



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

City Council Public Hearing Agenda

December 15, 2025, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Chambers, Dahlongega City Hall

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision - Dahlongega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlongega, a City of Excellence, will provide quality services through ethical leadership and fiscal stability, in full partnership with the people who choose to live, work, and visit. Through this commitment, we respect and uphold our rural Appalachian setting to honor our thriving community of historical significance, academic excellence, and military renown.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Ordinance 2025-10 regarding REZN 25-09 Rezoning: Laurel Hackinson, applicant and property owner, seeks rezoning from B-3 (Historical Business District), Conditional (use limited to a quilt shop) to B-3 (Historical Business District) for 0.52 acre fronting on the northwest side of Warwick Street and the southwest side of Church Street (Map/Parcel D07/056) (315 Church Street). Proposed use: Multi-family residential/short-term rental and any historic business use (remove existing condition limiting the property to a quilt shop).
Doug Parks, City Attorney

ADJOURNMENT

Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlongega will be an open, honest, and responsive city that balances preservation and growth and delivers quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of its resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlongega commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare...for ALL!



Agenda Memo

DATE: 12/15/2025
TITLE: REZN 25-09
PRESENTED BY: Doug Parks, City Attorney
PRIORITY Strategic Priority - Communication

AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION

Ordinance 2025-10 regarding REZN 25-09 Rezoning: Laurel Hackinson, applicant and property owner, seeks rezoning from B-3 (Historical Business District), Conditional (use limited to a quilt shop) to B-3 (Historical Business District) for 0.52 acre fronting on the northwest side of Warwick Street and the southwest side of Church Street (Map/Parcel D07/056) (315 Church Street). Proposed use: Multi-family residential/ short-term rental and any historic business use (remove existing condition limiting the property to a quilt shop).

HISTORY/PAST ACTION

None.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval.

SUGGESTED MOTIONS

Motions to approve when action is to be taken.

ATTACHMENTS

Consulting Planner's report.

CONSULTING PLANNER'S REPORT

TO: Dahlonge Planning Commission and City Council
c/o Doug Parks, City Attorney

FROM: Jerry Weitz, Consulting City Planner

DATE: November 17, 2025

SUBJECT: **REZN 25-09:** Rezoning from B-3 (Historical Business District), Conditional (use limited to a quilt shop) to B-3 (Historical Business District)

PUBLIC HEARINGS: December 2, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. (Planning Commission)
December 15, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. (City Council)

APPLICANT: Laurelanne Hackinson

OWNER(S): Laurelanne Hackinson

LOCATION: Fronting on the northwest side of Warwick Street and the southwest side of Church Street (315 Church Street)

PARCEL #: D07/ 056

ACREAGE: 0.52

EXISTING USE: Retail store and home

PROPOSED USE: Multi-family rental/ short-term rental

SURROUNDING LAND USE/ZONING:

NORTH: (fronting on Hawkins St. and Church St.): Detached, single-family dwelling, R-1

