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**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**

**September 1, 2015**

**Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Thomson, McMichael, Walker and Robinson present. Also present were Director of Administration Barry Holland, Purchasing Director Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Human Resources Director Ken Carter, HEMA/Fire Chief Jimmy Williams, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Chief Tax Appraiser James Moore, Tax Assessor Representative Amanda Clark, Sheriff Cullen Talton, Superior Court Clerk Carolyn Sullivan, Walt & Becky Wood, Ansel Peck, Senior Vice-President of Flint Energies Jimmy Autry, Warner Robins Supply Business Development Manager Jim Taylor, former Houston County Chairman Ned Sanders, Robins Regional Chamber President & CEO April Bragg, Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council Member George Slappey, Chairman Houston County Development Authority Mark Byrd, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Scott, 75th ABW Commander Col. Jeffrey King, Maj. Arielle Abbate, Centerville Mayor John Harley, Centerville Councilman Jon Nichols, Perry Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Bynum-Grace, Perry Councilman Randall Walker, Warner Robins Mayor Randy Toms, Putnam County Chairman Stephen Hersey, Putnam County Commissioner Billy Webster, District 147 Representative Heath Clark and County Attorney Tom Hall.

Commissioner McMichael led the audience in the Invocation.

Col. Jeffrey King, USAF led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his 22-year military career. Born and raised in Northern California, Col. King went to college in Southern California before receiving his commission in May of 1993. He stated that he is proud to be a career aircraft maintenance officer and has served in many duty assignments such as Virginia, Japan, Ohio, Florida, Alabama, Alaska, the Pentagon, and Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. He currently serves as the installation and 78th Air Base Wing Commander at Robins AFB. He met his wife Susy on one of his tours in Japan and has three sons ages 8, 10 and 12. He stated that it is an honor and a distinct privilege to serve. He commended the local community, governments and businesses of our community that show tremendous support for the military and its mission. He thanked his wife Susy for her many years of support to his career.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Superior Court Clerk Carolyn Sullivan who recently reached her 50th anniversary working for Houston County. He stated that after Mr. Tommie Hunt passed away March 15, 1982, Ms. Sullivan, who worked on Mr. Hunt’s staff at the time, was appointed March 17, 1982 as Superior Court Clerk. She then ran for that office in the fall of 1982 and was elected, beginning her first term January 1, 1983. Since Mr. Hunt became Superior Court Clerk in 1940 and Ms. Sullivan has held the position since 1982, there have only been two clerks in the last 75 years. Chairman Stalnaker read a resolution of appreciation and presented Ms. Sullivan with several small gifts on behalf of the citizens of Houston County for her dedicated service. Ms. Sullivan stated that the greatest accomplishment in her life was raising her son to be the man that he is today and that the second greatest accomplishment was her years of service to Houston County. Sheriff Talton commended Ms. Sullivan and stated that there is no better or efficient clerk in the State of Georgia.

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Chairman Stalnaker recognized several dignitaries in attendance including Putnam County Chairman Stephen Hersey, Putnam County Commissioner Billy Webster, former Houston County Chairman Ned Sanders, Sheriff Cullen Talton, Centerville Mayor John Harley, Centerville Councilman Jon Nichols, Perry Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Bynum-Grace, Perry Councilman Randall Walker, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Scott, Development Authority Chairman Mark Byrd, Robins Regional Chamber President & CEO April Bragg, Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council Member George Slappey, and State Representative Heath Clark.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting of August 18, 2015.

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 action taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Special Exception Application #1902 and #1903 for home occupation businesses were presented by Tim Andrews. Mr. Andrews explained that Application #1902 was tabled at the August 4th Board meeting and sent back to Zoning & appeals so that the sign could be properly posted on the property. Originally the sign was mistakenly posted on 104 Whitley Drive instead of on 104 Whitley Court. Zoning & Appeals now recommends unanimous approval subject to no signage, no customers to the home and allowing for a 7 ft. x 14 ft. enclosed trailer to be stored in the rear yard.

Special Exception Application #1903 was tabled at the August 4th Board meeting and sent back to Zoning & Appeals so that the applicant could obtain the required authorization from the property owner. The application was heard at a second hearing on August 24th and Zoning & appeals now recommends unanimous approval of this application as well. Both applications comply with Section 95 of the Comprehensive Land Development Regulations.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on Application #1902 and #1903.

Applicant for #1902 was present with no further information to add.

Applicant for #1903 was not present.

There was no opposition to the applications.

There being no public comments, the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve Special Exception Applications #1902 submitted by Vilma Venegas and #1903 submitted by Michael Turner.

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Special Exception Application #1906 and #1907 for home occupation businesses were presented by Tim Andrews. Mr. Andrews explained that Application #1906 complies with Section 95 of the Comprehensive Land Development Regulations and that the Board of Zoning & Appeals recommends unanimous approval subject to no signage, no customers to the home, and allowing for a 7 ft x 16 ft enclosed trailer to be stored in the rear yard.

Mr. Andrews explained that Application #1907 was recommended to be tabled and sent back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration in order for the applicant to be present at the hearing.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on Special Exception Application #1906.

The Applicant was present with no further information to add.

There was no opposition to Special Exception Application #1906.

There being no public comments, the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve Special Exception Application #1906 submitted by Glen Cannon to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

Motion by Mr. Walker second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to send Special Exception Application #1907 submitted by Bruce Douglas back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration.

Mr. Andrews 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.

Chairman Stalnaker gave a brief introduction to a resolution opposing a regional transportations sales tax. He explained that the Transportation Funding Act of 2015 passed by the State of Georgia included options for the non-TIA regions to call for another transportation sales tax vote. He indicated that the County Commissioners have discussed this issue with various other local governments as well as business owners and private citizens in order to have a consensus on the proposed resolution.

Mr. Thomson then read the resolution outlining Houston County’s opposition to another regional sales tax (T-SPLOST).

Chairman Stalnaker further explained that an additional 1 cent sales tax would raise the current sales tax in Houston County from 7 cents to 8 cents on the dollar. The process now in motion within our region, which includes 10 other counties in addition to Houston, would place the issue on a referendum to come back before the voters. Voters in Houston County overwhelmingly rejected the 8 cent proposed sales tax known as the T-SPLOST in 2012. Houston’s citizens have been very supportive of our local SPLOSTs and have seen first-hand the benefits of local control in the more than $180 million of improvements accomplished in Houston over the last ten years. Approximately $40 million of that figure has been spent on improving State and Federal routes within the County. The Board is very grateful for the Citizen’s support in the past on both ad valorem taxes and SPLOST. Therefore the Commissioners cannot support an 8 cent sales tax that the citizens do not want.

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Each of the four Commissioners individually expressed their support of the opposition to the additional sales tax. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Scott, Centerville Councilman Jon Nichols, Houston County Sheriff Cullen Talton, Warner Robins Mayor Randy Toms, Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council Member George Slappey, Houston County Development Authority Chairman Mark Byrd, Putnam County Commission Chairman Stephen Hersey, Perry Councilman Randall Walker, Centerville Mayor John Harley, former Houston County Commission Chairman Ned Sanders, and citizen Walton Wood all spoke in support of the County Commissioners opposition to the additional sales tax. Chairman Stalnaker also pointed out that there are other options available than a regional sales tax referendum. In closing, Chairman Stalnaker asked if there was anyone present in the meeting that was in favor of the 8 cents additional sales tax. There were none.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve a Resolution in opposition of a regional transportation sales tax.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve a resolution pledging mutual cooperation to support economic development along the I-75 corridor in Peach and Houston Counties.

