

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
February 2, 2021
Perry, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday February 2, 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 Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch, Public Buildings Superintendent Mike Phillips, School Superintendent Dr. Mark Scott, and Advanced Disposal Services Operations Manager Jeanne Moyer.

Commissioner Perdue gave the Invocation.

Lt. Col. Julia Mafnas, USAF led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed her year military career. After growing up in Maine she attended Syracuse University in upstate New York where she received her commission through the ROTC program. Her military occupational specialty is Aircraft Maintenance Officer. She has been stationed at Aviano AB, Italy; Al Dhafra AB, United Arab Emirates; Geilenkirchen AB, Germany a NATO base; Luke AFB, AZ; and for the second time Robins AFB. Her husband is a service member with the J-STARS program, and they have a daughter and a son. Lt. Col. Mafnas currently serves as Commander of the 461st Maintenance Squadron.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 19, 2021.

Chairman Stalnaker asked for a motion to add a resolution supporting the E-SPLOST referendum as agenda item 14 and a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the 2018 Countywide SPLOST Natatorium project as agenda item 15.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve adding a resolution supporting the E-SPLOST referendum as agenda item 14 and a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the 2018 Countywide SPLOST Natatorium project as agenda item 15.

Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2424, #2425, #2426 and #2433.

Both Applications #2424 and #2425 have been withdrawn by the applicants and require no further action.

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

Special Exception Application #2426 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2433 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

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

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1901

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Walker 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 #2426 Brandon Gibby Metal Fabrications (Mobile)

Application #2433 Dallas Perry Taxidermy

Tim Andrews presented Special Exception Applications #2437 thru #2444.

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

Special Exception Application #2437 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2438 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2439 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2440 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2441 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2442 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Special Exception Application #2443 applicant was not present.

Vice President of the Brantley Subdivision Homeowner's Association Grant Fossum, 103 Danielle Way, objected to the application on the premise that a home occupation business violates their protective covenants. He explained that their covenants prohibit operating a business from a residence and that no commercial vehicles were allowed on a day to day basis.

Chairman Stalnaker asked Mr. Hall to make his statement concerning covenants.

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 then clarified the Zoning & Appeals process that the applicant goes through including having met all the Section 95 requirements for a home occupation. He explained to Mr. Fossum that several home occupations in the Brantley have been previously approved.

Mr. Andrews explained that under our regulations one commercial vehicle was allowed at each residence.

Special Exception Application #2444 applicant was not present, there was no opposition.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1902

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and reopened the regular meeting.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Byrd 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 #2437	James Winters	Mobile Home Hardship
Application #2438	Mark & Shelia White	Mobile Home Hardship
Application #2439	Doretha Nichols Davis	Cleaning Service
Application #2440	Kimberly Clements	Virtual Administrative Services
Application #2441	Christina Hancock	Jewelry & Pet Access (Internet)
Application #2442	Danny & Sharon Reed	Construction
Application #2443	Lorenzo & Audrey Quichocho	HVAC Contractor
Application #2444	Karl Tyson	Bail Bondsman

Tim Andrews presented Re-Zoning Application #2445 explaining that the applicant withdrew the application during the Planning & Zoning public hearing, so there was no action necessary.

Mr. Perdue presented a Utility Relocation Agreement between the County and Georgia Power on the Houston Lake Road Widening Project (Gray Road to Kings Chapel Road).

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the Utility Relocation Agreement with Georgia Power on the Houston Lake Road (SR127) Widening Project. This project is funded by the 2018 SPLOST.

Mr. Walker presented Change Order #2 with C.W. Matthews Contracting Co., Inc. on the Church Street Widening Project.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing Change Order #2 with C.W. Matthews Contracting Co., Inc. of Marietta on the Church Street Widening Project (CW12-03) increasing the contract price from \$1,697,070.17 by \$150,000.00 to \$1,847,070.17. Contract time will also increase from 550 to 670 calendar days.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that although the permanent striping has not been done yet the widened roadway looks very nice. The extended timeline of this project was due to the utility conflicts and was not the contractors' fault. He noted that there is a surprising amount of traffic present day to day on this road.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1903

Mr. Walker presented a request from the City of Centerville to annex a 102.53-acre property located at 3930 N. Hwy. 41.

