

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
June 7, 2016
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, McMichael, Thomson and Robinson present. Also present were Director of Administration Barry Holland, County Attorney Tom Hall, Purchasing Director Mark Baker, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Chief Tax Appraiser James Moore, Fire/HEMA Chief Jimmy Williams, Animal Control Officer Alan Smith, Houston County Library System Director J. Sara Paulk, Perry Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Darlene McLendon, Jones County Chairman-elect Chris Weidner, Flint Energies Senior VP Jimmy Autry, Walt and Beck Wood.

Chairman Stalnaker led the audience in the Invocation.

MSgt. Carlos Avila Jimenez, USAF (Retired) led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and detailed his 21-year military career. Hailing from San Juan, Puerto Rico, he joined the Air Force in 1988 and served in the Desert Shield and Desert Storm campaigns as well as duty assignments in such places as Korea, Japan, Arizona, New Mexico, and finally Moody AFB, Georgia. He retired from the military and took up residence in Houston County. Currently he works as a technical writer for Blue Bird in Fort Valley. His son also works at Blue Bird in the IT department and his daughter is a teacher in the Houston County school system. He enjoyed the adventure of being in the Air Force and also the privilege of serving our nation.

Chairman Stalnaker acknowledged Jones County Chairman-elect Chris Weidner and welcomed him to the meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Perry Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Darlene McLendon who passed out flyers for the upcoming Independence Parade to be held Sunday June 26th at 6:00 p.m. in downtown Perry to be followed by the Freedom Fireworks celebration at 7:00 p.m. at the Georgia National Fairgrounds (West Gate). Ms. McLendon then briefed the Board on the Middle Georgia Leadership Champions Class of 38 individuals who completed the program earlier this year. The program is an initiative of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, encompassing eleven counties, and is focused on improving the region's economic prosperity, educational attainment, and quality of life. Ms. McLendon explained that this inaugural class will remain intact and will meet periodically under the leadership of the regional commission. Partially dependent upon grant funding from the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment, a second class will hopefully be formed soon.

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Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2016 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Re-Zoning Application #1972 submitted by Teramore Development, LLC at 108B Story Road. Present zoning is R-AG. Proposed use is C-2 Commercial for a potential retail store. Planning & Zoning recommends unanimous approval subject to Story Road being improved to handle an increase in traffic if an entrance is added.

Chairman Stalnaker opened a Public Hearing on Re-Zoning Application #1972.

In Favor:

Chris West, 513 Habersham Road Thomasville, GA and in-house counsel for Teramore Development spoke on behalf of the applicant, stating he was there to answer any questions and concerns.

Chairman Stalnaker reminded Mr. West that there would be a stipulation if the application was approved that would require Story Road to be improved to a point just past the proposed driveway for the retail development to accommodate increased traffic. Since Story Road is a dead end street with no cul-de-sac for turning around there is no need to improve the road past that point just east of the proposed driveway. Mr. West then submitted 'Exhibit A' which shows the proposed area of improvement to meet this stipulation.

In Opposition:

Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen indicated that he was not really opposed to the rezoning but rather wanted to ask who would be responsible for the maintenance of Story Road once their development was finished with the improved section of roadway.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that at the point of completion, the road would then be the responsibility of the County.

There being no further comments the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Re-Zoning Application #1972 submitted by Teramore Development, LLC subject to Story Road being improved, to County standards, to handle an increase in traffic if an entrance is added.

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Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Re-Zoning Application #1980 submitted by Merganser Enterprises, Inc. at the intersection of SR96 and SR 247. Present zoning is R-1 Residential and vacant land. Proposed use is C-2 Commercial for a grocery store. Planning & Zoning recommends unanimous approval subject to Ammons Road being improved to handle an increase in traffic if an entrance is added.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Andrews if the other tract north of this one on Highway 247, at which the development was originally going to be built, would revert back to its original zoning or if it would remain.

Mr. Andrews explained that it would remain as rezoned. Mr. Scott Free, Coldwell Banker Robbins & Free Realty, indicated that the current owner of that original property is considering whether or not to leave it or rezone it back to its original state.

