



STAFF REPORT

HEARINGS: Planning & Zoning Commission: September 8, 2025
Board of County Commissioners: November 4, 2025

APPLICANT: Thomas Merendino and Rebecca Powell

FILE NUMBER: H-25-23

REQUEST: Rezoning from R-1C(Residential) to AR(Agricultural/Residential)

GENERAL LOCATION: Two (2) parcels, north and south side of Barnevelde Road between its eastern terminus of Pomp Parkway

PARCEL KEY NUMBER(S): 00882539, 00073761

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

The petitioner is requesting the rezoning of two (2) adjacent lots from R-1C (Residential) to AR (Agricultural/Residential). This rezoning would allow for gardening and composting, promoting environmental sustainability by reducing waste and supporting a healthier planet. Additionally, the petitioner plans to raise chickens and livestock, enabling the production of homegrown organic food that fosters a healthier diet, free from the additives and pesticides commonly found in commercially produced products. Each lot is 2.30 acres, totaling 4.6 acres combined.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Site Size: 4.6 acres

Surrounding Zoning;

Land Uses: North: AR (Agricultural/Residential); Single Family Residence
South: R-1C (Residential); Single Family Residence
East: AR (Agricultural/Residential); Undeveloped
R-1C (Residential); Single Family Residence
West: R-1C (Residential); Single Family Residence

Current Zoning: R-1C(Residential)

Future Land Use

Map Designation: Rural

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The petitioner shall be required to comply with all applicable Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Florida Department of Environmental Protection permitting requirements.

UTILITIES REVIEW

The Hernando County Utilities Department (HCUD) reviewed the petitioner's application and provided the following comments:

- Hernando County Utilities does not currently supply water or sewer service to these parcels.
- Water and sewer service are not available to these parcels.
- Hernando County Utilities has no objection to the zoning change from R-1C (Residential) to A/R (Agricultural Residential)

ENGINEERING REVIEW

The subject parcels are on the north and south side of Barnevelde Road between its eastern terminus of Pomp Parkway. The County Engineer has reviewed the petitioner's request and has no comments or objections.

LAND USE REVIEW

The permitted uses in the AR (Agricultural/Residential) district are:

(a) *All agricultural/residential districts:*

- i. Aquaculture
- ii. Grazing livestock at the rate of one mature animal and offspring less than one year of age, per acre.
- iii. Poultry and swine for home consumption maintained at least seventy-five (75) feet from adjacent property.
- iv. Horticultural specialty farms, including the cultivation of crops.
- v. Accessory structures related to the principal use of the land.
- vi. Pigeon aviaries with a maximum of 1,500 square feet of area devoted to housing pigeons, per acre.
- vii. Sales on the premises of permitted agricultural products produced on the premises: provided that where such products are sold from roadside stands, such stand shall be set back a safe distance from any public street right-of-way and shall provide for automobile access and off-street parking space in such a manner so as to not create an undue traffic hazard on the street on which such roadside stand is located.

(b) *Agricultural/residential:*

- i. Single-family dwellings.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

The subject property is located within the Residential Future Land Use classification on the adopted Future Land Use map. The Hernando County 2040 Comprehensive Growth Strategy Plan provides the principles for guiding land development activities in the County and describes the related programs and strategies that provide the overall guidance for implementing the Plan.

Future Land Use Element, Rural Category**Objective 1.04C**

The Rural Category allows agriculture, agricultural commercial, agri-industrial, recreation, agritourism and residential land uses of a rural character. Certain neighborhood commercial uses may be allowed subject to locational criteria and performance standards. Residential density is 0.1 dwelling units per gross acre (1 unit per ten gross acres) except where otherwise indicated by the strategies listed herein and incorporated into the land development regulations.

Strategy 1.04C(2) The Rural Category contains areas of predominately platted or divided lands which have a more dense development pattern and character of a rural residential or residential nature that are recognized by existing zoning designations which allow for infill in a manner consistent with the character of the area, but does not allow for expansion into areas designated with lower land use densities.

Strategy 1.04C(3) Notwithstanding the density limitations stated in Objective 1.04C the areas described as recognized infill areas herein may be allowed to infill at densities consistent with the availability of utility services and the existing zoning designations. An appropriate transition shall be maintained between rural/agricultural uses and recognized infill areas to protect the use and enjoyment of land and maintain appropriate development patterns. Specific areas and circumstances where the infill pattern is expected and where infill would allow for more efficient use of existing infrastructure are recognized by this strategy

Comments: The subject site is within the Rural land use designation; the permitted uses within the AR (Agricultural/Residential) district are consistent with the goals, objectives, and strategies of this land use designation.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The request for AR (Agricultural/Residential) zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and compatible with the surrounding land uses.

NOTICE OF APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY

The rezoning process is a land use determination and does not constitute a permit for either construction on, or use of, the property, or a Certificate of Concurrence. Prior to use of, or construction on, the property, the petitioner must receive approval from the appropriate County department(s) for the proposed use.

The granting of this land use determination does not protect the owner from civil liability for recorded deed restrictions which may exceed any county land use ordinances. Homeowner associations or architectural review committees require submission of plans for review and approval. The applicant for this land use request should contact the local association or the Public Records for all restrictions applicable to this property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend the Board of County Commissioners adopt a resolution approving the petitioner's request for a rezoning from R-1C (Residential) to AR (Agricultural/Residential) in accordance with the staff report.