

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

Kick-Off Meeting and Public Hearing I

April 24, 2018

5:30 PM

Harris County Courthouse, Room 223

Commissioners Present: Harry Lange, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewing, Becky Langston, Jim Woods.  
Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy McMichael, County Clerk. RVRC Staff: Rick Morris, Allison Slocumb, Will Griggs.

Also in attendance: John Brent, Craig Greenhaw, Alan Feagin, Brian Williams, Jim Furin, Lynn Sanders, Lynda Dawson, Bobby Haralson, Scott Moye, Richard Marien, Ann Bacher, Michael Harris, Colin Martin, Randy Robertson, Morgan Marlowe, Ricky Hood, Andrew Zuerner, Jim Trott, Andy Kober, Dwight Langston, Meghan Guenther, Tom Horn, Jim Malaby, Patrick Callaway, Ken Napier, BJ Johnson, Glenda Pilkington, and about 10 to 15 others

**CALL TO ORDER.** In the absence of Chairman Lange, who was running late, Vice Chairman Andrews called the meeting and Public Hearing to order and said that the Comprehensive Plan is an important document to help guide the growth of the County, that it will be a cooperative effort with the Board, the Board of Education, the municipalities, the Development Authority, and other entities, and that the result should be a document that reflects how the citizens want the County to look. She then asked Rick Morris, with the River Valley Regional Commission, to make his PowerPoint presentation.

Rick Morris, Planning/Community Development Director for the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), appeared before the Board and introduced his co-workers Allison Slocumb, Senior Planner/Historic Preservation Planner, and Will Griggs, Regional Planner/Community Developer. Mr. Morris then presented his PowerPoint program, which included explanation of the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan, which is due to the State by June 30, 2019; that the Plan is a guide for decisions related to the development of the County, coordinates local planning efforts, and fulfills the State requirement; that the Plan is not a regulation, an ordinance, or zoning, and does not create new regulations, change existing zoning regulations, or alter the development rights of existing zoning; that the Plan must be updated every five (5) years; that it is a joint effort of the County and the municipalities of Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh, and Waverly Hall; that the process includes community assessment, public participation in hearings and workshops, final plan of a 20-year vision that includes goals and strategies, future development guide, and implementation; that participation by citizens is necessary; and that everyone is urged to check the various websites for meeting dates, times and other Plan information.

Chairman Lange joined the meeting and apologized for being late, and Vice-Chairman Andrews turned the meeting over to Chairman Lange, who made comments regarding the need for the Plan update, which would be a joint effort with the municipalities, that participation for various individuals is needed, and that it will take a year to do the update. He also said that the Board needs to hear from citizens, that if they don't hear from citizens, decisions are made based on regulations and information presented and not on what the citizens want or don't want; that before the millage rate increase last year of 2.5 mills, the County had the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest millage in the State, but with the increase it is now the 34<sup>th</sup> lowest in the State; that growth is inevitable and the Plan will help guide the County in reaching its goals for growth; that while the number of citizens can grow, the land can't, thus the need for the Plan; that to attract businesses, there has to be rooftops (homes); and that the Plan will address the wishes, wants and needs of the County. He then asked for comments from those in attendance.

Comments were made by Tim Malaby (citizen), Patrick Callaway (citizen), Ken Napier (Planning Commission member), Meghan Guenther (citizen), Morgan Marlowe (School Board), Tom Horn, Lynn Sanders (citizen), Colin Martin (Harris County Chamber), Craig Greenhaw (Development Authority), Lynda Dawson (citizen), John Brent (Planning Commission), Jim Furin (citizen), and Bobby Haralson (citizen).

Comments included that development should take place along the I-85 corridor; that the high school is over capacity and education reimbursement from the State is not adequate for education needs; that property taxes don't cover education costs; that developers should be held accountable for impact on County services; that the Comp Plan should have projected densities; that representation on the Comp Plan committee should include persons from the unincorporated areas; that there is a need for more recreation facilities in the south portion of the County; that the county should be marketed to families and not retirees; that

more/better communication is needed between the county, cities and school board (to which Chairman Lange said that perhaps the quarterly meetings should once again take place); that tourism brings in the most revenue; that there should be joint projects between the County and municipalities; that there needs to be long-term goals and resources; that a volunteer coordinator for citizen involvement in programs may be needed; that the preservation of rural areas should continue; that growth should be environmentally sustainable; that the Comp Plan benchmarks should be reviewed by the Board on a regular basis; and that FaceBook could possibly be utilized as a media for the Comp Plan.

Chairman Lange thanked all for their comments.