

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
August 17, 2021
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday August 17, 2021, at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Byrd, Perdue, Robinson, and Walker present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Personnel Director Ken Carter, and Tom McMichael.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of August 3, 2021.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker with Mr. Perdue voting yes and Mr. Byrd abstaining to approve the minutes from the meeting on the 3rd Public Hearing of the Tax Digest on August 11, 2021.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Walker with Ms. Robinson voting yes and Mr. Byrd abstaining to approve the minutes from the meeting to approve the Millage Rate Adoption on August 11, 2021.

Mr. Walker presented an abandonment of ROW request along Carl Vinson Parkway.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular meeting, opened a public hearing, and made some introductory remarks regarding this request. He commented that an abandonment of right of way is not unusual when you have one property owner that owns land on both sides and the County has no use for the right of way anymore. The County would do so to get the property back on the tax rolls particularly when there is no need for it on future transportation projects. He reminded everyone that the Board recently abandoned a section of road coming out of the neighboring subdivision and both property owners in that case received half of the right of way. This particular right of way for the Carl Vinson Extension was obtained back in the 80's as a donation to the County. The County has tried several times over the years to bring the Carl Vinson Parkway Extension project to fruition with no success and it does not appear that it will be successful in the future. The consensus of the Board is that the right of way is more of a liability at this point than an asset and is therefore now entertaining the abandonment of the right of way.

County Attorney Tom Hall confirmed that no property owners would be landlocked because of the right of way abandonment. In addition, one of the property owners who had originally donated right of way had it revert back to them years ago after years of no action.

Chairman Stalnaker also commented that if this right of way is abandoned Mr. Warnock has agreed to offer a twenty-foot buffer that would be deeded to the property owners of the subdivision to the west that border this particular property. Mr. Warnock confirmed that he is in fact willing to do so.

No comments were received from the public.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a resolution abandoning an undeveloped portion of Carl Vinson Parkway at 613 Dunbar Road, Warner Robins, Georgia with a stipulation that a twenty-foot strip of land would be deeded to each of the property owners to the west bordering this property.

Mr. Walker presented a rezoning request for properties located at Carl Vinson Parkway and Dunbar Road submitted by Larry E. Warnock representing Bry-Mel Homes, Inc.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that this property was originally annexed into the City of Warner Robins as R-1 and now the request comes back to the County to rezone the R-1 to R-3 with a small portion fronting Dunbar Road rezoned to C-2. He explained that the Board is voting to concur or not to concur on this request. The Board does not have the rights or authority to deny this request. He clarified that there would not be a public hearing on this matter, but he did offer to take public comments.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Mr. Steven Spann, 302 Heritage Drive, Warner Robins and presented him with a preliminary development plan that Mr. Warnock had submitted to the County and the City of Warner Robins. Chairman Stalnaker pointed out to Mr. Spann that the preliminary plan did not show a proposed road near the Heritage Subdivision lots. Mr. Spann thanked the Chairman for meeting with him on this matter yesterday and introduced his neighbors, Ray and Wanda Duda, who were also in attendance.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins request for the rezoning of property located at Carl Vinson Parkway and Dunbar Road from R-1 to R-3 and a small portion to C-2.

After the motion and vote, Mr. Larry Warnock expressed his appreciation to the Chairman and the Board for working with him on this issue. He felt that the new development that will come to this property would be an asset to the north side of the County. He also stressed that the preliminary development plan was not set in stone and may have to be tweaked some before it is finalized.

Mr. Byrd commended the communication and cooperation that occurred between the developer, the surrounding residents, and the Commissioners during this process.

Mr. Walker thanked the Chairman for his leadership on this matter.

Mr. Perdue echoed Mr. Byrd's comments.

County Attorney Tom Hall reminded Mr. Warnock that the right of way will now have to be annexed into the City of Warner Robins.