Mr. Walker made a motion to non-concur with the annexation request and Ms. Robinson seconded the motion for discussion purposes.

Chairman Stalnaker began a discussion about concerns he had about the change in zoning and the density as compared to the zoning of the surrounding properties. His other concern was that the surrounding property owners have not had the opportunity to voice any concerns because the City of Centerville Planning & Zoning Board does not have their public hearing until February 11th and the Mayor and Council will not meet concerning this application until February 16th. He explained that it puts the County in a position to concur or non-concur prior to any public hearing. Although the property has rezoning signs posted on it most people do not really go around looking for those. The proposal is for 323 additional homes on this acreage. The County needs to consider the impact of the additional traffic and whether the County can provide the water and what impact that may have on the County water system. He remarked that he met with the developer yesterday and he believes that the developer will do the things necessary to make the project feasible. The County has previously widened Dunbar Road, but the volume of traffic will be greatly increasing on this section of Dunbar Road between Houston Lake and Hwy. 41. Houston County also put a turn lane on Hwy. 41 because of a number of rear-end collisions on the highway. He stated that he is not 100% against what the applicant is trying to do but reiterated that the residents needed to have some level of voice and a non-concurrence in this situation merely means that this Board does not concur with the annexation mainly due to the re-zoning. The annexation has been requested by the property owner and it is contiguous to the city limits of Centerville so there is no real reason to contest that. If the non-concurrence passes today it means that the City of Centerville, the County and the developer need to sit down and see if there is some path to resolution otherwise a mediator would be appointed by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

County Attorney Tom Hall clarified that the mediation set up by DCA would be between the City of Centerville and Houston County only. The developer or builder would not participate.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that he meant the developer could be a part of the conversation seeking resolution before the actual mediation. He then recognized Mr. Will Vinson, who resides at 1209 N. Houston Lake Road.

Mr. Vinson identified himself as a 4th generation pecan farmer in the area. He expressed concerns with the density that the proposed zoning of R-2 would generate in terms of traffic. His pecan orchard is across the street from this proposed development.

Chairman Stalnaker said that although the orchard and some surrounding properties are zoned R-1 they are really more conducive to R-AG.

Mr. Walker stated that he shares the Chairman's concerns.

Mr. Perdue asked Mr. Dunbar to clarify the Public Works staff comments that were submitted to the Board concerning this requested annexation and re-zoning.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1904

Mr. Dunbar stated that the comments indicate that staff has no reason to object based on infrastructure and public works concerns but they also state that we did not have the opportunity to have a pre-engineering meeting with the City to determine such things as whether a hydraulic study would need to be performed to determine if adequate fire protection could be achieved or if a traffic study was indicated.

Mr. Perdue asked Chairman Stalnaker if there was a time limit or anything that would prohibit them from annexing and rezoning this property for a certain length of time.

Chairman Stalnaker replied that the non-concurrence is basically telling the City of Centerville that the County does not concur with the re-zoning. The City would continue with the process but if they did not change the R-2 designation then the mediation would have to occur. He indicated that this is not the first time the Board has non-concurred. It has been done with both the City of Perry and the City of Warner Robins, but they have been resolved before they reached the mediation stage.

County Attorney Tom Hall clarified that if the Board non-concurred today we were under obligation to notify the City immediately and then DCA. Fifteen days after we notify DCA they must assemble a mediation board to hear this matter.

Mr. Byrd thanked Mr. Vinson for coming and expressing his views. He thanked Chairman Stalnaker for doing an outstanding job sharing the concerns about this application. He agreed that it is not ideal that the process creates a timeline that has the County voting to concur or not to concur prior to the City holding a public hearing. He hoped that the Board could work with the cities to address this in the future. He did say that he was conflicted with a vote to non-concur because the landowner has operated in compliance with the current process, the property is contiguous to the city limits, and the request is compatible with surrounding like zoning. There is a public hearing scheduled by the City. He asked Mr. Dunbar if it was true that the process allows City and County staff members to address any infrastructure concerns.

Mr. Dunbar indicated that the process does eventually allow that but by the time it happens if the County does not address infrastructure improvements it is really late notice to the developer.

Mr. Byrd indicated he would like to see the Board try to bring some attention to improving this process going forward so that the County could be voting after the City has held their public hearing.

Chairman Stalnaker indicated that it would take a legislative action to change the process in state statute.

Mr. Perdue asked for clarification that the Board does not have the option of tabling this request because we must respond to the City within 30 days.

Chairman Stalnaker replied that no action by the Board within that 30-day timeframe was basically concurrence.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson to non-concur with a City of Centerville annexation request for a 102.53-acre property located at 3930 N. Highway 41, Tax Parcel 000450 007000. Upon voting Mr. Walker, Ms. Robinson, and Chairman Stalnaker voted yes, Mr. Perdue and Mr. Byrd voted no. Motion approved.

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1905

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the City of Warner Robins to annex property located at the south side of East Bob White Road and west of Old Perry Road.

Chairman Stalnaker commented on the differences between this annexation request and the previous request from the City of Centerville. He explained that this developer has signed letters from the surrounding property owners in support of this development. Even though it has not been before the City for their public hearing or before Mayor and Council the developer has gone to the property owners and discussed his plan with them. Also, this particular project is a continuation of his existing project and is not a new project.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to concur with a City of Warner Robins annexation request for a 61.31-acre property located on the south side of East Bob White Road and west of Old Perry Road (Tax Parcel 001050 118000 totaling 47.17 acres; a 13.92 acre portion of Tax Parcel 001050 048000; and a 0.22 acre right of way).

Mr. Byrd presented a request from the Accountability Court to engage the services of a surveillance officer.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker signing a contract for services with Christopher Gray as Accountability Court surveillance officer effective February 2, 2021 and expiring on June 30, 2021. The Mental Health Accountability Court grant will fund the services of this officer.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve the re-appointment of Mr. Geoff Burkart to another term on the Airport Authority effective February 2, 2021 and expiring on December 31, 2022.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that Mr. Burkart has been a great asset to the Airport Authority.

Ms. Robinson presented a request for approval of a bid on the storm water drainage repairs under Esterine Drive.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Byrd and carried unanimously by all to approve the award of the storm water drainage repair project at Esterine Drive to LaKay Enterprises of Fort Valley in the amount of \$45,364; and the closure of Esterine Drive for seven days to complete this work.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$3,498,252.34.

Chairman Stalnaker acknowledged Mr. Crawford Hicks who turns 100 years old on February 21st. Mr. Hicks is well known to the Board members as a World War II veteran. A birthday card was signed by each member of the Board and will be presented to Mr. Hicks at a later date wishing him a happy birthday as well as thanking him for his service to our country. Mr. Hicks was shot down during WWII and spent

Houston County Commissioners Meeting Continued from Page 1906

eleven months as a POW. He served until 1966 and has authored a book about his experience during the war. Each member of the Board congratulated him on his birthday and thanked him for his service.

Chairman Stalnaker also recognized former County commissioner Calvin Maye on the occasion of his birthday today. Mr. Maye served on the County commission from 1993 to 1996. He and his wife Gail, a former educator, have moved to North Carolina but still have roots here in Houston County.

Chairman Stalnaker introduced Dr. Mark Scott, Superintendent of Houston County Schools.

Dr. Scott presented information on the upcoming E-SPLOST referendum. He began by speaking about the major accomplishments that have been made with the current 2017 E-SPLOST including new construction; renovations; safety enhancements including security system upgrades, access control, fire protection, fencing, and parking and traffic flow improvements; the purchase of new school buses; and technology purchases such as computers, network cabling and other equipment.

