

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
October 5, 2021
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday October 5, 2021, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, 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, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, and Walton and Becky Wood.

Commissioner Robinson led the audience in the Invocation.

Col. Rosalie Duarte, USAF led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed her nearly 23-year military career. She currently serves as the 78th Air Base Wing vice commander at Robins AFB having come to this assignment in June of 2020. She was born in the Philippines and her father and many of her relatives served in the U.S. Navy. She joined the Air Force a little later in life at 26 years old having already earned a Master of Public Health degree and worked in a civilian hospital in North Carolina. Her first duty assignment was to Beale AFB, CA and she has had many assignments including Japan, England, Washington D.C., Southwest Asia, Italy, Virginia, and Maryland. She has commanded three different times and has served in numerous key staff positions at the headquarters level.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of September 21, 2021.

Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2531 and #2540 and advised that both applications were withdrawn by the applicants before the Zoning & Appeals hearing therefore no action is necessary.

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 #2545 through #2548, #2551, #2554, #2555, #2557 and #2558.

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

Special Exception Application #2545, applicant was present and stated that her desire is to offer affordable cleaning services. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2546 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2547 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2548 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2551 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2554 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2555 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2557 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2558 applicant was present with nothing further to add. There was no opposition.

As there were no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Hearing and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Ms. Robinson 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:

Application #2545	Kimberly Washington	Cleaning Service
Application #2546	Andres Acosta	Rental Properties
Application #2547	Charlie Swafford	Stone Restoration
Application #2548	Courtney Willard	Cookies & Cake Baking
Application #2551	Jason & Sara Kliethermes	Sale of Commodities produced on Premises
Application #2554	Matt & Cari Dowd	Mobile Home Hardship
Application #2555	Miles Smith	Lawn Care
Application #2557	Mike Thorn	Landscaping
Application #2558	James & Karen Randolph	Engineering & Educational Services

Mr. Andrews gave the applicants 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. Andrews presented Re-Zoning Application #2549 and advised that the application had been withdrawn by the applicant before the Planning & Zoning Board hearing and therefore no action is necessary.

Mr. Andrews presented Re-Zoning Applications #2552 and #2553 simultaneously since Planning & Zoning considered them linked together as one proposal.

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

Applicant Laura Branham of Coldwell Banker Free Realty spoke on behalf of property owner Mr. Hitesh who owns the corner lot at 1601 S. Houston Lake Road and Ms. Wendy Thornton who owns the adjacent property at 1609 S. Houston Lake Road and 104 Hunt Road. She explained that Mr. Hitesh's corner property which is zoned C-1 has shrunk in size over the years due to the widening of the road. Ms. Thornton owns the other two parcels surrounding this corner property and the request is to rezone a portion of that property to C-1 in order to make the corner usable again as a commercial property for Mr. Hitesh. The other portion of the property would be left as residential to provide a buffer of sorts for Ms. Roselle Davidson at 1611 S. Houston Lake Road.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Ms. Branham for meeting with him the day before to discuss the issues relative to this application. He agreed that the corner lot had shrunk in size due to the widening of Houston Lake Road years ago but the property owner at that time was compensated for that additional right of way needed for the road project. The commercial zoning existing on this property was granted before the current zoning regulations were established in Houston County and therefore is grandfathered in. It would be very difficult to put a commercial zoning in this type of area under the current regulations since the surrounding properties are all residential in nature. He expressed concern over growing the size of this commercial lot.

Mr. Byrd asked if there was a planned or intended use for the property at this time. Ms. Branham stated that there is just a desire at this point to gain access to the commercial property as it is for sale currently.

Tom Davidson, whose mother lives at 1611 S. Houston Lake Road, spoke in opposition to the request explaining that all surrounding properties are residential in nature. A dozen or so other residents in attendance yielded to Mr. Davidson to speak on their behalf. He commented that there are plenty of available commercial businesses within a 2-1/4-mile radius already. He expressed concern that there is no way to know what type of commercial business would be located on this property since a C-1 zoning allows a broad range of diverse business activities. This request would expand the existing commercial corner lot from 0.7 of an acre to well over 2 acres. He explained that the location would not be conducive to foot traffic and vehicular traffic on the road is already heavy.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. Davidson and the other residents for the respectful manner in which they have brought forward their opposition.

Mr. Davidson commented that his mother has lived at 1611 S. Houston Lake Road since 1974. He explained that Wilson's store used to sit on the corner lot in question which is why the lot is currently zoned C-1.

Paul Clair, 110 Huntwood Lane, Kathleen spoke as a concerned resident of the area. He agreed with Mr. Davidson that a new commercial business located on the corner would not bring any conveniences to the neighborhood that they cannot already get on Hwy. 96 or Hwy 127. He expressed concern with the planned ingress/egress to this corner lot since the area is already congested with traffic.

Motion by Mr. Walker to concur Planning & Zoning's recommendation for denial, second by Mr. Perdue.

Mr. Byrd thanked both the applicant and those in opposition for their respectful tone of the discussion relative to this request.

Upon voting motion was carried unanimously by all to concur Planning & Zoning's recommendation for denial.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the applicant for the annexation request into the City of Perry, at 90 Amherst Street in Kahtleen, had withdrawn their request earlier that morning which has been confirmed with the City of Perry. The applicant plans to go back to the City of Perry Planning & Zoning with a revised plat in the near future.

Mr. Byrd presented a request from Sheriff Talton for the disbursement of the allotted clothing allowance for eligible individuals.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the disbursement of a \$450.00 clothing allowance to those twenty-seven Sheriff's Department personnel identified in a letter from Sheriff Talton dated September 23, 2021. Total disbursement is \$12,150.

At the September 21, 2021 Board meeting Director of Administration Barry Holland conducted a first reading of an Alcohol License Application submitted by Sue Anna Qaiser representing S&A convenience store for the retail sale of beer and wine. Ms. Qaiser has withdrawn the application, therefore no action is necessary.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$4,354,825.24.

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

Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen thanked the Chairman and certain staff members for their assistance resolving an issue concerning one of today's agenda items. He also thanked Mr. Keith Newton for meeting with him and discussing the issues.

Director of Purchasing Mark Baker commented that a lot of steel had been delivered to the State Court Expansion job site and is currently going up. He said that we have a good superintendent on the job who is making things happen on this project.

As there were no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed Public Comments and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker opened Commissioners Comments.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for coming and participating in the process in a reasonable and moderate fashion. She also commented that she looks forward to the opening of the Georgia National Fair this week.

Mr. Byrd commented it was noteworthy that we had several withdrawals of items on the agenda which, although not typical, is a product of the process working as it should where an applicant makes application for something and during the process impediments may arise that need attention or working out. He commented that October is Pastor Appreciation month which recognizes those who live for service and purpose with others in their heart. He asked everyone to continue to hold up our healthcare workers and commented that Forbes magazine recently recognized Houston Healthcare as one of the top 100 employers in the state of Georgia. The message there is that good employees make good employers.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 2031

Mr. Perdue thanked everyone for coming and encouraged those who have not been vaccinated to reach out to a family doctor or other medical personnel and talk to them about your reasons for not being vaccinated.

Mr. Walker agreed that vaccinations are the best way to protect you and your family. He thanked everyone for coming and commented that it was great to live in Houston County with outstanding employees who go serve our citizens every day.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that 4:00 p.m. Thursday is the opening of the Georgia National Fair. Governor Kemp will be there that day as will each of the Board members. The opening ceremony will be held at the Georgia Grown Birthing Barn this year rather than at Reeves Arena. Also, on Sunday at 6:30 p.m. the Fairgrounds will celebrate Houston County's 200th Anniversary with an event that will include participation by the Commissioners as well as other activities such as a church choir singing and early fireworks. The annual parade will be on Saturday morning. On Monday evening at 6:30 p.m., the Robins AFB 80th Anniversary event will be held similar to the County's event from the night before.

Chairman Stalnaker then commented on the completion of the new Houston County Government Building which houses the Board of Elections, the County Extension Office and the federal NRCS office stating that he is proud of the people associated with the construction of the building. He thanked the taxpayers foremost for giving the resources that built the building. He commended Mark Baker especially for managing the construction of the building. Lastly, he commented that our healthcare workers should be praised equally as we praise our law enforcement officers, first responders and military.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all, meeting adjourned.

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner