PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING
OCTOBER 7, 2026
7:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair:	Dianna Carneal
Vice Chair:	Maria Pitts
Planning Commission Members:	Myra Dickinson
	David Hammond
	Sandra Hill
Assistant Town Manager	
Zoning Administrator:	James Knighton
Secretary:	Patsy K. Scates

VISITORS

Jamie Gomes	Herb Sebren
Caroline "Lynn" Amos	Denise Hammond
Bill Woodhouse	Straton Beamer
Cheryl Evans	Warren Evans

A Public Hearing of the Planning Commission was held on October 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Tappahannock Municipal Building. The hearing was advertised in the Rappahannock Times for two weeks on September 23, 2026, and September 30, 2026, as required by Title 15-2-2204 of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended.

The purpose of the public hearing was to provide an opportunity for the citizens of Tappahannock to voice their opinion regarding the following item.

An application from Bareford GMC requesting to rezone lots known as tax parcel 32B (20) Parcels 75, 76, 76 A and 76B. The lots are approximately 0.73 acres and are located at the 500 block of Dangerfield St. in the Town of Tappahannock. The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from R-3 Town Residential to CG-2General Commercial.

Said application has been submitted as per Section 22-225 through Section 22-228 of the Tappahannock Zoning Ordinance.

CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Carneal called the meeting to order.

Chair Carneal stated the purpose of the meeting and recognized Assistant Town Manager Knighton.

BAREFORD GMC REZONE REQUEST

Assistant Town Manager James Knighton presented a rezoning request submitted by Bareford Ball, Inc., for four parcels totaling approximately 0.73 acres in the 500 block of Dangerfield Street. The applicant is requesting that the property be rezoned from R-3 Town Residential to CG-2 General Commercial to allow for additional vehicle parking and storage associated with the business.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton reviewed the Town's Comprehensive Plan, noting that while the property is currently designated for town-scale residential use, the proposed rezoning supports the Town's economic development goals by encouraging business growth and expansion. However, he acknowledged that the change to commercial zoning would increase the intensity of land use and could raise compatibility concerns with surrounding residential properties.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton advised that the applicant submitted voluntary proffers intended to minimize potential impacts on neighboring properties. He advised these include installing a Type C buffer yard and fencing along Dangerfield Street, limiting lighting poles to 20 feet in height, requiring full-cutoff lighting, and restricting numerous commercial uses otherwise permitted under CG-2 zoning. He advised the primary intended use would be vehicle storage, with limited movement of vehicles for cleaning, display, or other business purposes.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton also reviewed potential fiscal, transportation, and environmental impacts. He estimated assessed land value could increase from $93,400 to $125,000 following rezoning and development, excluding improvements. He advised no significant additional public safety costs are anticipated. He reported that VDOT indicated that its previous comments remain unchanged and that a complete site plan would be required for further review. He advised that the property is located within the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Resource Management Area but is outside designated FEMA flood hazard zones.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton concluded that while the rezoning represents an increase in land-use intensity, the applicant's voluntary proffers demonstrate an effort to address compatibility concerns and reduce potential impacts on surrounding properties. He noted that the request generally supports the Comprehensive Plan's economic development objectives, although its consistency with residential land-use goals remains open to interpretation and additional environmental, transportation, and utility impacts would be evaluated during the site plan review process if the rezoning is approved.

Commission Member Hill stated that since the proffers are voluntary and if the applicant is approved are they still required to honor the proffers or can they change their mind.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton advised that once the proffers are accepted as part of the approval of the application it becomes zoning law for that property and the only way they can be removed is through a public hearing. He advised if the property is sold then the proffers would go with the sale of the property.

Chair Carneal expressed concerns regarding the potential fiscal impact of rezoning residential property for use as a parking lot, noting that the property's value could be higher if it remained residential.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton explained that his fiscal impact analysis was based on the proposed use rather than hypothetical future developments. He acknowledged that more intensive commercial use could generate greater tax revenue but emphasized that the current proposal was for a parking lot.

Chair Carneal also questioned whether the proposed expansion would result in additional employment.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that Mr. Ball had submitted an economic impact statement outlining potential employment and economic benefits associated with the expansion and could provide further details.

Chair Carneal recognized Carter Ball, Bareford GMC.

Carter Ball, Bareford GMC stated that they are a family-owned business who is in need of space. He stated that they are asking for the Commission Members to consider rezoning the parcels from R-3 to GC2 with proffers. He asked the commission members to keep in mind what land use is currently in use and is compatible with his proposed surrounding parcel. He used June Parker Oil Company as an example. He reminded the commission members that they rezoned the Parker's lot for commercial use (which is close to his parcels).

Chair Carneal corrected Mr. Ball and advised that the June Parker parcel request was rezoned to correct a zoning map error. She stated that a public hearing was held because the planning commission had to go through the formality of correcting the zoning map error.

