

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
July 5, 2017
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday July 5, 2017 at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, Robinson, McMichael and Thomson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Fire/HEMA Chief Jimmy Williams, Purchasing Director Mark Baker, Flint Energies Senior VP Jimmy Autry, Perry Police Chief Steve Lynn, Rolling Thunder Georgia Chapter 3 President Buster Hickam, Rolling Thunder Georgia Chapter 3 Public Relations Officer Rita Starnes-Tinney, USAF Brig Gen James Sehorn (ret.), USAF Lt. Col Crawford Hicks (ret.), US Army PFC Bill Freeman (ret.), James Erdmanczyk, Walton and Becky Wood, and Ansel Peck.

Commissioner Walker gave the Invocation.

SSgt. Jeremy Mashuga, US Army (ret.) led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 13-year military career. He enlisted in the summer of 2004 and was trained as a cavalry scout. He completed three combat tours of duty, two in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, where he was injured in three separate IED attacks receiving three Purple Heart medals among others. After the third injury and due to a hearing disability as a result, he was moved out of the combat unit and into a non-combat unit against his wishes. Reassigned to Ft. Bragg, he helped to train new lieutenants fresh out of college. Shortly thereafter, he left the service and worked briefly at the Bibb County jail and then used his GI Bill to attend the police academy and was hired at the Centerville Police Department where he has been for the last 16 months.

After recognizing SSgt. Mashuga for his service to both country and community, Chairman Stalnaker introduced him to the three gentlemen who were each held as POW's during different wars.

Chairman Stalnaker then recognized Buster Hickam, President of the Rolling Thunder Georgia Chapter 3, who spoke of the Rolling Thunder's mission to raise awareness for all military POW's and those missing in action. He then introduced three men who were each once held as a prisoner of war: Crawford Hicks who was held prisoner by the Germans in WWII; Bill Freeman who served in WWII and also in the Korean War where he was held prisoner; and retired Brigadier General James Sehorn who was held prisoner in Vietnam for over five years. Each man shared powerful stories of their service and captivity. The Chair of Honor and POW/MIA flag presentation followed with Chairman Stalnaker remarking that they will be displayed proudly in the rotunda of the courthouse. The POW/MIA flag will also be flown in front of the courthouse, at the Warner Robins Annex building and at the two new parks at the intersection of Lake Joy Road and Hwy. 96.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked each man for his service to country and remarked that the County was honored to recognize each one.

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Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meetings of June 20, 2017 and also June 27, 2017.

County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations that even if the Board of Commissioners approves an application, neighborhood covenants may still impose certain restrictions upon or against home occupation businesses. These restrictive covenants are superior to any action taken by the Board of Commissioners. The actions taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews was not present for the meeting and that County Attorney Tom Hall would be presenting the Special Exception Applications.

Special Exception Applications #2087 thru #2089, #2091, #2092, and #2094 thru #2098 were presented by County Attorney Tom Hall. Mr. Hall explained that each application met the Section 95 requirements and are recommended by the Zoning & Appeals Board for unanimous approval.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for a public hearing.

Applicant for #2087 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2088 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2089 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2091 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2092 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2094 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2095 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

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Applicant for #2096 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #2097 was present with nothing further to add.

Tom Harden, 121 Kestral Way, Kathleen spoke against the application mainly due to concerns of increased traffic and congestion in the area.

Betty Sue Wood, 1419 S. Houston Lake Road, Kathleen spoke against the application also mainly due to concerns of increased traffic. She pointed out that members leaving the church wanting to travel north would first have to turn south onto Houston Lake Road and then would likely make the u-turn at the first opportunity which would be at the median cut existing for Golden Eagle Drive thereby creating the potential for accidents.

Dave Domingue, an elder representing Warner Robins Church of Christ, spoke in favor of the application and assured Mr. Harden and Ms. Wood that the church was also concerned about the safety of the traveling public. He commented that the Church had met with traffic engineering personnel from the Public Works and were assured that Houston Lake Road had been designed and built to handle the additional traffic that the church would generate. He also commented that the church may be able to request the assistance of the Sheriff's Office to direct traffic when services were letting out.

Chairman Stalnaker pointed out that peak times would obviously only be Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.

Mr. Domingue agreed. He said that the current church membership was around 240 and that they would hope to grow to possibly no more than 500 in the future.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Dunbar to meet with the County's Traffic Engineer Ken Robinson to make sure that any future driveway access plan will work. He commented that although Houston Lake Road was designed for this type of traffic it was the movement of that traffic in this instance which generates concern.