Chairman Stalnaker opened a Public Hearing on Re-Zoning Application #1980.

In Favor:

Merg Hoffman, applicant and President of Merganser Enterprises, Inc., spoke in favor of the rezoning and stated that he was working with the County on a plan for the necessary improvements to Ammons Road.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the entire length of Ammons Road would have to be improved to County standards if there was to be an entrance from Ammons Road into the development.

Mr. Hoffman asked the Board if there could be some firm agreement of the Ammons Road improvement before the rezoning was voted on.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that the County's position of the required improvements has not changed and would not be negotiated in the meeting.

Mr. Hoffman then requested that the Board table the application for rezoning for 30 days so that a firm agreement could be reached between the County and the developer.

Mr. Andrews stated that the application could be tabled until the first meeting in July without having to come back before the Planning & Zoning Board.

There being no opposing comments the meeting was continued.

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Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to table Re-Zoning Application #1980 submitted by Merganser Enterprises, Inc., until the July 5, 2016 Board meeting.

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.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #1962, #1975 thru #1979, and #1981 for home occupation businesses. Mr. Andrews explained that Application #1962 was recommended for denial by the Zoning & Appeals Board because the applicant failed to appear at a second Zoning & Appeals hearing. He further explained that each of the remaining applications complies with Section 95 of the Comprehensive Land Development Regulations and that the Board of Zoning & Appeals recommends unanimous approval of each application for home occupations.

Chairman Stalnaker opened a Public Hearing on Special Exception Applications #1962, #1975 thru #1979, and #1981 for home occupation businesses.

Applicant for #1962 was not present.

Applicant for #1975 was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1976 was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1977 was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1978 was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1979 was not present.

Mr. Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road asked for a clarification, on Application #1979, on what appeared to be a typo concerning the description of the proposed business. The word 'insert' was mistakenly used instead of the word 'internet'.

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Applicant for #1981 was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

There being no further comments the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to deny Special Exception Application #1962 submitted by Mitchell Mintz due to the applicant failing to appear at the second Zoning & Appeals Board hearing to address concerns pertaining to his request.

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

Special Exception Application #1975 – Benjamin & Ansley Bailey

Special Exception Application #1976 – Matthew & Susan Evans

Special Exception Application #1977 – Brunetta Childs

Special Exception Application #1978 – Kenneth Saulsbury

Special Exception Application #1979 – Susan Camp

Special Exception Application #1981 – Jason & Cassandra Maloy

Mr. Andrews then 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.

Mr. Walker presented a request by Ferrell W. Kitchens to abandon an existing 60-foot road easement at 120 Sparrow Street (Birdsong Acres) since there is no potential of Raven Avenue ever being extended. Staff concurs with the abandonment of the road easement provided that a revised plat shows a 20-foot drainage easement along the existing ditch.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the abandonment of the road easement requested by Ferrell W. Kitchens at 120 Sparrow Street (Birdsong Acres) lots 8 & 9 provided that a revised plat shows a 20-foot drainage easement along the existing ditch, and the applicant is to pay for the new plat and recording of said plat.

Chairman Stalnaker asked both County Attorney Tom Hall and Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar to follow up on the revised plat that will be required.

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Mr. Walker presented a request by Darin Snellgrove (Prestige Builders) to abandon the drainage easement at McCarley Downs subdivision located off Highway 96 near Old Hawkinsville Road. Staff recommends the approval of the easement abandonment.

County Attorney Tom Hall explained the necessity behind the abandonment since the current drainage easement did not exactly line up with the street.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the abandonment of the drainage easement requested by Darin Snellgrove (Prestige Builders) at McCarley Downs subdivision, Section 2, Phase 2, with the applicant to pay for new plat and the recording of said plat.

Chairman Stalnaker asked County Attorney Tom Hall and Mr. Dunbar to follow up on this plat as well.

Mr. McMichael presented a request by the City of Warner Robins, for Mr. Charlie N. McGlamry (GSL Investment Holdings LLP), to annex a parcel located on the east side of Old Hawkinsville road and west of Statham's Way totaling 16.53 acres. The property is currently zoned County PUD. Proposed zoning and land use upon annexation is city of Warner Robins PDR (Planned Development-Residential).

Chairman Stalnaker asked County Attorney Tom Hall to write a letter to the City of Warner Robins regarding the utilities for the property.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the City of Warner Robins annexation request for that property known as Tax Parcel #001230 041000 totaling 16.53 acres.

Ms. Robinson presented a personnel request to promote Alan Smith from his current position as Animal Control Officer to Senior Animal Control Officer which is vacant due to the retirement of Dale Newberry. According to County policy, Mr. Smith would move from his current Grade 11 Step I to Grade 13 Step H. Also according to County Policy, when an employee is promoted his salary shall be adjusted to the step of the new range which will affect an increase in salary.

Director of Administration Barry Holland makes this request with full confidence based on Mr. Smith's performance during the last 8 ½ years working in the Animal Control Department.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to appoint Alan Smith as Senior Animal Control Officer at Grade 13-H effective June 8, 2016.

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Each member of the Board thanked Mr. Smith for his past service to the County and congratulated him on his appointment to the Senior Animal Control Officer position.

County Attorney Tom Hall presented a request for a Waiver to Animal Limitations for Ronnie Martin at 202 Lake Drive, Warner Robins. He also explained the reason the Board was seeing a second application for this waiver from Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin made an application previously in August of 2015 to keep five dogs plus one more that he boards for a friend during the day. In addition, Mr. Martin had wished to establish a business breeding and selling German Shepherds from his residence. The application was denied and Mr. Martin was directed to reduce his dog count down to three within 90 days with the provision that he could keep an occasional 'boarder' dog for short periods of time but not on a permanent basis. If a dog was boarded on a permanent basis it would be considered one of the allowable three. Mr. Martin has complied with the three dog rule to date.

Mr. Martin is now reapplying for five dogs, bringing back the other two that are housed elsewhere, and would like to also board the friends' dog during the day. Mr. Martin is willing to construct an insulated building for the dogs, complete with heating and air conditioning, which will prevent the dogs from bothering the neighbors. He has indicated that his neighbors are supportive of this as long as he constructs the building before bringing the other dogs back. He no longer intends to run a breeding business from his residence.

Chairman Stalnaker opened a Public Hearing on the Waiver to Animal Limitations for Ronnie Martin.

In Favor:

Mr. Martin's attorney, Kristy W. Harris from the law offices of Rebecca Moody, spoke in favor of the waiver stating that Mr. Martin simply would like for his other companion dogs to come home.

There being no opposing comments the meeting was continued.

Mr. McMichael clarified that this was not intended to be a foster home for dogs.

Mr. Hall clarified that one litter per year is allowable under the current regulations.

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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the Waiver to Animal Limitations for Mr. Ronnie Martin of 202 Lake Drive, Warner Robins, to keep five dogs plus board one additional dog during the day only. Construction of the building is required before the additional dogs come back to the residence.

Mr. Thomson presented a request for Chairman Stalnaker to sign Juvenile Court Contract Attorney Agreements for FY2017 as recommended by Judge Edwards.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all for Chairman Stalnaker to sign Independent Contractor Agreements with Sherry Herrera Campbell at \$45,000 per year, Kameyan Sims at \$45,000 per year and Caralyn J. Huddleston at \$20,000 per year to provide for the defense of indigent persons appearing in the Houston County Juvenile Court. Each agreement will be effective July 1, 2016 and remain in effect until June 30, 2017. These agreements may be renewed from year to year subject to an annual review of performance conducted by the county in conjunction with the Juvenile Court.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that there were no contract changes from the previous year.