Carter Ball presented additional information in support of the rezoning request, emphasizing its alignment with the Town of Tappahannock's Comprehensive Plan, economic development goals, and efforts to minimize impacts on surrounding residential properties.

Carter Ball explained that the proposed rezoning supports the Comprehensive Plan's objectives of expanding the Route 360/17 commercial corridor, promoting existing businesses, attracting higher-paying jobs, and strengthening the Town's economic base. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan identifies undeveloped properties along the commercial corridor as opportunities for future development.

Carter Ball addressed neighborhood concerns by proposing several measures, including required 15-foot landscaped buffer yards, additional fencing and landscaping along Dangerfield Street, elimination of access to the northern alley, and restrictions on lighting. He also offered to prohibit most uses otherwise permitted under CG-2 zoning, including vehicle repair, fuel sales, car washes, and auto body services. He emphasized that these measures were intended to protect neighboring residential properties and prevent additional traffic on Dangerfield Street.

Carter Ball explained that the dealership's existing parking and service areas are congested, creating potential traffic and safety concerns. He stated the proposed expansion would provide additional vehicle storage and improve traffic circulation within the dealership. He stated that the properties were purchased in poor condition and that redevelopment would improve the appearance of the surrounding area.

Carter Ball stated that regarding economic impact he reported that the dealership's average employee salary was approximately $86,146, compared to the Town's median income of $37,695. He stated that the business currently supports more than a dozen higher-paying local jobs and that the proposed expansion could create up to six additional positions. He explained that it would allow the ability to accommodate approximately thirty additional vehicles which could generate an estimated $500,000 in additional monthly revenue, potentially increasing the Town's gross receipts tax revenue.

Carter Ball addressed housing concerns, stating that the property owner maintains other residential rental properties in the area but determined that the two properties were not suitable for rental use in their

existing condition. He reminded the commission members that when he was before the commission members previously, he had letters of support from local business owners.

Commission Member Pitts asked why the properties weren't rented when they were brought several years ago.

Carter Ball stated that after the properties were purchased it was inspected and determined by the contractor that it was not practicable.

Commission Member Hammond asked for clarification regarding the average salary at Bareford GMC and inquired about the median income for comparison.

Carter Ball emphasized that the company provides high-paying, professional employment opportunities in Tappahannock, noting that technicians can earn six-figure salaries. He clarified that the company's average salary is not inflated by a single highly paid position but reflects competitive wages across its workforce. He expressed pride in the company's ability to provide skilled, high-tech jobs within the community.

Commission Member Hammond asked Mr. Ball if there was a reason he was using vinyl fence material instead of masonry material. He asked if the type of material would make a difference in muffling the sounds.

Carter Ball stated that it was typical to use vinyl fence material.

There was some discussion regarding the fence material. There was some discussion regarding whether the parking lot would be gravel or blacktop and what would be the best way to reduce the sounds that may come from the parking lot if approved.

Carter Ball stated that it would be part of the site plan, but it would be gravel, but they would like to blacktop in the future.

Commission Member Hammond asked Mr. Ball if the light poles were going to be twenty feet in height was correct.

Carter Ball stated that the light poles will be designed so that no light will spill into the adjacent neighbor's property.

Commission Member Pitts asked Mr. Ball if he had conservations with his neighbors regarding this request.

Carter Ball stated that he has had conversations with his neighbors and there were concerns but he reported he has made attempts to mitigate those concerns.

Chair Carneal questioned the proposed parking expansion, noting that the application states the additional parking area would accommodate approximately 30 vehicles to support a larger inventory of new and pre-owned vehicles, while also improving parking access for service customers. She requested clarification on how the additional parking would serve both purposes and whether vehicles currently parked elsewhere on the dealership property would be relocated to the proposed expanded area.

Carter Ball clarified that the proposed parking lot expansion would accommodate approximately thirty additional vehicles beyond the dealership's current capacity, although the lot itself could hold significantly more. He noted by relocating inventory vehicles to the expanded lot, congestion in the existing parking areas would be reduced, allowing for additional parking and improved accessibility for service department customers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jamie Gomes expressed opposition to the proposed rezoning of residential properties located directly behind her home. She explained that her family already experiences impact from the dealership's existing commercial operations, including traffic congestion, tractor-trailer deliveries, vehicle washing, and vehicles entering and exiting the service bays. She expressed concern that converting the neighboring residential properties into a gravel parking area with fencing and lighting would extend commercial activity further into the residential neighborhood, potentially increasing traffic, noise, and disturbances behind her home. While acknowledging the need for businesses to grow, she stressed the importance of preserving boundaries between commercial and residential areas. She urged the Commission to consider the long-term impacts on surrounding families and property owners and recommended that the properties retain their residential zoning.