Chairman Stalnaker pointed out that this was yet another example of regional cooperation.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign a contract for services with both Tamra Gornik and Dave Carrick to perform the duties of Accountability Court Surveillance Officers for the period September 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016; and a contract for service with The Step-After Evidence-Based Programming, LLC to provide Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT) Treatment for the Accountability Court for a period January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016. Payment for these services will come from the Mental Health & Veterans Accountability Court grant.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously to approve an award of the Lately Bridge Road base and paving contract to Everett Dykes Grassing Co. of Cochran in the amount of $256,960. This is a 2006 SPLOST funded project.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that this was another project accomplished with 2006 local SPLOST dollars.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign the construction management (CM) contract with International City Builders of Warner Robins for the improvements to the Perry-Houston County Airport (T-Hangar and Georgia State Patrol Aviation Hangar) and the new Fire Station #6 (Perdue) projects. The CM fee will be 3.95% of the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP).

Mr. McMichael remarked that these were very close bids. Chairman Stalnaker announced that there will be a ground-breaking ceremony held at the Perry-Houston County Airport Thursday, September 3rd at 10:00 a.m. for the Georgia State Patrol Aviation Hangar and airport improvements. He also commented that the new fire station will be constructed near the Perdue chicken plant in an effort to better serve those areas of Houston County that need better fire coverage.

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Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve Chairman Stalnaker to accept and sign a proposal from Utility Service Company, Inc. of Atlanta to paint the exterior of the Hwy. 96 west elevated water tank in a County-approved paint scheme in the amount of $56,875. Project is funded by Water capital funds.

Chairman Stalnaker presented the proposed water tank paint design that he felt shows this community’s patriotic nature.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to award the contract for the improvements to GCCS Phase III at the Landfill to Plastic Fusion Fabricators, Inc. of Huntsville, AL in the amount of $78,940. Project is funded by Solid Waste capital funds.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously to approve the award of one 2015 Isuzu HE4 with 16-foot cargo box and hydraulic lift gate from Middle Georgia Freightliner of Macon in the amount of $47,380. This purchase is funded by SPLOST 2012.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to approve the award of one new 2016 Ford Explorer from Alan Vigil Ford of Morrow, GA in the amount of $24,995. This purchase is funded by SPLOST 2012.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to approve the payment of bills totaling $3,019,946.95.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that each item purchased with SPLOST funds helps to reduce ad valorem taxes.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for public comments.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked the three cities, the Board of Education and Robins Air Force Base for their spirit of cooperation.

Ms. Patsy Goff, Perry-Houston County Airport Manager, expressed her gratitude to the Board of Commissioners for their continued support of the airport and the Authority.

April Bragg, President & CEO of the Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce, thanked the Board for their leadership and support and commented that it was vital for continued business development in our community. She encouraged everyone to come out to the 2015 Middle Georgia Regional HobNob event, Thursday, September 17th, 5:00 p.m. at the Elevate Building on Moody Road.

There being no further public comments, the meeting was continued.

Chairman Stalnaker then asked for comments from the Commissioners.

Chairman Stalnaker wished everyone a happy Labor Day this coming weekend.

Mr. Walker commented that it is great to live in a community where the County and the three cities work together for the benefit of their citizens.

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Ms. Robinson was thankful for the opportunity to serve and expressed appreciation for all those who attended and shared their thoughts and viewpoints about current issues.

Mr. Thomson expressed thanks for everyone’s support and especially singled out Patsy Goff as well as Ned Sanders for their vision and efforts at the Perry-Houston County Airport.

Mr. McMichael thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve and commented on the spirit of cooperation between each governmental entity. He remarked that he is the liaison to the Board of Education and thanked Dr. Scott for his leadership.

Chairman Stalnaker reminded everyone of the Thursday, 10:00 a.m. ground-breaking ceremony for the Georgia State Patrol Aviation Hanger and airport improvements. It will be a big day with Col. Mark McDonough, Georgia Department of Public Safety Commissioner, in attendance. Chairman Salnaker recognized Sgt. Hamilton Halford, GSP pilot and hangar commander of the Perry GSP aviation unit.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

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