Mr. Thomson presented a request from the Purchasing Department to approve a bid on a new mini-excavator for use in the Water Department. The Purchasing Department solicited bids from four Georgia-based Kubota dealers, two bids were received with Mason Tractor Company the lowest bidder. Staff recommends award to Mason Tractor Company.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the purchase of one new Kubota mini-excavator in the amount of \$55,500 from Mason Tractor Company of McDonough, GA for use in the Water Department. Water Department capital funds will be used to purchase this equipment.

Mr. McMichael presented a request to make a Budget Adjustment to the Fire District Fund. The adjustment is from the FY16 funds for Fire Department Vehicles.

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Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the following budget adjustments to the Fire District Fund:

Increase Expenditures:

270-3500-54.2200 Vehicles	\$28,706.85
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Increase Revenues:

270-0000-31-1192 Other-Fire Tax	\$28,706.85
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Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills in the amount of \$2,897,037.96.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that there would be an Executive Session at the conclusion of Public Comments and Commissioners Comments with the possibility of a vote after the session.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for public comments.

Ms. J. Sara Paulk, Director of the Houston County Public Library System, briefed the Board on the Library's Summer Reading Program indicating that over 1,500 children were already signed up. She also spoke of other community outreach activities undertaken by the Library staff such as helping high school age students prep for the SAT and helping people apply for various job opportunities online.

Chairman Stalnaker stated that he has himself participated in the Summer Reading Program in the past and was amazed at the level of participation. He then remarked that there has been some recent criticism by some concerning the library book collection being inadequate or lacking and asked Ms. Paulk if she thought there was a problem with the book collection or with available funding from the county.

Ms. Paulk indicated that the County has been very generous with SPLOST dollars for books and she felt the book collection in our system was more than adequate. She reminded everyone that our collection is augmented by the entire PINES collection throughout the state of Georgia and that if you could not find a book on topic in our local system that you could easily find it in PINES. She also thanked the Board for their continued support and mentioned that the Friends of the Library had raised approximately \$21,000 through the old book sale recently.

Mr. Thomson thanked all the local sponsors of the Summer Reading Program.

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Mr. Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen thanked Ms. Paulk for enlightening the Board on the library's activities. He then thanked Kristin Moriarty, staff reporter for the Houston Home Journal, for taking pictures at the last Board meeting while he was on vacation. He also asked Chairman Stalnaker for an update on the completion dates for the Highway 96 widening project currently underway by the Georgia DOT.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that to the best of his knowledge Phase 1 and 2 from I-75 to Moody Road would be completed this summer and that Highway 96 from Moody Road to Old Hawkinsville Road would be completed sometime in 2018.

Mr. Wood then asked if there had been any further activity regarding the transportation sales tax effort.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that there had been no recent activity.

Ms. Christine Johnson, Georgia Area Sales Manager for Williams Communications, 840 Hillcrest Industrial Blvd., Macon addressed the Board concerning the recent RFP for the E-911 Communications Upgrade Project. She represents Harris Corporation who is a large public safety communications equipment provider. Ms. Johnson reiterated her belief, previously expressed at the May 3, 2016 Board meeting, that the RFP issued by the County was not fairly written thus leading Harris to submit a no bid on the project.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that the Board would take her opinion under consideration and asked her to reach out to him to set up a meeting where this issue could be further explored.

There being no further public comments the floor was opened for commissioners' comments.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Jones County Chairman-elect Chris Weidner who stated that he appreciated the invitation to the meeting and looked forward to working together with Houston County in the future.

Mr. Thomson thanked MSgt. Jimenez for speaking to the Board about his military service.

Mr. Walker stated that we appreciated not only MSgt. Jimenez but all of our military service members active duty and retired.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending and participating in the government process.

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Mr. McMichael thanked everyone for coming and remarked that the patriotic paint scheme recently completed on the Highway 96 water tank shows everyone how much Houston County appreciates the military.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that it was a team effort on the water tank between the Board, the Public Works and Utility Service Group.

Chairman Stalnaker then asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to enter into Executive Session for Personnel matters per O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2); and Attorney / Client matters per O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1).

Upon returning, Chairman Stalnaker reconvened the regular Board meeting with no action taken.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson, and carried unanimously by all.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