Mr. Byrd presented a request by the City of Warner Robins for use of County-maintained roadways (Smithville Church Road and Rio Pinar Drive) for a period of two weeks while contractors make a utility cut across Tom Chapman Boulevard.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the City of Warner Robins' request allowing the use of County-maintained roadways for the detour from Tom Chapman Boulevard onto Smithville Church Road and Rio Pinar Drive during construction by a City contractor.

Mr. Byrd presented a request by Utility Engineer Brian Jones to enter into a professional services agreement with Carter & Sloope to provide test well installation and evaluation for the Bear Branch Road Water Treatment Plant Remote Well project. The County has an option to purchase the property at 134 Bear Branch Road pending a satisfactory evaluation of this test well.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve entering into a professional services agreement with Carter & Sloope, Inc. of Macon, GA in the amount of \$113,265 on the Bear Branch Road Water Treatment Plant Remote Well project. This project is funded by Water Capital Funds.

Ms. Robinson presented a condemnation resolution for two parcels on Scott Road.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing resolutions for the filing of condemnation by declaration of taking to acquire the necessary right-of-way for the paving of the Scott Road Extension. The properties to be acquired are Parcels numbers 16 and 23.

Ms. Robinson presented a bid approval for the Courthouse Chilled Water Plant Upgrade.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously to approve the award of the Courthouse Chilled Water Plant Upgrade project to Air Management Systems, Inc. of Baxley, GA in the amount of \$167,093. SPLOST 2018 will fund this project.

Mr. Byrd commended the bid process results which show the bid spread and value to the taxpayers

Mr. Perdue presented an LMIG Priority List for submission to Georgia DOT.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to authorize the proposed LMIG priority list to be submitted to Georgia D.O.T. The estimated grant funding would total \$822,991.44 and the 30% mandatory match from the County is \$246,897.43. The road names and mileage are as follows:

<u>Road Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Length (Miles)</u>
Arlington Place	Cul-de-Sac	Fernwood Drive	0.088
Ashley Court	Hillary Drive	Cul-de-Sac	0.154
Athena Terrace	Smithville Church Road	Cul-de-Sac	0.132
Brookhaven Drive	Foxwood Circle	210 Brookhaven Drive	0.558
Creigh Street	Nichols Street	Joshua Street	0.094
Fleming Drive	Sandy Run Road	Michael Street	0.300
Franklin Street	Conley Drive	Lake Placid Drive	0.168
Hillary Drive	GA Hwy. 127	Ashley Drive	0.122
Jill Crest Drive	Kings Crest Boulevard	Cul-de-Sac	0.204
Kings Crest Blvd.	Jennifer Lane	200 Kings Crest Blvd.	0.204
Lake Joy Road	Cohen Walker Drive	Sandefur Road	1.206
Martingale Court	Bridlewood Trail	Cul-de-Sac	0.045
McConnell Drive	Foxhall Blvd.	Dead End	0.140
Michael Street	Stanley Street	Cul-de-Sac	0.347
Nelson Drive	Watson Blvd.	Corder Road	0.905
Providence Lane	WR City Limit	WR City Limit	0.094
Red Maple Trail	Harner Road	Dovetree Lane	0.209
Sabre Drive	Cottonfield Court	Cul-de-Sac	0.631
Sasser Drive	GA Hwy. 96	Dead End	0.226
Springhill Drive	Corder Road	Nelson Road	0.301
Taylor Street	Gilchrist Drive	Alexander Drive	0.204
Timberlea Drive	Sandy Run Road	Colonial Oaks Drive	0.310
Wessex Drive	Azalea Drive	Davidson Road	0.667
Woodfern Drive	Pheasant Ridge Drive	Prestige Drive	<u>0.139</u>
		Total	7.448

Chairman Stalnaker commented that the roads in need of improvement are graded by the Public Works staff to determine which should be prioritized and added to this list. He asked Mr. Dunbar to follow up with the Georgia Department of Transportation on one question concerning mileage.

Mr. Perdue presented an Inmate Work Detail Agreement with the Georgia Department of Corrections.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing a contract with the Georgia Department of Corrections to provide the County with seven inmate work details from the McEver Probation Detention Center at a total cost of \$295,908. The contract is effective for the fiscal year expiring on June 30, 2022.

Mr. Perdue inquired as to whether the Department of Corrections would be able to send out these details. Mr. Dunbar replied that we would not be able to get all the crews but that we wanted to have them under contract for when they were made available. We will not be billed for inmate crews unless they were able to come out and perform the work.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,289,061.03.

Chairman Stalnaker closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Public Comments.

There were no public comments.

Chairman Stalnaker reopened the regular portion of the meeting and opened Commissioners Comments.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized and thanked the Sheriff's deputy for providing security for the meeting and for his service to the community.

Mr. Byrd commended Deputy Doug Blackmon and Sergeant James Spivey for being awarded Sheriff Deputy of the Year for Valor awards at the annual Sheriff's conference recently for their role during a hostage situation earlier this year. He then expressed his appreciation for our local healthcare workers and urged those who have not yet done so to consider being vaccinated so that we could minimize the negative effect on our healthcare system. Lastly, he offered condolences and thoughts and prayers to the family of Mr. Todd Harden, co-owner of Georgia Cooling, who passed away recently.

Mr. Perdue commented that he returned from a two-day ACCG training session this afternoon and was reminded once again how blessed we are in Houston County both in terms of the years of work that has established us in a very healthy fiscal condition and in terms of the types of cooperation and collaboration that we witnessed tonight that advance the agendas of both the County and the cities and their respective citizens.

Ms. Robinson remarked that it is good to be a part of a local government that cares about the outcomes of issues important to the citizens and that work to make things better. She thanked everyone for displaying that type of mindset and cooperation.

Mr. Walker thanked everyone for coming and remarked that it was great to live in Houston County. He thanked the County's outstanding employees, law enforcement and healthcare workers who serve the citizens every single day.

Chairman Stalnaker gave a brief update on the local COVID situation that has stretched the healthcare industry very thin. As of August 17th, ninety-five patients were hospitalized locally with COVID. Of those ninety-five patients, eighty-eight are unvaccinated. Twenty-seven are in the ICU and twenty-four of them are unvaccinated. Thirteen are on a ventilator and all thirteen are unvaccinated. These numbers seem to show that the vaccine is doing what it is supposed to do. The healthcare professionals in our community need our support. Although it is a very divisive issue, vaccinations are proving to be effective.

Mr. Byrd, who sits on the hospital's systems board, concurred with the Chairman's comments. Open dialogue on this issue is important as there is a lot of stress on the healthcare system. The data says that those who have been vaccinated are not getting as sick. He encouraged everyone to examine that data and make the best decision that they can for themselves, their families, and our community.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 2009

Mr. Walker stated that he, along with Ms. Robinson and Mr. Perdue, sit on the Hospital Authority and it is devastating to hear the statistics that are coming out of the hospital concerning COVID. He encouraged everybody to reconsider if they have not yet taken the vaccine.

Mr. Perdue concurred with those comments. Our healthcare workers are exhausted, and the fact is that our healthcare system is not losing workers to other hospitals but rather losing them to other professions.

Ms. Robinson agreed that the healthcare workers are very limited and very stressed. In order for the healthcare system to function properly you need to have available nurses, technicians, and doctors to take care of people who are not only sick with COVID but also other many other unrelated conditions.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Mr. Warnock who reminded everyone that the hospital has not mandated its workers to get vaccinated but in fact approximately 85% of them have done so voluntarily.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Mr. Tom McMichael who also serves on the Hospital Authority Board. Mr. McMichael reminded everyone not to pay attention to the misinformation that has been put out there about the vaccine.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all, meeting adjourned.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner