding that it would not add to an overallocation from the county's standpoint, as it would be adding housing in the city; however, it would add housing availability to the county as a whole.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that when the analysis was done, it included City FLUs as well as the County's FLU.

Commr. Parks relayed his understanding that it was cumulative between all the Cities and the County, opining that the study took a while because it was very complicated; however, he opined that the County should have that number.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that even though he did not currently have the number of what the allocation was, this development would add to housing that would be available in the county over and above what the analysis said.

Commr. Parks mentioned that he would like to know what the internal rate of capture would be for traffic and what the cumulative impact analysis would be on that, and indicated his understanding that since it was residential, people would be going in and out on CR 48.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that staff had enough information to draft a letter to the City of Leesburg.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: REZONING

Commr. Campione asked the Board to disclose any ex parte communication or site visits, but there were none. She mentioned that all of the correspondence that had been sent to anyone regarding these variances was in the zoning file.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that there were no planning and zoning cases on the current day; however, there were five variances on the agenda, noting that Tab 5 for the Humphrey property had been withdrawn. He commented that these items had been advertised in accordance with Florida Statute.

VARIANCE REGULAR AGENDA

Tab 1. Final Development Order No. 2026-6
Variance Case # PZ2026-58
Alsept Property
A variance to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Table 3.02.05, entitled Setback Requirements, to allow the construction of a carport and walkway cover over existing driveway at 44.3 feet from the centerline of the road in lieu of the required sixty-two (62) foot setback.

Tab 2. Final Development Order No. 2026-7
Variance Case # PZ2025-344
Love Property
A variance to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Table 3.02.05, entitled Setback Requirements, to allow a driveway (impervious surface area) with an irregular setback, between four (4) and zero (0) feet along the western property line, in lieu of the required five (5) foot.

Tab 3. Final Development Order No. 2026-8
Variance Case # PZ2026-101
Gifford Pool
A variance to Planned Unit Development Ordinance #1998-17 Section (II)(A)(2) to allow for the construction of a pool, pool deck and associated pool screen enclosure five (5) feet from the rear property line in lieu of the required ten (10) foot.

Tab 4.
Variance Case # PZ2025-375
Escobedo Property
A variance to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Section 14.11.01(D)(2)(c) to allow the creation of two (2) lots through the minor lot split process where the easement that leads to the parent parcel varies in width and is 10 feet wide at the narrowest point in lieu of the required 50 feet.

ALSEPT PROPERTY

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that variance case # PZ2026-58, Alsept Property, was for the construction of a carport and walkway cover over an existing driveway at 44.3 feet from the centerline of the road in lieu of the required 62 foot setback, which was the front yard setback, and that the location was 15 Aberdeen Circle in the City of Leesburg area. He showed the aerial and a concept plan of the proposed carport and covered area in the front, and said that it was 33 feet from the centerline of the road to the property and 11.3 feet to the beginning of the carport. He mentioned that this was reviewed and approved by the Homeowners Association (HOA) in February 2026, and that staff had received that approval.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

Mr. Robert Gorby, a resident of Scottish Highlands, commented that he and his wife had lived on Aberdeen Circle for over 13 years, and that they were opposed to this zoning variance on setback requirements for the Alsept property. He mentioned that he did not know the petitioners and bore them no ill will; however, he opined that this was a large change. He related that the requested variance would allow a structure of about 22 feet in length to protrude from an existing one car garage, and that even though keeping a vehicle under a carport was a convenience, there were other properties with two car garages available when the petitioners bought their property in February 2026. He remarked that there were numerous residents with multiple vehicles and one

car garages, and opined that a request like this had never been granted. He opined that if this variance was granted, then other residents could follow suit, requesting more variances and building more carports; additionally, he opined that granting this variance would alter neighbors' views from their homes and streets, which he opined could become a safety issue when neighbors were attempting to back out of their driveways while looking for oncoming traffic, including cars and golf carts. He opined that the principle of fairness would be violated for the neighbors and the neighborhood, and that having to park a vehicle in the sun was not a substantial hardship. He opined that if the Board were to drive through the community and assess the potential impacts of this variance, then they would agree with his concerns and deny this proposed variance.

Mr. Robert Alsept, the applicant, related that he and his wife purchased the home in Scottish Highlands about six months prior, and that before completing the purchase, they went to the HOA and asked what the process would be to get a carport. He mentioned that they received an approval from the HOA and spoke with the adjacent neighbors, who were okay with it, before they went to the permit office, and that even though there were concerns, the driveway would still be longer than some of the other driveways in the community after the addition of the carport. He pointed out that a two-car garage was not an option to them because he drove a truck to pull their fifth wheel, which would not fit in the garage because of the height.

Commr. Sabatini indicated his understanding that the HOA approved it, and asked if it was a unanimous vote.

Mr. Alsept confirmed this, adding that it had also been approved by the architectural committee.

Commr. Campione opined that the aerial was telling because it showed the length of the driveway.

Commr. Smith commented that there were other driveways along Aberdeen Circle that were double driveways, while Mr. Alsept had a single driveway, opining that at some point people had gone past the requirement to attach their driveway all the way out.

Mr. Alsept confirmed this, and mentioned that there were also other houses in the neighborhood that had carports. He showed a picture of one, and stated that this was one of the things that prompted them to go the HOA to begin with, opining that this was not a new concept.

Ms. Carrol Utz, a resident of Scottish Highlands, stated that she and her husband had resided there for four years, and that the majority of homes there that had a carport did not have a garage, noting that the carport was attached to the house. She mentioned that there was one home that had an extension of the garage that came out to the carport; however, she opined that it was not nearly as long as what was being proposed. She commented that they were not in favor of this, and expressed concern that it would set a precedence, opining that it could cause an issue of being able to see down the road for golf carts and cars.

Mr. James Cox, a resident of Scottish Highlands, remarked that he was an adjacent neighbor to Mr. Alsept, and that he had moved there in April 2025. He opined that since the carport was open on both sides, it would not block any views and would not create a safety issue, noting that it was just to protect the vehicle from the sun. He mentioned that he also could not fit his

truck in his garage because of the height, and that he would like to put an extension on his home to cover his truck, opining that there was not an issue with it being there.

There being no one else who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Commr. Campione opined that since the HOA had reviewed this, they had taken into consideration the concerns of line of sight, and visually blocking others, noting that they had voted unanimously to approve it.

Commr. Sabatini stated that he would vote for it, and opined that even though change was difficult, not being able have one's vehicle shaded was serious. He opined that it was far enough away from the road that it would not be a substantial factor, and noted that the HOA approved it. He commented that even though he had some concerns, they were outweighed by the significance of someone wanting to invest in and improve their own home and enjoy their lives in Lake County.

Commr. Campione opined that the length of the driveway was longer than most, being on a curve, and that this may have gone into the decision by the HOA.

Commr. Morris commented that he was glad that the applicant went to the HOA to get permission.

Commr. Campione opined that the HOA would take into account some of the concerns that were expressed, and that it looked like the driveway was long enough that it would not impact someone else being able to get out of their property, noting that she tried to err on the side of letting people use their property.

Commr. Morris opined that the HOA was for the betterment of the community and to do what was best for the community.

Commr. Campione opined that the HOA would ensure that things were not being done that would bring down the community, and that things were being done that would protect the community.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Tab 1, Variance Case # PZ2026-58, Alsept Property.

<u>LOVE PROPERTY</u>

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that variance case # PZ2025-344, Love Property, was a variance to allow a driveway with an irregular setback, between four and zero feet along the western property line, in lieu of the required five feet to ensure proper stormwater drainage, and that the location was 25306 Carnoustie Drive in the Mt. Plymouth area. He explained that they were replacing an existing concrete driveway with a paver driveway, and that they were requesting to go right up to the property line. He commented that staff had reviewed this, and that even though the Public Works Department had objections to this because of the lack of a five-foot setback and the preservation of stormwater drainage, they had outlined some conditions that staff would follow during construction if approved, including swale improvements, drainage conveyance, and sloping of the driveway.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that they were taking this from pervious to impervious.

Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that this was still considered an impervious area; however, they were still within their impervious surface ratio allowance.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Mr. Eric Love, the property owner, related that they were removing the existing driveway which was damaged with cracks, and that they were replacing it back to the exact setbacks with no exceptions.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Tab 2, Variance Case # PZ2025-344, Love Property.

GIFFORD POOL

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that variance case # PZ2026-101, Gifford Pool, was a variance to construct a pool, a pool deck, and an associated pool screen enclosure five feet from the rear property line in lieu of the required 10 feet, and that the location of the property was 36729 Alaqua Court in the City of Eustis area. He mentioned that this property current abutted a golf course with a golf ball retrieval easement on the property that was 10 feet wide, and that the encroachment on that easement had been reviewed and approved by the architectural review board of the HOA, noting that they had no issues with it.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Tab 3, Variance Case # PZ2026-101, Gifford Pool.

ESCOBEDO PROPERTY

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that variance case # PZ2025-375, Escobedo Property, was a variance to create two lots through a minor lot split process where the easement that led to the parcels was 10 feet wide in lieu of the required 50-foot easement, and that the location of the property was at 24925 Olmac Road in the Sorrento area. He pointed out that this request had been reviewed by the Office of Fire Rescue, who were not in support of this variance request, and that even though the development order included certain provisions for the property owner to maintain clearance of the 10 foot wide easement to ensure emergency access, this did not erase the fact that the Office of Fire Rescue had objected to allowing additional housing there with this limited access easement; additionally, staff had received an objection from the property owner across the street who was opposed to the variance. He displayed an aerial showing the access from CR 437, and noted that the easement became narrow at Olmac Road to about 10 feet of clearance.

Commr. Sabatini inquired what the hardship was.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that they were splitting the lot into two, and that there was not a hardship.

Commr. Sabatini relayed his understanding that the report said something about not being able to build a home, and that he would like to hear from the applicant how the hardship applied.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that there currently was a home there, and that they wanted to build a second home; however, the difficulty already existed for the existing home.

Commr. Smith wondered if there was another way for the fire department to gain access to the parcels, and relayed his understanding that there was a road north of there.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Mr. Alberto Escobedo, the applicant, asked for the Board to approve the variance, and explained that since his family lived on the 10 acre parcel, they wanted to split it into two because his family was getting larger. He mentioned that because they all took the same road, they would not add any more traffic, and that it was a dirt road with some curves, noting that if the fire department brought a large truck, it would not fit unless it made a wide turn onto the property. He stated that they loved living on this property, and that they had many animals. He commented that he wanted to build his home on the first parcel for himself, his wife, and his kids, and that the rest of the family would live in the house that was there currently.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that this was for his family, and questioned why an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) would not apply here.

Mr. Fitzgerald opined that the applicant could apply for an ADU; however, this was not the application they received.

Mr. Escobedo remarked that they wanted to leave the current home for his mother, and that he wanted to have his own home.

Commr. Smith expressed concern about the access to the fire department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), opining that ambulances would not be able to get there. He stated that he did not understand why it was necessary to split the parcel instead of using what was already available, such as building an ADU.

Commr. Morris inquired who took care of the road.

Mr. Escobedo answered that all the residents that lived on Olmac Road took care of it, and said that when they first moved in, he and his brothers had to fill in a large hole, noting that it was not a County maintained road.

Chief Michael Vitta, Division Chief/Fire Marshal for the Office of Fire Rescue, commented that he did a road evaluation for the subject property, and that because of a couple of pinch points, it would be difficult for the fire department to access. He added that at the corners, the turning radius was very tight, and that firetrucks would not be able to get back there.

Commr. Campione questioned if they could get back there currently if there was a fire on that property.

Chief Vitta opined that without more room, they would be denting and scratching some things to get there; additionally, he indicated concern about the vertical clearance, noting that the tree cover would have to be lifted. He mentioned that the evaluation was done about one year prior.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that the issues included the turning radius and the branches, and she expressed concern about the safety of adding another residence in that area.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the ADU would be the best option.

Commr. Campione commented that the Board would not be able to deny an ADU; however, the question was whether he could create a separate lot. She asked what the limitation was for the size of an ADU.

Ms. Marsh replied that it would be 70 percent of the existing structure or 1,200 square feet, whichever was greater.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that as far as creating an additional living area, Mr. Escobedo could build a house up to 1,200 square feet or up to 70 percent of the existing unit.

Mr. Escobedo commented that since the house was about 1,500 square feet, he could only build an ADU that was 1,200 square feet, and that he wanted to have his own personal home and keep the rest of his family on the existing property, noting that he understood the safety issue.

Chief Vitta stated that there were other alternatives, such as adding a residential sprinkler system.

Commr. Campione opined that even though this was expensive, it was a valid option and would address the fire issue, and that it would be a building code requirement if the variance was granted with that as a condition.

Commr. Smith made a motion to deny the variance because Mr. Escobedo could do an ADU instead of splitting the property and possibly selling it to another individual.

Commr. Sabatini seconded the motion, noting that this was because of the fire issue and the possibility of an ADU. He commented that if Mr. Escobedo wanted to come back with a sprinkler system plan on the front end and explore other options, then he would be more open minded.

Commr. Morris opined that it would be better for the applicant to withdraw and come back with those plans.

Commr. Campione opined that it would be better for the Board to postpone this item to a date certain, and that Mr. Escobedo could then explore whether using a sprinkler system was something that was feasible for him, noting that this would keep him from having to pay the fee again and start over at the beginning of the process.

Commr. Parks asked if this would include the lot split.

Commr. Campione answered that this was the request, and opined that if he explored it and decided that he was willing to spend the additional funding on a sprinkler system, then the application could be changed to include this as a condition.

Commr. Parks inquired if it would be an ADU, opining that the lot split was the other issue.

Commr. Campione clarified that Mr. Escobedo wanted to have separate lots so that he had his own parcel, and that the question was whether he would be willing to spend the additional funds associated with a sprinkler system.

Commr. Parks opined that the lot split was an issue, and that even though the intent was for his mother to live there, this lot could be sold as an additional unit at some point.

Commr. Smith remarked that he had an issue with the lot split, opining that the applicant could do an ADU.

Commr. Sabatini mentioned that he would have an issue if it was a small acreage; however, this was 10 acres.

Commr. Campione commented that if Mr. Escobedo was willing to spend the funds for the sprinkler system so they could have two family members living near each other with their own properties, then she was in favor of the separate home ownership.

Commr. Sabatini withdrew his second.

Commr. Morris opined that it would be better for Mr. Escobedo to see if he could afford to install the sprinkler system and for the Board to give him time to do that, and that the lot split could be dealt with at that time.

Commr. Smith stated that he was in favor with Mr. Escobedo exploring that option and bringing it back when he was ready.

Commr. Parks questioned if one could get a variance on the ADU square footage requirement, and Ms. Marsh indicated that this was possible. Commissioner Parks opined that this may be an option to explore, and that even though there was much acreage, the lot split was a larger issue to consider.

Commr. Morris asked if staff could help Mr. Escobedo through the process.

Commr. Campione inquired how much time should be given.

Ms. Marsh replied that this could be done at the October 6, 2026 BCC meeting so that he did not have to pay for advertising costs again.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board tabled Tab 4, Variance Case # PZ2025-375, Escobedo Property, to the October 6, 2026 BCC meeting.

REPORTS

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

COMMISSIONER SABATINI – DISTRICT 1

AMENDMENT 3 BALLOT LANGUAGE

Commr. Sabatini relayed that a judge in the Amendment 3 ballot language case ordered that it be rewritten, and noted that the Florida Sheriffs Association was against it.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that there was a 10-day period that the Attorney General could rewrite it, noting that it could be appealed.

Commr. Smith commented that this was a discussion during the Canvassing Board meeting regarding whether there would be time to rewrite it.

COMMISSIONER MORRIS – DISTRICT 5

CANVASSING BOARD

Commr. Morris, who was serving on the Canvassing Board, asked residents to fill out the ovals on the voting ballots correctly, opining that it could be difficult to determine who was being voted for.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation to Commissioner Morris for doing that so that this process could continue to move forward.

Commr. Smith remarked that he was also on the Canvassing Board with Commissioner Morris, and said that he was impressed by the way the elections in Lake County were being handled. He mentioned that they spent four hours on the previous Monday going over the processes and testing, opining that it was enlightening. He said that he was glad that he was doing it, and opined that it would be an opportunity for everybody, noting that votes were taken seriously in Lake County.

Commr. Campione recalled that in prior years, there were some elections that were one or two votes difference, and that the Canvassing Board had done much hand counting and oversight.

COMMISSIONER CAMPIONE – CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 4

BRITT ROAD PRESS RELEASE

Commr. Campione commented that there was a press release about Britt Road, and that work had begun on the road, opining that they had made much progress. She stated that she was glad to see this happening, and hoped that the work would go quickly.

Commr. Sabatini inquired if there were time estimates.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that the timeline showed that was in October 2026, opining that there was much that had to happen along the way to ensure that all the drainage was exactly the way it needed to be.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

NATIONAL COAST GUARD DAY

Commr. Smith said that it was National Coast Guard Day.

Commr. Campione mentioned that the Lake County Supervisor of Elections was a U.S. Coast Guard veteran.

Commr. Smith said that it was also National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

_____
LESLIE CAMPIONE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

_____
GARY J COONEY, CLERK