

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL SUSTAINABLE FOOD SOURCES BY SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AGRICULTURE, SMALL FARMS, URBAN FARMING AND THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY; DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS TO PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION FOR EXPANDING THE LAND USE PROVISION IN UNINCORPORATED FULTON COUNTY TO SUPPORT URBAN AGRICULTURE MORE BROADLY; AND A CALL TO ACTION FOR MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN FULTON COUNTY TO SUPPORT URBAN AGRICULTURE AND REMOVE OBSTACLES OR ROADBLOCKS THAT DISCOURAGE OR PREVENT THIS INDUSTRY.**

**WHEREAS**, the Metro Atlanta Chamber states that Metropolitan Atlanta is the ninth largest and fourth fastest-growing metro area in the nation and home to 6 million people in 2019, and exemplifies the estimate that 81 percent of Americans live in metropolitan areas; and

**WHEREAS**, Gracie Bonds Staples, writing in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, states that the Atlanta metro area contains more than 35 food deserts, and cites experts who see a “direct correlation between food deserts and the state’s high rates of obesity and chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and cancers,” as well as stroke and heart disease; and

**WHEREAS**, the Economic Research service of the USDA states that “limited access to supermarkets, supercenters, grocery stores, or other sources of healthy and affordable food may make it harder for some Americans to eat a healthy diet;” and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), produce travels 1,500 to 2,000 miles from farm to table, due to outdated food distribution systems; and

**WHEREAS**, Jeanne Peters, writing in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, describes a local food system as one that “preserves local farmland and fosters community economic viability, requires less energy for transportation, and offers consumers the freshest foods” to help build a sustainable future; and

**WHEREAS**, K. Rashid Nuri writes in his book, *Growing Out Loud*, that the critical importance of agricultural production to national strength and stability, is enshrined in a series of U.S. Homestead Acts, beginning in 1862, which provide for government support of farmers by providing land, education and infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, urban agriculture, which is agriculture integrated into the urban economic and ecological system, takes the form of backyard, roof-top and balcony gardening, small farms, community gardening in vacant lots and parks, roadside urban fringe agriculture and livestock grazing in open space; and

**WHEREAS**, according to numerous studies by the US Department of Agriculture, when small farms and urban agriculture is supported by local government, the incidence of food deserts decreases, food insecurity decreases, and food systems become inclusive, resilient, and safe, providing healthy and affordable food to all people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Zoning Resolution provides at Article V for an Agricultural District allowing urban agricultural uses of property with certain provisions such as property setbacks in order to provide protection from interference on adjacent properties; and

**WHEREAS** the Fulton County Zoning Resolution provides at Article XIX, Section 19.3.4 for special use permits for more intensive agricultural activities within the

Agricultural District, with the stated intent of the article being to allow agricultural activities and preserve the nature of agricultural areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners finds that it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Fulton County to adopt policies, ordinances, and legislation to expand the support for land conservation, small farming, and urban agriculture in other compatible land use districts throughout Fulton County, Georgia and to remove barriers to this land by providing for certain activities to be exempt from the special use permitting requirements.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, The Board of Commissioners declares the importance of and significance of Small Farms and Urban Agriculture practices to Fulton County residents and the local food economy.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Commissioners hereby encourages Fulton County to partner with organizations that provide technical assistance to farmers and landowners in the implementation of urban agriculture and conservation practices.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby directs its Director of Public Works to assess the compatibility of all existing land uses within unincorporated Fulton County with small farms and urban agricultural uses, and to report to the Commission on the viability and wisdom of providing for the overlay of the Agricultural District in unincorporated Fulton County districts.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby directs the Director of Public Works to study the impacts of gardening and small poultry operations in residential communities, and to provide a recommendation to the Commissioners for the types and scales of urban agricultural practices that may be

conducted without placing an undue burden on neighboring properties, such that a special use permit would not be warranted.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Director of the Department of Real Estate and Asset Management is directed to consider partnerships with schools, health care facilities, neighborhood groups, nonprofits, municipalities, and other non-governmental organizations to establish urban agricultural uses on county-owned properties wherever located, and to provide a report to the Board of Commissioners to list those properties with suitable grounds areas to support community gardens, small farms, or other urban agricultural uses.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the efforts made to assist local farmers with program applications, design and layout of urban agriculture, and activities associated with program development and management, shall not be in conflict with any standards and specifications set forth by the policies and best practices of local, state, and federal departments and services.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby urges municipalities located within Fulton County, Georgia, to adopt policies, ordinances, and legislation with the objective of supporting land conservation, small farming, and urban agriculture, and to study their land use and zoning ordinances and permitting processes to determine how to remove roadblocks that seek to discourage or prevent the success of this industry.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Clerk to the Commission is directed to provide a copy of this Resolution to each municipality located within Fulton County, Georgia, with the expectation that adoption of this Resolution will increase community

awareness of the significance of local food sources and urge the creation of avenues of support for the local food economy.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall become effective upon its adoption, and that all resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County, Georgia, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

**FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

SPONSORED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Ellis, District 2  
Fulton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tonya R. Grier,  
Clerk to the Commission

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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Kaye Burwell, County Attorney