

**CITY OF BERKELEY LAKE
4040 SOUTH BERKELEY LAKE ROAD
BERKELEY LAKE, GEORGIA 30096
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
FULL MINUTES
MARCH 11, 2026
7:15 PM**

Those in attendance at the meeting were as follows:

Commission Members: Dan Huntington
 Pekka Ignatius
 George Kaffezakis
 Rand Kirkus

City Officials: Leigh Threadgill - City Administrator

Citizens Present: 0

I. CALL TO ORDER

Huntington called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. A quorum of the commission along with City Administrator, Leigh Threadgill, were present at the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Huntington asked if there were any suggested changes to the agenda.

Kirkus moved to approve the agenda. Ignatius seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

III. MINUTES

1. Minutes of December 9, 2025

Ignatius moved to approve the minutes of the December 9th meeting. Kirkus seconded the motion, and all voted to approve the minutes.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a) PZV-26-01 – 490 Lakeshore Dr – Variance to Sec. 78-147(8) to reduce the septic system setback from the shoreline of Lake Berkeley to 50 feet

Huntington acknowledged the applicant and noted that he is a member of the planning and zoning commission and will be available to answer questions and then will be recused for the commission to discuss the request.

George Kaffezakis, 490 Lakeshore Dr, noted that this is proactive and he is here to answer questions. He explained that it is a slow-draining drain field and about a year ago there was seepage at the top of the septic tank. The tank was pumped and an attempt was made to jet the drainfield line. That didn't work, but nor has there been any additional spillage. Kaffezakis has looked into the history and it looks like the original drain field line was installed in the early 1960's is the drain field line. One septic tank was replaced in the late 70's and when the house was expanded a second tank was installed on the other side of the lot. It looks like the second tank was connected to the existing drain field without any expansion of the drain field line. It is unclear whether environmental health classifies the house as a 3-bedroom or 4-bedroom house. Since the drain field line is over 60 years old and slow draining and to clear up any lingering questions about whether a 3 or 4-bedroom house, Kaffezakis is installing 260 feet of a chambered drain field system. He could put it in the state required setback of 50 feet or pump the front of the house. Kaffezakis explained the hardship of installation in the front yard, and the tree removal that would be required to accommodate the project in the front yard. The best option is to request a variance to the setback from the lake to meet the 50-foot state setback from the lake, rather than the city's more restrictive 75-foot setback. And now the house will be property accredited for a 4-bedroom system.

Huntington asked if the drain field can't remain in the backyard and meet the 75-foot setback. Kaffezakis stated that the current failing drain field line doesn't meet the setback, but environmental health doesn't want the line to be replaced over a failing drain field line. Even if I tried to do that, I'd have specimen trees in the backyard that would have to go as well.

Huntington note that the hardship of just removing trees to me is a hardship but somewhat of a low bar for what we would call a hardship. Huntington wants to understand the hardship completely, because this seems like it de facto is changing the code from 75 feet to 50 feet. It is important to fully understand the hardship, so it doesn't seem like we're scratching our buddy's back.

Kaffezakis stated that variances have been granted to the septic system setback before down to 50 feet. Also, the draft unified development ordinance proposes a 50-foot setback to be adopted to be consistent with the environmental health standard.

Threadgill noted that preservation of trees is justification for granting a variance to the zoning ordinance as stated in the city's tree code. She further stated that the unified development ordinance is in draft form and there is no way to know what will happen through the public process, but it is unclear why the city would require a more restrictive setback than environmental health.

There was further discussion about why there is a discrepancy between the city and environmental health's setback.

Kaffeidakis noted that he has a large property and if he is constrained to meet the 75-foot setback, the smaller lots, which are numerous, are facing the same issue, and that should be considered in the UDO project.

There was discussion about the suitability of replacing a drain field in the same location. New septic requirements mandate a reserve drain field area for when the original drain field fails.

Kaffeidakis noted that it is also important to have the required drain field for a 4-bedroom house, which was not provided when the house was expanded to 4 bedrooms. This will bring the drain field line into conformance with environmental health standards for a 4-bedroom house, which will be more protective of the environment and water quality.

There was discussion about whether the variance could be smaller to change the setback from 75 feet to 55 feet or 60 feet. Environmental health is working with Kaffeidakis to layout the 260-foot drain field and both tanks will be connected to the new drain field.

Ignatius feels comfortable to stay consistent with the state limit, rather than come up with something that is intermittent between the city and state limits.

Kaffeidakis recused himself from the discussion regarding the request.

Huntington noted he had some concerns about using sound reasoning and not just because the code was perhaps going to change. Without a legitimate hardship this would be hard to grant, and the commissioners were in agreement that there is a valid hardship due to the required tree removal.

There was further discussion.

Ignatius made a motion to recommend approval of the variance as requested. Kirkus seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

b) Election of Chair

Huntington noted that he was willing to continue as chair.

Ignatius made a motion to elect Huntington to chair. Kaffeidakis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Election of Vice-chair

Kaffeidakis noted that he was willing to continue as vice-chair, but he will be out for four or five months. There was further discussion.

Full Minutes

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting

March 11, 2026

Page 3 of 4

Ignatius made a motion to elect Kirkus as vice-chair. Kaffezakis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d) Appointment of Secretary

Kaffezakis made a motion to appoint Leigh Threadgill as secretary. Kirkus seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no comments.

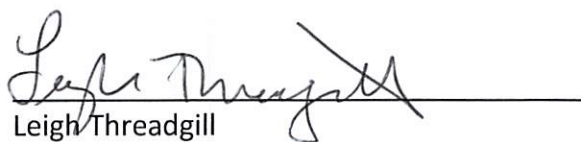
VII. DISCUSSION

There was brief discussion about the Unified Development Ordinance project.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Kirkus made a motion to adjourn. Ignatius seconded the motion. All were in favor and Huntington adjourned the meeting at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Leigh Threadgill
City Administrator

