



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

Growth Services

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**PLANNING & ZONING SECTION
STAFF REPORT**

P&ZC Date: 05/27/2026	BCC Date: 08/18/2026
Case Number:	260604SU
Plan Number:	PL SUP-000544-2026
Type of Case:	Special Use Permit: to allow alkaline hydrolysis for domestic animals and small livestock in a Community Business (B-2) Zone.
Owner	Solfan, LLC
Applicant	Paula Dempsey and Ted Stone
Street Address	19241 N US HWY 441, Reddick, FL, 32686
Parcel Number	02938-000-00
Property Size	±1.55- acres
Future Land Use	Employment Center (EC)
Zoning Classification	Community Business (B-2)
Overlay Zone/Scenic Area	Secondary Springs Protection Zone
Staff Recommendation	Approval with Conditions
P&ZC Recommendation	Approval as Conditioned
Project Planner	Sarah Wells
Related Case(s)	N/A

I. ITEM SUMMARY

Paula Dempsey and Ted Stone have filed an application for a Special Use Permit to request permission that would allow aquamation, a process using alkaline hydrolysis on deceased livestock and small animals, on a 1.55-acre, B-2 (Community Business) zoned parcel, which is owned by Solfan, LLC. Figure 1 is an aerial photograph showing the general location of the subject property. The Parcel Identification Number associated with the property is 02938-000-00, and the street address 19241 N US HWY 441, Reddick, Florida, 32686. The parcel is currently the site of the Orange Lake VFW post. The legal description is displayed in the deed included in the application (See Attachment A). The parcel is located outside of the Urban Growth Boundary, within the Farmland Preservation Area, within the Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Zone, and within the Secondary Springs Protection Zone. The future land use designation for the parcel is Rural Activity Center (RAC). Figure 2 shows the conceptual plan provided by the applicant. The Conceptual Site Plan shows the layout of proposed use. Staff is recommending **Approval with Conditions** of the Special Use Permit request.

Aquamation is used as an alternative to cremation, the process utilizes alkaline hydrolysis in place of flames. This process involves water, heat and alkalinity to speed of the decomposition process which would occur naturally in a traditional burial. The process uses less energy than flame cremation and does not rely on fossil fuels-often being referred to as an eco-friendly option. After the aquamation process, all that remains are bones and effluent (wastewater). The bones will be pulverized and ground into a powder after the aquamation process, much like the typical cremation process, and returned to the pets' owners. The process uses chemicals potassium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, or a combination of both (commonly known as *lye*). Those strong basic chemicals are neutralized in the process, leaving behind a sterile nutrient solution containing amino acids, sugars, salts (effluent) and calcium phosphate bone remains.

The applicants propose to use the aquamation for pets (dogs, cats, rabbits...etc.) and small livestock (maximum size of a goat-no larger). The equipment they propose to use, the "PET-550", can hold a maximum weight of 550 pounds, an average of 14 pets, and will take twenty-four (24) hours to complete a cycle. Each pet will be in an individual compartment which is tagged for identification purposes. The system is about the size of a large deep freezer. The application will not have public hours and will be utilizing a whole-sale method, instead of retail-facing, utilizing local veterinarian offices. Remains which are awaiting the aquamation process will be stored in refrigerated units for a maximum of thirty days. The effluent which remains after the process has been completed is to be captured and stored in tanks until such time it is pumped out and removed from the premises.

This item was heard on June 17th, 2026. The applicant has requested a continuance for sixty (60) days to prepare a presentation and business plan.

Figure 1
Aerial Photograph of Subject Property



Figure 2
Conceptual Site Plan Submitted by Applicant



II. STAFF SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **Approval with Conditions** as specified in Section VII.B. of this Staff Report. The recommended conditions are being imposed to address compliance with the requirements in Land Development Code (LDC) Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B, in the event of approval.