Caroline "Lynn" Amos expressed strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of four residential parcels, citing concerns about property maintenance, neighborhood safety, and quality of life. She described the deteriorating condition of the two existing homes, including overgrown vegetation, debris, damaged screens, and trash, and questioned why the properties had not been rehabilitated, particularly given the town's identified need for housing. She referenced the Town's Zoning Ordinance, which is intended to promote public health, safety, and general welfare, and raised concerns about lighting shining into neighboring bedrooms, dust from gravel parking areas, increased noise, inadequate landscaping maintenance, and traffic hazards caused by vehicle carriers parked along Dangerfield Street. She asked for the request be denied.

Bill Woodhouse asked for the request to be denied.

Cherly Evans expressed strong opposition to the proposed rezoning from R-3 Residential to CG-2 General Commercial, stating that commercial expansion would disrupt the character and stability of the surrounding residential neighborhood. She disputed the applicant's claim that the properties are surrounded by commercial uses, noting that the former dentist's office and nearby apartment buildings are residentially zoned. She also referenced the Town Council's unanimous decision in February 2026 to correct the zoning of 524 Dangerfield Street from CG-2 to R-3. She emphasized that the alley has historically served as the boundary between commercial development along Route 17 and the residential neighborhood. She cited the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, which encourage commercial development in appropriate areas while protecting residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment, excessive traffic, noise, lighting, and other disruptions.

Cherly Evans maintained that the proposed rezoning is inconsistent with the Town's planning goals and that the applicant must demonstrate how the rezoning would benefit the community rather than primarily serve private business interests.

Herb Sebren suggested using the forty-acre lot next to Lowes Home Improvement to relocate the business or for vehicle storage.

Denise Hammond expressed opposition to rezoning the four residential parcels to commercial use, emphasizing the importance of preserving residential zoning and planning for Tappahannock's future housing needs. She referenced discussions from a recent town hall meeting, and she noted the need for additional affordable housing and suggested that vacant or deteriorating properties could be rehabilitated to provide housing opportunities. She pointed out that the parcels have historically been zoned residential and could support residential use again in the future. She raised concerns that changing the zoning to commercial would constitute encroachment into an established residential neighborhood and could encourage further commercial expansion. She urged the Planning Commission to consider the long-term impact on the town's residential areas and requested that the four parcels retain their current residential zoning.

Straton Beamer expressed opposition to the proposed rezoning, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a clear boundary between residential and commercial properties to protect the neighborhood. Straton Beamer questioned whether the two existing houses were beyond repair and suggested that restoring them for residential use could provide additional tax revenue to the Town. She also raised concerns regarding what he described as ongoing zoning violations, unauthorized vehicle parking, poor property maintenance, and blocked streets and alleys associated with Bareford GMC.

Straton Beamer questioned whether the proposed parking expansion would actually alleviate existing traffic and parking issues or primarily serve as additional vehicle inventory space. She requested clarification on the number of parking spaces proposed and expressed concerns about the dealership's ability to maintain the property based on past conditions. She concluded by urging the Commission to preserve the residential zoning designation and prevent further commercial encroachment into the neighborhood.

Warren Evans spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning, expressing concerns about the potential impacts of expanding commercial activity into an established residential neighborhood. He stated that the proposed vehicle storage lot would increase traffic congestion and safety hazards due to car carriers, service vehicles, and the movement of additional vehicles, particularly near busy intersections. He also raised concerns about the safety of children, bicyclists, and pedestrians. He emphasized that increased noise from vehicles and backup alarms, lighting from 15- to 20-foot poles, and dust from the gravel lot would negatively affect residents' quality of life. He further expressed concern that the proximity of commercial operations to neighboring homes would reduce residential property values.

Warren Evans argued that the proposed rezoning would prioritize private commercial interests over the well-being of the surrounding residential community. He concluded by requesting that the Planning Commission deny the rezoning application.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton asked if the commission members had any questions or any comments to clarify.

Commission Member Hill asked how many light poles would be installed and if the light poles would produce any sounds.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton indicated that the new lights have LED lighting so there should be no sound and the number of light poles will be determined by the site plan.

Commission Member Hill asked if there was any inquiry about how many accidents or what type of accidents were around that area.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated he did not request that information.

There was much discussion regarding the possible number of vehicles that could be stored on the proposed lots.

Commission Member Dickinson questioned Bareford GMS's long-term expansion plans, asking whether the proposed rezoning would provide sufficient space for future business growth or if additional expansion requests might arise within the next two to three years.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton emphasized the need to keep the discussion focused on the four parcels currently being considered for rezoning rather than speculating about future requests.

Commission Member Dickinson explained that understanding the dealership's long-term plans would help inform the rezoning decision.

Carter Ball responded that the dealership's 80-year history in business demonstrates its longevity and ability to adapt and grow over time.

Chair Carneal asked for any other comments or questions.

ADJOURNED

There being none, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Dianna Carneal

Dianna Carneal, Chair

Patsy K. Scates

Patsy K. Scates, Secretary