Dr. Scott then spoke about the upcoming 2022 E-SPLOST that will focus on some of the same improvements such as safety and security, facilities, technology, and transportation. He spoke of the aging facilities and the necessity of maintaining, renovating, and adding square footage at either existing facilities or building new facilities. Early voting will begin February 22nd and continue through March 12th and voters must be registered before February 16th. The election will be held on the same day, March 16th, as the City of Warner Robins special election. City of Warner Robins voters will be able to vote in both special elections at the same location, but on different ballots. A small percentage of City voters will have to visit two locations to vote in both special elections because the County and City precincts do not all line up. Dr. Scott explained that without the E-SPLOST the school board would have to levy approximately six mills in taxes to equate to the dollars that the E-SPLOST program brings in.

Each Board member thanked Dr. Scott and expressed their support of the E-SPLOST referendum.

Mr. Perdue read a resolution of support for the upcoming E-SPLOST referendum.

Motion by Mr. Perdue, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the signing of the Resolution to support the E-SPLOST.

Chairman Stalnaker spoke on the natatorium project commenting that it would not be as far along as it is without the Board of Education's support as well as the partnership with the City of Warner Robins and Perry and Centerville.

Mr. Byrd presented the MOA thanking the citizens of Houston County for providing the funding for this countywide project through the 2018 SPLOST. He thanked Dr. Scott for the Board of Education taking the lead as the fiscal agent on the construction of this natatorium facility.

Motion by Mr. Byrd, second by Mr. Perdue and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the Memorandum of Agreement between Houston County, the City of Warner Robins, and the Houston County School District for the use and distribution of the proceeds from the 2018 SPLOST for a specific capital outlay project natatorium contingent upon the City of Warner Robins passing the same document without any changes.

Chairman Stalnaker confirmed that this project was spelled out in the 2018 SPLOST plan not as a discretionary project but rather as a countywide project. He remarked that he was proud of the sales tax revenues that are coming in because he would have thought there would have been a downturn in revenues in 2020 but there was not.

Mr. Byrd added that the MOA does create an Executive Committee that has representatives from the County, all three cities and the Board of Education so it is well-represented across the community and also has provisions for a Design Committee with stakeholders from the 'swim' community that can offer input up to the Executive Committee during the process.

Dr. Scott remarked that he appreciated each of the government entities coming together to work on this project and expressed his appreciation of the confidence shown in the Board of Education as they act as the fiscal agent.

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

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Jeanne Moyer, Operations Manager for the County's waste contractor Advanced Disposal Systems (ADS). Although ADS has been purchased by Waste Management, they have retained Ms. Moyer in her management role over the Kathleen office.

Landfill Superintendent Terry Dietsch remarked that the County has been fortunate to have Ms. Moyer in this position since 1997.

Ms. Moyer said that she was very pleased to be a part of Waste Management which is the number one trash company in the United States. She commented that she looks forward to continuing to serve the County under the Waste Management name.

Each Board member thanked Ms. Moyer for her past and present efforts.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting and reopened the regular portion of the meeting.

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

Mr. Perdue encouraged all County citizens to support the E-SPLOST referendum.

Mr. Byrd likewise encouraged all citizens to support the E-SPLOST. He also remarked that customer service was important to County government and that we had an example of that today with Mr. Andrews and his staff and the Zoning & Appeals Board in their very thorough and detailed preparation of these special exceptions. He

commented. on a letter that the Board had recently received from a fire investigator who commended several Houston County Fire Department personnel for their efforts and action during a fire-loss here in the County.

Mr. Walker agreed that it was very important to go vote on March 16th for the E-SPLOST. He also thanked Ms. Moyer, all County department heads and employees for their efforts.

Ms. Robinson thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to go vote and support our education system and E-SPLOST. She thanked each County employee for making this a great place to be.

Chairman Stalnaker also thanked each County employee and hoped everyone continued to be safe. He remarked that he appreciated the taxpayers because they are really the ones that allow government to provide services. The next meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. on February 16th in Warner Robins at the County Annex building.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner