

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

December 7, 2021

6:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Andrew Zuerner, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Bobby Irions, Becky Langston.
Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael,
County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Zuerner called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Zuerner led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2021 Regular Session and the November 30, 2021 UDC Work Session was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
4. **APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS**

- A. **Thomas Vowell: Recreation Board & Out of County Participants.** Thomas Vowell, citizen, president of the Soccer Association and member of the Recreation Board, appeared before the Board and said that he had concerns about erroneous comments made during the November 16 meeting by Stephen Waskey, Recreation Director, regarding out-of-county participants. that were erroneous; and that the issue came up at a Soccer meeting and eventually made its way to the Rec Board; that Soccer has both rec and travel soccer; that out-of-county was brought up in the July, August and October meetings of the Rec Board; requested that the Board not put anything in writing yet regarding out-of-county but allow the associations to come up with plans to present to the Rec Board and then to the Commissioners for approval; that coaches need to be paid; that showing movies in a cow pasture is not going to bring money in for recreation; that tournaments are needed; that it's been rough getting support from the Rec Department since John Magazu retired; that it would be helpful for the Rec Department to help market Soccer; and that he and other Soccer parents help cut the grass on the Soccer fields to help out. Discussion included that "rec" and "travel" and two different things; that the Rec Department does the sign ups for Little League and football, but soccer does theirs; and that this should be further discussed during the next planning retreat.

Brent Widener, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that he echoes what Mr. Vowell said; that the Board should reconsider their decision to put anything in the by-laws regarding out-of-county players; that there should be conditions upon which out-of-county players can be considered; that there are fewer and fewer players as the age bracket increases because they decided to do something else or move to another level; and that having out-of-county players makes a difference in whether or not a team is formed. Discussion included that Harris County recreation is for Harris County residents who live here, pay taxes, have their homestead exemption here, with the exception of outlying areas (Springdale in Meriwether County and Oak Mountain in Talbot County), children of teachers in the Harris County School system, and that Commissioner Grant is drafting appropriate wording for same for discussing during the next retreat.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Rezoning & Special Use Permit Schedule for 2022.** The motion to approve the schedule for 2022 was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Agreement: qPublic.** Chairman Zuerner said that the current agreement with qPublic expired in June; that the new agreement is for four years; and that Wayne Morris, Tax Assessor, is in attendance to respond to questions. In response to questions, Mr. Morris said that his office is very happy with qPublic; that in 2020, there were over 206,000 visits to the website; that each time a different page is accessed it's considered a request, and there were of 3.9 million requests; that maps are updated when the County updates its maps, but the information is updated as necessary. The motion to approve the agreement was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" as C&A #21-17.)

- C. **Agreement: Dominion Voting Systems.** Chairman Zuerner said that the State had previously contracted with Dominion Voting Systems regarding the voting machines, but is no longer providing the service and has authorized counties to enter into agreements with Dominion for voting system hardware warranties. Sherrail Jarrett, Elections Supervisor, was in attendance and said that this agreement is needed and that the County previously had such agreements on the older voting machines. Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that while he had some reservations about the agreement, particularly with the strict liability limits, he recommends approval. The motion to approve the agreement was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in “Contracts & Agreements” as C&A #21-18.)
- D. **Resolution: Not Require Mobile Home Decals.** Chairman Zuerner said that the Georgia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 193 during its 2021-2022 session that allows counties to opt out of the requirement to issue mobile home decals as evidence of a mobile home location permit. Following discussion, which included that the Tax Assessor, Tax Commissioner, and the Board of Tax Assessors are in agreement with the Resolution, the motion to approve was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.
- E. **Appointments/Reappointments.** Chairman Zuerner said that appointments or reappointments are needed for vacancies that currently exist or will be expiring soon. Discussion included that all but two individuals wished to be reappointed. Upon a motion by Commissioner Grant, second by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously, the following appointments were made.
- (1) Development Authority. Craig Greenhaw (District 3) was reappointed to new terms ending 12/31/2025. Alan Feagin (District 5) declined reappointment.
 - (2) Elections & Registration, Board of. James Ethridge was reappointed to a new term ending 12/31/2025.
 - (3) Health, Board of. Bill Searcey was reappointed to a new term ending 12/31/2027.
 - (4) Planning Commission. Gene Weldon (District 1) was reappointed to a new term ending 12/31/2025, and Wayne Harbert (District 4) declined reappointment.
 - (5) Recreation Board. Mike Fuson (at large), Brad Johnson (Mtn. Hill YSA) were reappointed to a new term ending 12/31/2024, and Garnett Ray (Board of Education) was reappointed to a new term ending 12/31/2022.
 - (6) Tax Assessors, Board of. Pam Jackson was reappointed to a new term ending 12/31/2025.

6. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various projects, as follows:
- (1) UDC/Land Use Codes. The Board met on November 30 and will have another on January 10 to continue discussion.
 - (2) Ellerslie Park. Gates are up, signs are up, aerator is running, dock is in, soft opening scheduled for January 22.
 - (3) Man O’War Railroad Recreation Trail, Phase IV (aka Rails to Trails). Ribbon cutting held November 30 and project is being closed out.
 - (4) Man O’War Railroad Recreation Trail, Phase V (aka Rails to Trails). Survey has been completed and design has begun, hope to bid out in March; should be completed by this time next year from the Callaway Country Store to across from the current Carver Middle School on US 27.
 - (5) Courthouse Renovations, Phase I. Project should be bid out this month.
 - (6) Renovation of Old Library - Roof & HVAC System. Material and supply chain issues are causing project completion to be in March 2022.

(7) Impact Fee Study. Methodology report was reviewed and accepted in October, the Capital Improvements Element transmittal resolution will be before the Board on January 4 for approval to transmit to the RVRC and DCA.

(8) Single Family Home Permits. Issued 12 during the month of November, for a total of 91 this fiscal year.

7. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Easement across Landfill Property: Greeneberry Farms**. Russell Britt, County Attorney, said that a request had been made for an easement across a corner of the Landfill property. The Board questioned if the requestor was interested in purchasing the property and what the plans were for the property. As a result, the matter was tabled until the next meeting, which will be on January 4, 2022 (the December 21 meeting having been cancelled).

B. **Request for Executive Session**. Russell Britt, County requested an Executive Session for the purpose of discussion personnel issues and litigation.

8. **RECESS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Chairman Zuerner made the motion to go into Executive Session for personnel issues and litigation at 7:41 PM. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grant and passed unanimously.

9. **RESUME REGULAR SESSION**. The motion to go back into Regular Session was made at 9:25 PM by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.

Andrew Zuerner, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk