

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

11
12 **WHEREAS**, the Metro Atlanta Chamber states that Metropolitan Atlanta is the
13 ninth largest and fourth fastest-growing metro area in the nation and home to 6 million
14 people in 2019, and exemplifies the estimate that 81 percent of Americans live in
15 metropolitan areas; and

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

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

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25 (NCAT), produce travels 1,500 to 2,000 miles from farm to table, due to outdated food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

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

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

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

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

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

21 **WHEREAS** the Fulton County Zoning Resolution provides at Article XIX, Section
22 19.3.4 for special use permits for more intensive agricultural activities within the

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

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

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

12 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Commissioners hereby encourages
13 Fulton County Director of Public Works to consider partnerships with the Director of the
14 Cooperative Extension, Director of the Department of Real Estate and Asset
15 Management, and other organizations that provide technical assistance to farmers and
16 landowners in the implementation of urban agriculture and conservation practices.

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

1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby directs
2 the Director of Public Works to partner with the Cooperative Extension to study the
3 impacts of gardening and small poultry operations in residential communities, and to
4 provide a recommendation to the Commissioners for the types and scales of urban
5 agricultural practices that may be conducted without placing an undue burden on
6 neighboring properties, such that a special use permit would not be warranted.

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

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

19 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby urges
20 municipalities located within Fulton County, Georgia, to adopt policies, ordinances, and
21 legislation with the objective of supporting land conservation, small farming, and urban
22 agriculture, and to study their land use and zoning ordinances and permitting processes

1 to determine how to remove roadblocks that seek to discourage or prevent the success
2 of this industry.

3 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Clerk to the Commission is directed to
4 provide a copy of this Resolution to each municipality located within Fulton County,
5 Georgia, with the expectation that adoption of this Resolution will increase community
6 awareness of the significance of local food sources and urge the creation of avenues of
7 support for the local food economy.

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

11 **PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County,
12 Georgia, this 20th day of October, 2021.

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17 **FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF**
18 **COMMISSIONERS**

19
20 SPONSORED BY:

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24 _____
25 Bob Ellis, Commissioner
26 District 2

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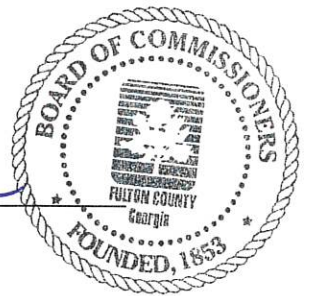
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30 _____
31 Natalie Hall, Vice-Chair
32 District 4

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Kadijah Abdul-Rahman
Commissioner
District 6

ATTEST:

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



APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Kaye Burwell
Kaye Burwell,
Interim County Attorney

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