

# Variations approved for distribution center

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Ten variations were approved for the Dollar General distribution site on Jackson Road.

The changes were approved Thursday by the Joint Development of Butts County and Spalding County.

"A lot of the items came up in the plan review," explained JDA Secretary Laura Hale Sistrunk, noting it was all approved by the Butts County Board of Appeals on Oct. 6.

The variations have to do with

landscaping, but also entrances, parking and compliance with the Butts County I-75 Overlay District, and are in part because of the existing wetlands on the site. The "front" of the building will not face Jackson Road but faces south to fit it within the site and not disturb the wetlands, according to the request from Dollar General.

Other variations allow for secondary buildings in the front — the side facing Jackson Road, and horizontal and vertical articulation, which will

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## VARIANCES

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be separated by paint colors on the side of the building facing Jackson Road.

The landscaping changes included leaving the existing trees in the wetlands areas, which exceed the size required for new plantings. There will not be plantings along the building, out of concerns about water getting under the foundation of the building and the parking lots, so instead additional trees will be planted along Jackson Road.

Trees will also be planted along the entire perimeter of the employee parking area, instead of island parking landscaping. Parking will be on all sides of the building — including along the side facing Jackson Road, to avoid disturbance of existing wetlands, according to the request from Dollar General, with variations granted for truck, employee and visitor parking.

The entrance variance allows for a combined entrance for trucks and employee and visitor non-truck traffic at the south entrance, with a second entrance, north of this one as a truck-traffic only exit. Both will be on Jackson Road.

The ordinance required separate truck entrances. Visitor and employee parking will be on the south portion of the site, with that traffic diverted off the main driveway truck traffic directed to dedicated truck lanes.

Truck maintenance and dispatch will be west of the main building, facing Jackson Road. All mechanical equipment will be on the roof, and not visible from Jackson Road, but will also be fenced in to screen from view, according to Butts County. Pursuant to the Butts County Unified Development Ordinance, aggrieved persons have 30 days from the Oct. 6 decision to appeal the decision in

Butts County Superior Court, which may affirm, overrule or modify in whole or in part the decision.

The site on the Butts/Spalding County line is subject to Butts County regulations per an intergovernmental agreement between Butts and Spalding counties, their respective development Authorities and the Joint Development Authority of Butts County and Spalding County. Dollar General is building an approximately 1,017,851 square-foot regional distribution center.

At Thursday's meeting, Sistrunk said construction remains on schedule, despite some blasting being necessary because of the rock on the site. She said there were no complaints about the blasting, only the dust, and water trucks are being used at the site now to keep the dust down.

Five of the JDA's eight members were present and voted unanimously to approve the variations. Those present with Sistrunk were Chairman Bryan Bush, Vice Chair Chuck Copeland, and members Tom Gardner and David Luckie.

Also at Thursday's meeting, the board approved financial statements, with a \$150,000 escrow check from the \$120 million bond sale deposited on June 29, and expenses paid for grant applications and consultants. The JDA account is at United Bank in Jackson, and as of Sept. 30, had a remaining balance of \$136,876.05.

The JDA also voted Thursday to pay \$4,000 for a full-page ad in an upcoming issue of Georgia Trend Magazine, in which the JDA will be featured. Luckie had suggested each development authority pay \$2,000 for the ad, but Copeland suggested the JDA pay the whole amount, after talking about the JDA disbursing any of the excess funds back to each county.

"This way each development authority doesn't have to have a called meeting just to vote for the expense," Copeland said. "It makes sense since it's the same pot of money, anyway."