EAST: (across Church St.): Detached single-family dwelling and church, R-1

SOUTH: (across Warwick St.): Detached single-family dwellings, B-3

WEST: Detached single-family dwelling, R-1

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval**

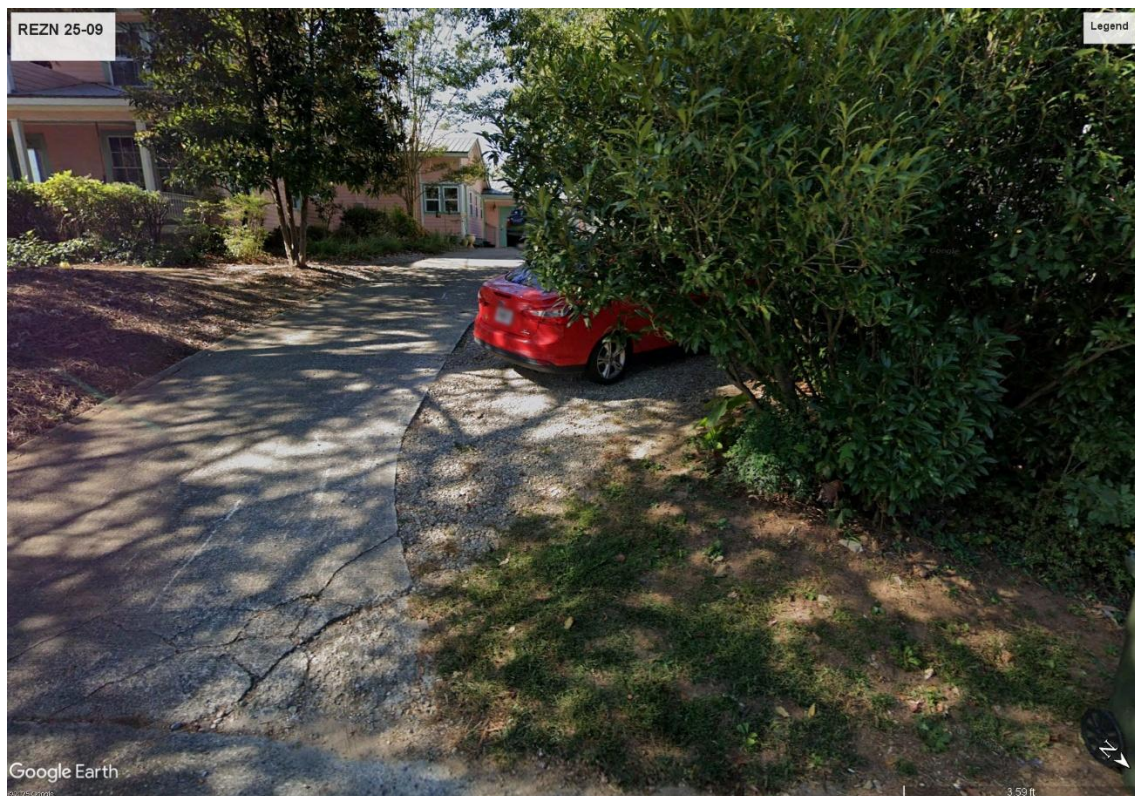


Tax Map/Aerial Photograph of Property (blue outline)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The applicant seeks to remove an existing condition of zoning approval that limits the use of the subject property to a quilt shop. The specific request is for rezoning from B-3 Conditional to B-3, either unrestricted as it pertains to uses, or for multiple uses including short-term rental, long-term rentals, offices, and retail uses. There is no boundary survey provided. There is no site plan provided in the application. A detailed letter of intent is provided which also addresses zoning criteria stated in the rezoning application.

The subject property has a dwelling which is 3,754 square feet according to the records of the Lumpkin County tax assessor and is classified as residential.



Short-term rentals are regulated per Article VIII of the Dahlonge zoning ordinance.

The purpose of the B-3 zoning district is in part to “protect and promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the old, historic, architecturally worthy structures in historic areas or neighborhoods which exhibit a distinct aspect of the community and which serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of the community, state or nation.” According to the tax record, the residential structure on the subject property was constructed in 1834. A wide variety of uses are permitted outright in B-3, including but not limited to all enclosed retail trade establishments, churches and schools, lodging, and all forms of multiple-family residential uses.

Per Chapter 109 of the Dahlonge City code, B-3 zoning districts are a part of the locally designated historic district (Sec. 109-21) and subject to provisions requiring certificates of appropriateness for material changes in appearance to buildings, structures, and grounds (Sec. 109-22). This is important in that changes to the property will be required to be reviewed and approved by the Dahlonge Historic Preservation Commission. There is thus less of a need for conditions of zoning approval addressing architectural compatibility.

ZONING CRITERIA

Section 2607 of the Dahlonge zoning ordinance articulates the criteria by which an application for rezoning should be evaluated. They are as follows:

1. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.
2. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.
3. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use that will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.
4. Whether the zoning proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, transportation plans, or other plans adopted for guiding development within the City of Dahlonge.
5. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of property that give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning or special use proposal.

Note: The Planning Commission and City Council may adopt the findings and determinations provided in this report as written (provided below), if appropriate, or it may modify them. The planning commission and city council may cite one or more of these in its own determinations, as it determines appropriate. The Planning

Commission and City Council may modify the language provided here, as necessary, in articulating its own findings. Or, the Planning Commission and City Council can reject these findings and make their own determinations and findings for one or more of the criteria as specified in the Dahlonga zoning ordinance and any additional considerations it determines appropriate.

1. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.

Finding: The subject property is diagonally across a street intersection from the central business district. B-3 zoning (unconditional) exists to the south of the property on lots developed with detached, single-family dwellings. The site is surrounded on the other three sides (north, east, and west) by detached single-family dwellings on properties zoned R-1. The subject property is already zoned B-3 (but with a zoning condition limiting the use), so the B-3 zoning is considered appropriate and suitable even though there is single-family use and R-1 zoning on three sides of the subject property.

2. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

Finding: Given the predominant use as single-family dwellings surrounding the subject property, certain uses could have some adverse impacts on them, depending on the exact use of the property and the amount and location of on-site parking, if added to accommodate certain uses as would be required by the zoning ordinance **(inconclusive)**. It is consulting planner's opinion that most if not all uses permitted in the B-3 zoning district can be compatible and appropriate, so long as they are conducted within the existing historic residential building. There is probably no need to make it a condition of zoning approval that all uses must be conducted within the existing historic building, because demolition of the historic building would require approval by the historic preservation commission and would appear highly unlikely to be granted given the age of the dwelling and its contribution to the overall historic character of the central business district and surroundings. If appropriate, the planning commission can recommend and city council can impose additional conditions to ensure compatibility; again, however, because a certificate of appropriateness would be required for material changes in appearance, those issues could be left to the preservation commission to decide.

Finding: Uses that would be appropriate to exclude on the subject property but that would otherwise be allowed in B-3 absent a use restriction via zoning condition are as follows: car wash, drive-through facility, outdoor automated teller machine, gasoline sales, parking garage, and appliance repair.

3. *Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use that will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.*

Finding: Impacts may vary considerably depending on the exact use established. Conversion to multiple family (e.g., apartments) could have some impacts on the school system but any such impacts are likely to be negligible at most. No major impact to utilities would be expected. Most uses permitted in B-3 would not cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets (***supports request***).

4. *Whether the zoning proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, transportation plans, or other plans adopted for guiding development within the City of Dahlenega.*

Finding: The subject property is within the “public square” character area established in the 2022 comprehensive plan. Preservation of existing structures in this character area is recommended in the description of the public square character area. Also, per the description, a wide range of uses are contemplated, including mixed use structures, a variety of residential uses, and commercial and institutional uses. The request is considered consistent with the character area designation of the comprehensive plan (***meets criterion/ supports request***).

5. *Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of property that give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning or special use proposal.*

Finding: Land uses can change over time, and though the subject property has had a specific commercial use operated within it for two decades per the applicant, there may be a need to change the use of the structure over time. Since the property is conditioned to a single use (quilt shop), the zoning does not permit the owner to change uses when conditions affecting the property also change, such as market trends, preferences of owner, etc. In consulting planner’s view the application to add a wider range of uses to the property’s zoning permission is appropriate (***supports request***).

CONCLUSION

Findings in this report support approval of the rezoning request. The city may consider the need for conditions of zoning approval as appropriate.

Letter of Intent for Rezoning Request

To: Dahlongega City Council

From: Laurelanne Hackinson

Subject: Request for Rezoning and Clause Removal – 315 Church St, Dahlongega, GA 30533

Date: 9/12/2025

Dear Members of the Dahlongega City Council,

I am writing to formally request the rezoning of my property located at 315 Church St from its current designation with a restrictive clause to **Historical Business**, allowing for **short-term rentals, long-term rentals, and any Historical business use**.

My property has a long-standing history of responsible business operation. For over 20 years, I ran a retail store, *Magical Threads*, which was permitted under the Historical Business zoning. However, a clause was added—restricting the use to a quilt store only. This clause has significantly limited the property's marketability and utility.

The proposed rezoning and clause removal will:

- Align with existing uses in the area, including nearby multi-family residences and commercial businesses.
- Preserve the historical integrity of the property while allowing adaptive reuse.
- Support Dahlongega's economic development goals by expanding business opportunities in the Historic District.
- Maintain neighborhood harmony, as confirmed by my closest neighbor, Jim Gribben, who supports the change.

I have a prospective buyer who has expressed interest in using the property as short term rentals and long term rentals, —all of which are compatible with the Historical Business designation and the character of the area.

I respectfully request the Council's approval to:

1. Remove the restrictive clause limiting the property to a quilt store.
2. Rezone the property to Historical Business with allowances for short-term and long-term rentals.

1. Existing uses and zoning of nearby property and whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect them:

The surrounding properties include a church, multi-family residences, and a long-standing commercial business operated from a garage. My property has operated as a retail business for over 20 years without negatively impacting neighbors. The proposed zoning aligns with existing uses and will not adversely affect the usability of nearby properties. My closest neighbor, Jim Gribben, supports the rezoning.

2. Extent to which property values are diminished by the current zoning restrictions:

The restrictive clause limiting the property to a quilt store significantly reduces its marketability and value. Removing this clause and allowing broader business and rental

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Letter of Intent (1 of 3)

uses will restore the property's full potential and align it with comparable properties in the Historical District.

3. Extent to which the destruction of property values promotes public welfare:

Restricting the property to a single type of business does not promote public welfare. In contrast, allowing flexible use—such as short term rentals, long term rentals, office space, bed and breakfast, or multi-family housing—will support economic growth, tourism, and housing diversity, all of which benefit the general welfare of Dahlongega.

4. Relative gain to the public vs. hardship to the property owner:

The public gains will increase business activity, tourism, and housing options. The hardship to me as the property owner is significant—limiting the sale and use of my property reduces its value and utility. Removing the clause and rezoning will balance public benefit with private rights.

5. Physical suitability of the property for current and proposed zoning:

The property is already suited for business use, having operated as a retail store. It includes separate living quarters, making it suitable for multi-family or rental use. Its location in the Historical District supports its continued and expanded use under Historical Business zoning.

6. Length of time the property has been vacant and changed conditions:

The property is currently on the market and has not been vacant. However, the interest from buyers in using it for varied purposes reflects changing conditions and demand in Dahlongega for flexible, mixed-use properties in the Historical District.

7. Zoning history of the property:

The property was previously zoned Historical Business and operated as “Magical Threads,” a quilt store. The clause limiting it to a craft business should be removed to reflect the original intent of historical business and allow broader use consistent with Historical Business zoning.

8. Potential burden on public infrastructure:

The proposed uses—short term rental, long term rentals, offices, bed and breakfast, or multi-family etc—will not place excessive burden on streets, utilities, or public services. The infrastructure already supports similar uses in the area, and the Historical District's oversight ensures responsible development.

9. Conformity with the comprehensive plan and city policies:

The City previously approved a retail business on the property, indicating alignment with city goals. Expanding permitted uses supports Dahlongega's vision for a thriving, diverse

downtown and aligns with the comprehensive plan's emphasis on economic development and historical preservation.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the growth and preservation of Dahlonega.

Sincerely,

Laurelanne Hackinson

706-429-7740

lolathyme@gmail.com

Letter of Intent (3 of 3)