III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.C, notice of public hearing was mailed to five (5) property owners within 300 feet of the subject property on May 8th, 2026. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B, public notice was posted on the subject property on May 5th, 2026, where site photos were also collected (Attachment B) and consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.E due public notice was published in the Ocala Star-Banner on May 11th, 2026. As of the date of the initial distribution of this staff report, no letters of opposition or support have been received. However, at the Planning and Zoning hearing dated May 27th, 2026, four members of community voiced their concerns. Those concerns included where the wastewater was going and if it was going affect their drinking water or Orange Lake, hazardous spill concerns over the materials used in the alkaline hydrolysis process, potential future expansion of the use, and odors that may be produced during the process. Evidence of the above-described public notices are on file with the Growth Services Department and are incorporated herein by reference.

IV. BACKGROUND/CHARACTER OF THE AREA

- A. *Existing site conditions.* Figure 4 shows the property in its existing condition. The site was being utilized as Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10733. Figure 5 shows that per the Marion County Property Appraiser the property has a Commercial use classification. The northern adjacent parcel, Matatan Hay, also has a Commercial classification, and it being utilized as a farm and feed store. The adjacent property to the south also has a Commercial use classification, but it is unclear that a business is in operation. East of the subject property Government Institution use and is drainage retention area. West of the subject parcel and across N US HWY 441 are two adjacent properties, a Commercial classification use (United States Postal Service) property and a Single-Family Residential use.

Figure 4
Existing Conditions Map



Figure 5
MCPA Existing Uses

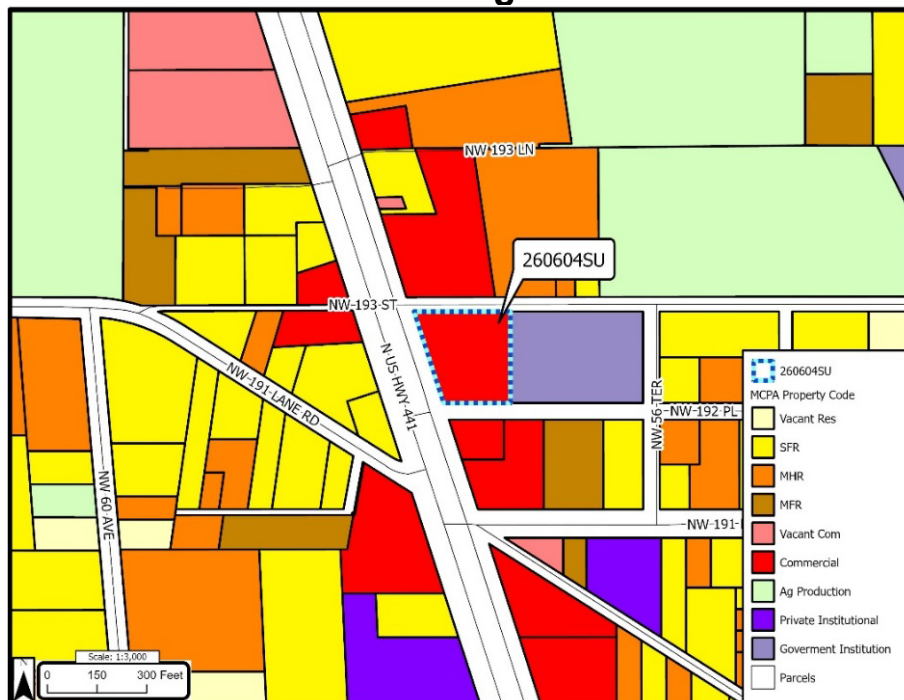
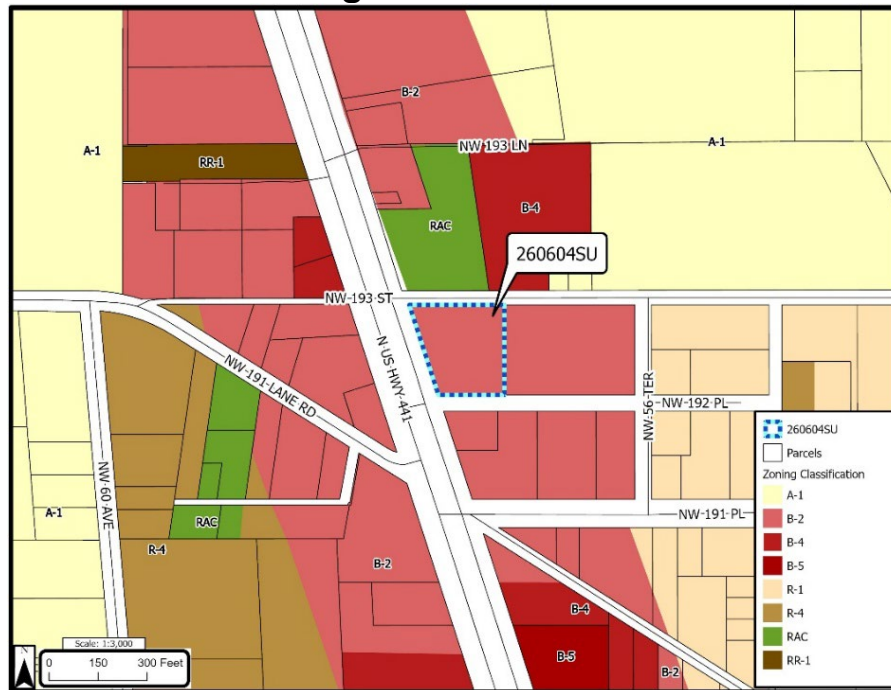
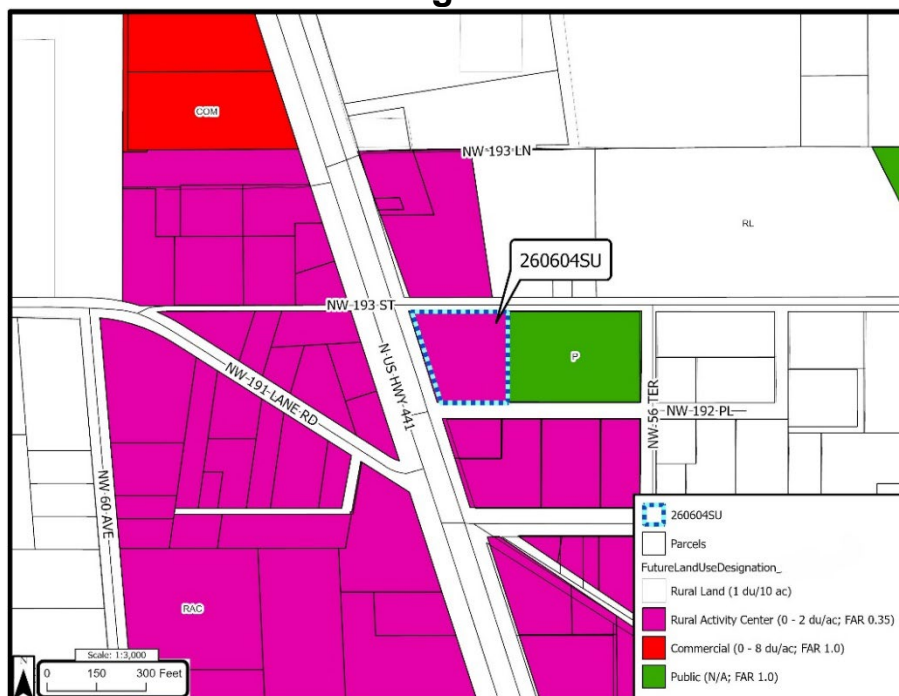


Figure 6
Zoning Classification



B. *Zoning district map.* Figure 6 shows the subject property currently has Community Business (B-2) zoning, along with parcels to the east, south and west. The adjacent parcel to the north has a Rural Activity (RAC) zoning. The parcel to the northeast has a Regional Business zoning (B-4).

Figure 7
FLUMS Designations



- C. *FLUMS designation.* Figure 7 is the FLUMS and it shows that the subject property and abutting properties to the north, south, and west are designated Rural Activity Center (RAC). The RAC Land Use allows for a FAR of 0.35 and up to two (2) dwelling units per one (1) acre. The parcel to the east of the subject parcel is designated Public (P).

V. ANALYSIS

LDC Section 2.8.2.D provides that in making a recommendation to the Board, the Board shall make a written finding the SUP addresses nine (9) specific requirements. LDC Section 2.8.3.B requires consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff's analysis of compliance with these ten (10) requirements are addressed below.

A. *Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.*

1. Policy 2.1.5: **Permitted & Special Uses** – The county shall identify permitted and special uses for each land use designation and zoning classification, as further defined in the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and LDC.

Analysis: LDC Section 4.2.18 requires a special use permit to allow a crematorium, a cemetery, or mausoleum within B-2 zoning. As such, staff finds that aquamation for animals most closely relates to this categorical zoning use. Conceptual Site Plan is provided by the applicant in Attachment A, and in figure 2.

- The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the proposed uses, submitted Conceptual Site Plan, and the conditions as provided with this approval.
- No outdoor storage or processing of materials associated with the aquamation process shall be permitted.
- The proposed aquamation and processing operation shall be conducted indoors.

B. *Provision for **ingress and egress** to property and proposed structures thereon with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety and convenience, traffic flow and control, and access in case of fire or catastrophe.*

Analysis: There are two existing Ingress/egress access points at this location which the applicant proposes to continue using without modification, they are both located on NW 193rd Street. Staff concludes that the application **is consistent** with provisions for ingress and egress.

- C. *Provision for **off-street parking and loading areas**, where required, with particular attention to the items in (1) above and the economic, noise, glare, or odor effects of the SUP on adjoining properties and properties generally in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: Parking will be provided on site as shown in the Conceptual Site Plan utilizing existing parking spaces, of which there are thirteen (13). The application **is consistent** with provisions for off-street parking and loading areas.

- D. *Provisions for **refuse and service area**, with particular reference to the items in (1) and (2) above.*

Analysis: The findings of facts state that the applicant will contract with a professional refuse collection service for regular removal and disposal of all refuse. The application **is consistent** with this provision.

- The dumpster enclosure shall not be used to dispose of materials associated with aquamation.

- E. *Provision for **utilities**, with reference to locations, availability, and compatibility.*

Analysis: Per the findings of fact, the applicant proposes no modifications to already existing well and septic. Marion County Utilities has no comments regarding this Special Use Permit. The applicant does not propose using the septic tank for the wastewater produced by the aquamation process. The effluent will be stored in tanks after each process occurs and will be removed offsite. Staff finds the application **to be consistent** with the provision for utilities and implements the following conditions:

- If public water or sewer becomes available from the public utility provider, connection will be required to services within 365 days of notification.
- No effluent from the aquamation process is permitted to be drained to the septic system or wastewater utilities. All wastewater from the aquamation process must be captured and removed off-site.

- F. *Provision for **screening and buffering** of dissimilar uses and of adjacent properties where necessary.*

Analysis: Per the Findings of Fact, the applicant is not proposing any buffering. Staff finds this to be **inconsistent** with the provisions for buffering and implies the following conditions:

- A modified type C-buffer on the western boundary of the parcel fronting N US HWY 441. The modified buffer shall consist of a 15-foot-wide landscape strip without a buffer wall. The buffer shall contain at least three accent/ornamental trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shade trees will be substituted for accent/ornamental trees at a 1:1 ratio, for a total of five (5) accent/ornamental trees. Shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall comprise at least 50 percent of the required buffer and form a layered landscape screen with a minimum height of three feet achieved within one year

- G. *Provision for **signs**, if any, **and exterior lighting** with consideration given to glare, traffic safety, economic effects, and compatibility and harmony with properties in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: According to the applicant's Findings of Facts, no new signage is proposed. The applicant has not proposed adding any lighting. Staff finds the application **is consistent** with the provision for signs and exterior lighting.

- H. *Provision for **required yards and other green space**.*

Analysis: Per the findings of fact, the applicant proposes to use existing green spaces with no further modifications.

- I. *Provision for general **compatibility** with adjacent properties and other properties in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: Compatibility is defined as a condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition. The proposed special use on B-2 zoning is compatible with adjacent and surrounding properties classified as commercial (hay and feed store, post office, undetermined business) and Government Institutional (drainage retention area), as depicted and discussed in figure 5. The single-family residence to the west of the parcel is located across N US HWY 441, which provides sufficient distance to offset negative effects. Staff finds the application is **consistent** with the provision for general compatibility with adjacent properties and other properties in the surrounding area.