Ms. Betty Sue Wood asked if there were any plans to have a second driveway from the church property onto Golden Eagle Drive.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that there was not a request before the County at this time for an additional driveway.

Mr. Domingue clarified that although there is no definitive plan to ask for a second driveway onto Golden Eagle Drive there has been some discussion about the possibility within the church.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that an additional driveway onto Golden Eagle Drive would be of concern and suggested that one driveway on Houston Lake Road was the better option.

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Mr. Thomson asked if the church property would eventually be annexed into the City of Warner Robins so that they could obtain sewer.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that it may come to that but Houston Lake Road would still remain a County road even if the property was annexed.

In closing, Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the concerns expressed by Mr. Harden and Ms. Wood were noted and that the County's traffic engineer and other Public Works personnel would be engaged in the process going forward.

Applicant for #2098 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the public hearing and the meeting continued.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the following applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendations and Section 95 Requirements staff report:

Special Exception Application #2087 – Mason Martin

Special Exception Application #2088 – Roy & Leah Falls

Special Exception Application #2089 – Kenneth & Dorothy Marie Beck

Special Exception Application #2091 – Jacqueline McLearn

Special Exception Application #2092 – Larry Trivette

Special Exception Application #2094 – Leila Matheson

Special Exception Application #2095 – William Bragg

Special Exception Application #2096 - Sarita Doty & Heather Stewart

Special Exception Application #2097 – Warner Robins Church of Christ

Special Exception Application #2098 – Aaron Bickel

After the motion Mr. Holland gave each applicant approved for a home occupation instruction on the next step of the process which is obtaining their occupational business license from the Commissioner's Office.

Ms. Robinson presented contracts between the Department of Corrections and the County for nine inmate work details from the McEver Probation Detention Center and one detail from the Dooly State Prison to be administered by the Public Works. The contracts having been reviewed by staff and the County Attorney.

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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing a contract with the Georgia Department of Corrections to provide the County with nine inmate work details from the McEver Probation Detention Center at a cost of \$39,500 per detail; and a contract for one inmate work detail from the Dooly State Prison at a cost of \$39,500. The contracts will be effective July 1, 2017 and will expire June 30, 2018. Total cost to the County is \$395,000.

Mr. McMichael asked why there was no additional language added to the contract concerning the minimum number of inmates per crew.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that although the County and the Department of Corrections discussed such language that the State chose not to add it to the contracts. They did however make certain assurances that sufficient numbers of inmates would be made available to fill the crews.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from the Engineering Department to enter into a professional services agreement with Saunders Engineering Consultants to provide construction plans for the Moss Oaks Road paving and reconstruction project at a total proposed fee of \$70,970.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve a professional services agreement with Saunders Engineering Consultants, Inc. of Centerville to provide construction plans on the Moss Oaks Road paving and reconstruction project in the amount of \$70,970.

Mr. McMichael presented a request from Public Works for approval of a bid on the timber harvest of approximately 20 acres at the Landfill to low bidder Walker Forest Resources. The expected revenue for this tract is \$20,365.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of a timber sales bid for 20 acres at the County Landfill to Walker Forest Resources of McRae in the amount of \$20,365 (expected revenue) and to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to sign all contract documents. The County's consultant, American Forest Management of Macon, will administer the contract.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,551,805.86.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Public Comments.

There being no comments the meeting continued.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Commissioners Comments.

Ms. Robinson remarked that she enjoyed the meeting especially SSgt. Mashuga's story as well as the Chair of Honor presentation and the three POW's stories.

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Mr. Thomson commented that SSgt. Mashuga's service story touched his heart and thanked the Chairman for continuing to honor our military all year long.

Mr. McMichael remarked that he had an uncle who was a POW and he appreciated the timing of these stories during the July 4th holiday.

Mr. Walker remarked that it was great to honor all of our military service members.

Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone of the July 10th 9:30 a.m. ceremony to dedicate the parks at the intersection of Lake Joy Road and Hwy. 96. He recommended those attending to park at the Publix shopping center as the ceremony will begin on that side of the intersection and then move across the highway to the other side located adjacent to the Walgreen's. He commented that two individuals will be honored at that time for their involvement. He also commented that the new signal being installed at the intersection of Lake Joy Road and Cohen Walker Drive would soon be finished and operational before the school year begins.

Chairman Stalnaker also reminded everyone that our next Board meeting would be at its regularly scheduled time and place at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 18th at the Warner Robins Annex building where a second Chair of Honor and POW/MIA flag presentation will be made.

Mr. McMichael announced that Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue would be honored on Sunday, July 9th at 6:00 p.m. at Second Baptist Church.

There being no further comments the meeting continued.

Motion to Adjourn by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner