

**Highlands County
Planning & Zoning Commission/Local Planning Agency
Tuesday, March 10, 2026, REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:25 p.m., Tuesday, March 10, 2026, in the County Commissioners' Board Room located in the Highlands County Board of County Commission Chambers at 600 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida.

An announcement was made by Chair Hunnicutt to silence all cell phones and other audible electronic devices.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken with the following members present:

Mrs. Ezell, Mr. Boring, Mrs. Hunnicutt, Mr. Brown, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Youngman, Chairperson.

Alternate Voting Members present: Mrs. Sclater.

Alternate Non-Voting members present: Mr. Drewery.

Staff present: Mrs. King, Planning and Zoning Technician II; Mrs. Navarrete, Planner I; Ms. Collinsworth, Planner I; Mrs. Culpepper, Planning and Zoning Supervisor; Mrs. Kramer, Planning and Zoning Manager; Mrs. Sauls, Development Services Director; and Mrs. Sutphen, County Attorney.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved. **Motion carried 7-0.**

4. SWEARING IN OF WITNESSES

County staff who had testimony were sworn in.

5. OLD BUSINESS

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. P&Z 2187 - DENNIS COULTER TRUST C/O DANA RIDDELL & JEFF KENNEDY

An approximate 10.09-acre parcel identified by Parcel Identification No. [C-19-33-29-A00-0031-0000](#).

The Applicant requested a change to the Official Zoning Atlas to change the zoning designation from AU Agricultural District to I-2 CU Industrial District with a Conditional Use, the conditional use being a slaughterhouse and meat

processing facility, with accessory uses directly supporting the operation. After review of the application as proposed, staff made a determination that a change to AU CU would be more appropriate.

Mrs. Hunnicutt read the request into the record. Ms. Collinsworth confirmed proof of advertising requirements and noted there were 34 letters received in favor and 2 letters received in objection to the request. Mr. Youngman noted ex parte communications, stating he visited the property and spoke with the Coulter Family regarding general information about the location and what the project looks like. The Applicant, Luke Dickens, and Agents, Dana Riddell and Jeff Kennedy, were present and sworn in. Mr. Dickens and Ms. Riddell gave a description of the development. Discussion ensued amongst the Commission members and the Applicant and Agents regarding how the water would be treated to avoid odor and why the slaughterhouse excludes the slaughter of poultry. The Applicant clarified that they would have to employ an environmental agency to treat the water with solutions to sanitize the water in order to avoid noxious odors and also stated that per USDA regulations, the slaughter of poultry is not permitted to be on the same kill floor as beef. Commission members had questions related to the retail operation aspect of the development. The Applicant and Agents confirmed that the retail operations will include a hot food component and the retail store will sell items associated with the operations (i.e. chips and drinks with cooked meat, spices and seasonings for meat, etc.). Discussion ensued amongst Commission members and staff regarding the timeframe constriction and whether Code Enforcement has the capacity to enforce this type of development. Staff noted that the time frame was a condition placed to avoid nuisances for the community if the Commission agrees to the condition and confirmed that Code Enforcement will be able to enforce the conditions.

Chair Hunnicutt opened the floor for public comment. There were five members of the public that spoke in favor of the request, noting the importance of the development to the agricultural community and the benefits of local meat. Three members of the public spoke in objection to the request with concerns about increased traffic, noxious odors, noise, and future expansion.

Motion made by Mrs. Ezell and seconded by Mr. Youngman to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve and adopt by Resolution, P&Z 2187, changing the Official Zoning Atlas for an approximate 10.09 acres from AU Agricultural District to AU CU Agricultural District with a Conditional Use, the conditional use being a slaughterhouse and meat processing facility, with accessory uses directly supporting the operation, referencing the mandatory findings of fact and becoming effective as provided by law.

Upon roll call, all members voted yes. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- 7. KNOWLEDGE QUEST**
- 8. CITIZENS NOT ON THE AGENDA**
- 9. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT**
- 10. BOARD MEMBERS**
- 11. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING - APRIL 14, 2026**
- 12. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Angie King
Planning and Zoning Technician II