J. *Provision for meeting any **special requirements** required by the site analysis for*

Analysis: Staff notes that unlike a variance, which runs with the land and is recorded in the public records, a special use permit is not recorded. As a result, a subsequent owner will not have notice of the requirements. Staff recommends the following conditions that will void the SUP if the property changes hand.

- No funeral or memorial services shall be conducted on-site.
- A new Special Use Permit will be required for any future expansion of the approved aquamation use.
- The Special Use Permit is granted only for the subject property and the benefit of the Paula Dempsey and Ted Stone on the subject property. Any change of ownership of the subject property will terminate this Special Use Permit.
- The applicant shall maintain a Spill Containment and Hazard Management Plan on file with the Growth Services Director and shall provide updated copies annually for recordkeeping purposes.
- The Special Use Permit shall expire on June 17, 2031; however, it may be renewed administratively three times for up to 5 years each by a written instrument signed and issued by the Growth Services Director (or position equivalent to the Growth Services Director at that time), unless:
 - There have been unresolved violations of the County Land Development Code, the County Code of Ordinances, and/or the conditions of the permit,
 - Neighboring property owners within 300' of the subject property have complained to the County Code Enforcement, Zoning, or equivalent/similar Departments/Divisions about the uses of the subject property by this Permit, or
 - The Growth Services Manager determines that renewal should be considered directly by the Board of County Commissioners through the Special Use Permit review process (or review process equivalent at that time).

Based on the above findings, Staff concludes the SUP is consistent with LDC Sections 4.2.28 provided conditions to address the ten (10) requirements are imposed.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- A. Staff recommends to **APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS** the special use permit.
- B. To address compliance with LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B, the following conditions are imposed:
1. The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the proposed uses, submitted Conceptual Site Plan, and the conditions as provided with this approval.
 2. A modified type C-buffer on the western boundary of the parcel fronting N US HWY 441. The modified buffer shall consist of a 15-foot-wide landscape strip without a buffer wall. The buffer shall contain at least three accent/ornamental trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shade trees will be substituted for accent/ornamental trees at a 1:1 ratio, for a total of five (5) accent/ornamental trees. Shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall comprise at least 50 percent of the required buffer and form a layered landscape screen with a minimum height of three feet achieved within one year.
 3. The dumpster enclosure shall not be used to dispose of materials associated with the aquamation.
 4. No outdoor storage or processing of materials associated with the aquamation shall be permitted.
 5. The proposed aquamation and processing operation shall be conducted indoors.
 6. If public water or sewer becomes available from the public utility provider, connection will be required to services within 365 days of notification.
 7. No effluent from the aquamation process is permitted to be drained to the septic system or wastewater utilities. All wastewater from the aquamation process must be captured and removed off-site.
 8. The applicant shall maintain a Spill Containment and Hazard Management Plan on file with the Growth Services Director and shall provide updated copies annually for recordkeeping purposes.
 9. A new Special Use Permit will be required for any future expansion of the approved aquamation use.
 10. No funeral or memorial services shall be conducted on-site.
 11. The Special Use Permit is granted only for the subject property and the benefit of the Paula Dempsey and Ted Stone on the subject property. Any change of ownership of the subject property will terminate this Special Use Permit.

12. The Special Use Permit shall expire on June 17, 2031; however, it may be renewed administratively three times for up to 5 years each by a written instrument signed and issued by the Growth Services Director (or position equivalent to the Growth Services Director at that time), unless:
- a. There have been unresolved violations of the County Land Development Code, the County Code of Ordinances, and/or the conditions of the permit,
 - b. Neighboring property owners within 300' of the subject property have complained to the County Code Enforcement, Zoning, or equivalent/similar Departments/Divisions about the uses of the subject property by this Permit,
 - c. The Growth Services Manager determines that renewal should be considered directly by the Board of County Commissioners through the Special Use Permit review process (or review process equivalent at that time).

VII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Approval as conditioned (4-0)

VIII. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ACTION

Continued for sixty (60) days at the June 17th hearing.

IX. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- A. SUP application.
- B. Site Photos.
- C. DRC Comments.