

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

July 8, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, J. Harry Lange. Commissioner Absent: Andrew Zuerner. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; John Taylor, County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Langston called the Regular Session to order.
2. **WELCOME BACK & ABSENCE.** Chairman Langston welcomed back Commissioner Lange and said that Commissioner Zuerner is out of town.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Langston led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENT.** Chairman Langston said that the Georgia Department of Transportation had a meeting just prior to this meeting regarding the widening of US Highway 27; that it was well attended; that many questions were answered; and that she was pleased with the attendance by citizens at the meeting.
5. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2019 Regular Session and the June 18, 2019 Called Session was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.
6. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Second Reading: Ordinance to Rescind Mulberry Grove Special Tax District Ordinance.** Chairman Langston said this was the second reading of the Ordinance to rescind and repeal the existing ordinance, adopted in connection with bonds issued for The Grove development; and that because the bonds have been paid off there is no need for the existing ordinance to remain in place. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that was a succinct explanation and that he had nothing to add. The motion to approve this Ordinance was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.
 - B. **Radio Towers Proposal: Dean Ginn.** Dean Ginn, of Dean's Commercial Two-Way, appeared before the Board to present a proposal regarding radio towers. Mr. Ginn said that there is a need for towers in the County to facilitate the county's public radio system as well as provide a means for wireless communication by private carriers; that there is a need for at least five (5) towers in the County; that he is proposing a partnership with the county for two (2) tower site locations, one on Washington Road in Pine Mountain Valley and the other on West Bon Acre Road in Cataula, which would not only help meet the County's radio communication needs but also wireless and cell phone needs; that the Washington Road site would also benefit the County's Solid Waste Department the capability to allow connectivity of IP phones and internet; that while he would build the towers, the County would have no cost except to pay for its needed radio equipment, shelter and the utilities at each tower; that if the County chooses not to become a partner, then it would have a greater cost to co-locate on the towers; and that there will be long-term leases with the property owners. Brian Williams, Community Development Director, said that while he likes the idea of partnering, the Zoning Ordinance requires the County to either own or lease the property on which the towers will be located in order to exempt the towers from the Ordinance requirements. John Taylor, County Attorney, said he would like to review the legal aspects of the partnership with Mr. Ginn's attorney and suggested tabling a decision until such can occur. Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Lange tabled action until Mr. Taylor can review the partnership with Mr. Ginn's attorney, which will hopefully take place soon so that this topic can be on the agenda for July 16.
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Request for Tax Refund: Chong & Terlin Kois.** Chairman Langston said that Chong & Terlin Kois have requested a tax refund in the amount of \$26.65; that the Tax Commissioner agrees with the request because the vehicle tag was purchased March 26 but totaled on the due date of April 26; and that the Board of Tax Assessors also agrees. The motion to approve the refund request of \$26.65 was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.

- B. **Silver Sneakers Program.** Stephen Waskey, Recreation Director, appeared before the Board and said that he would like to implement a Silver Sneakers program at the Community Center; that Silver Sneakers is a program for older adults to participate in fitness activities and is free for Medicare beneficiaries; and that it will pay the county \$5 for each visit up to \$20 per month. Following discussion, John Taylor, County Attorney, said that there are a few changes needed to the agreement regarding the program and recommended tabling action until the contract can be worked out. Chairman Langston tabled action until such time as the contract is worked out and brought back to the Board.

8. **PUBLIC HEARINGS @ 7:30 PM**

- A. **Conflict of Interest Forms.** The Conflict of Interest forms were completed at the request of Chairman Langston.
- B. **Explanation of Public Hearing Procedures.** Chairman Langston explained the procedures regarding the Public Hearings.
- C. **Application of Purvis Chapman for Special Use Permit for Private Kennel (no boarding or training) on 20.047 acres of Map 085, Parcel 041, Land Lot 278, Land District 17; present use residential and farm; proposed use residential, farm & private kennel for breeding; property located at 1652 Mt. Airy Drive, Waverly Hall, GA.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application and said that the Planning Commission and Staff had recommended approval with no conditions. Purvis Chapman, applicant, appeared before the Board and said that he currently has five dogs, but hope to reduce the number to three by the end of the year at which time he plans to have one male and two female dogs; and that he'll probably have no more than one litter per year. Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the application.

Linda Wendelschaefer, citizen who lives on Mt. Airy Drive, appeared before the Board and said that she lives across from Mr. Chapman, that he takes care of his dogs, that the dogs don't cause problems, and she is in favor of the application.

There being no further comments in favor, Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. There being none, she asked if there were questions from the Board. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Chapman reiterated that he had plans to reduce the number of dogs to three (3) by the end of the year.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Langston closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve this Special Use Permit with the condition that there be no more than five (5) dogs, was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.

- D. **Application of Dennis Thorne to Rezone 3.05 acres of Map 084, Part of Parcel 049A, Land Lot 127, Land District 18, from C-3 (Neighborhood Commercial) to A-1 (Agricultural and Forestry); present use timber land; proposed use agricultural with residence; property located at 745 McKee Road, Waverly Hall.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that both the Planning Commission and Staff have recommended approval with no conditions. Dennis Thorne, applicant, appeared before the Board and said that the subject property has not been used as commercial for many years and that he would like to rezone to agricultural, which would make it more sellable should he desire to do so. Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this rezoning application. There being none, she closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve this Rezoning with no conditions was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lange, and passed unanimously.
- E. **Application of Mt. Pleasant Properties, LLC, to rezone 99.691 acres of Map 084, Parcel 112A004, Land Lots 98 & 127, Land District 17, from A-1 (Agricultural and Forestry) to R-1 (Low Density Residential/Single Family Residential); present use timber; proposed use single family residential subdivision; property located at the south end of Abberly Lane, Ellerslie.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that both the Planning Commission and Staff had recommended approval with no conditions. Stephen Ginn, representing Mt. Pleasant Properties, appeared before the Board but had no comments to make.

Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this Rezoning application. There being none, she closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve this Rezoning application with no conditions was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.

9. **COUNTY MANAGER**

A. **Project Updates**. Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various projects, as follows:

- (1) County-wide Email System. Preparation of bid specs is underway.
- (2) Replacement Telephone System for Courthouse, Commissioners' Office, and Community Development. Preparation of bid specs is underway.
- (3) Restriping of 16 County Roads. Pre-bid meeting will be August 5, bids are due August 13, and action by the Board scheduled for August 20.
- (4) Pitts Drive. The design, permitting and construction administration by EMC was approved during the last meeting and is underway.
- (5) Ellerslie Park Lodge Repairs. Pre-bid meeting will be July 23, bids are due August 6, and action by the Board scheduled for August 20. An insurance adjustment resulted in another \$20,000 for repairs. It was suggested that once majority of the storm debris is removed and the lodge repaired, that it and the playground be opened to the public.
- (6) Ellerslie Park Chipping & Grinding. Project is expected to start soon and be completed in late September.
- (7) Soccer Complex Pavilion. Work will be done in-house and should be completed by the end of the year.
- (8) Rails to Trails. Phase I of the project was approved June 18 and Phase II will soon be bid out. Phase I, from downtown Pine Mountain to the intersection of US 27 and SR 18, should be completed by the end of the year, and Phase II will be from US 27 and SR 18 to behind the Mountain Creek Inn.
- (9) Airport Security & Wildlife Fence, Phase II. Project is underway and should be completed by late October.
- (10) Melody Lakes Dam. On going; consultant is working with DNR getting all the engineering details worked out.
- (11) Mulching of 35 +/- Acres in Northwest Harris Business Park. Five bids were received earlier this afternoon, action by the Board is scheduled for July 16, with completion 60 days from the Notice to Proceed.
- (12) T-SPLOST. Based on collections thus far, the budget will be met with two months remaining.
- (13) Single Family Home Building Permits. The fiscal year ended with 232 permits issued, which is 12 more than the preceding year and 66 more than the previous year, so it appears we are on the upswing and should issue more this fiscal year.
- (14) Solid Waste Tonnage. With home building permits up, the solid waste collection is also increasing, with one month remaining tonnage will exceed last fiscal year, which also exceeded the previous year.

10. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Agreements with New Horizons: Mental Health Center and Harris-Talbot Service Center**. John Taylor, County Attorney, said these are annual agreements, one each for the Mental Health Center and the Harris-Talbot Service Center for which New Horizons pays the County \$500 a month per building for use and maintenance in lieu of rent, and he recommended same of approval. The motion to approve both agreements was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by

Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously. (Documents can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #19-22 & 19-23.)

- B. **Agreement with Georgia Municipal Association: Cable Franchise Fee Increase.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said this agreement is with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and is for the purpose of providing services to increase the County's cable franchise fee from 2% to 5%; that GMA will handle the process for a cost of \$3,000 and get everything finalized; and that he recommends approval of same. The motion to approve this agreement was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #19-24.)
- C. **Memorandum of Understanding with Federal Highway Administration, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office: Rails to Trails, Phase Three Project.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said that this agreement is required in connection with Phase III of the Rails to Trails project in that the Recreation Trail Program (RTP) grant requires the development and posting of signs, historical photos and wording to indicate what the rail line looked like before the rails were removed; and that he recommends approval of same. The motion to approve this agreement was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #19-25.)
- D. **Agreement with Carter & Sloope: Design & Engineering to Upgrade Water Line (from 6" to 12") to The Grove development.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said that this agreement is for the design and engineering to upgrade the water line in order to provide water to the first phase of The Grove development; that the estimated cost of the agreement is \$31,000 and estimated construction costs is \$310,640; that the project should be completed in January 2020; and that he recommends approval of same. Discussion included that the water line would provide water for domestic use and fire flow; that the updated Master Plan of The Grove has not yet been provided to the County; and that the approval should only be for the design portion of the agreement, and not include the construction portion at this time. The motion to approve the design portion of the agreement was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #19-26.)
- E. **Agreement w/GDOT: Inmate Work Detail.** John Taylor, County Attorney, reviewed the annual agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation for a work detail, with a maximum of 10 inmates, for which GDOT provides the necessary equipment, tools and vehicle, and pays the County \$39,500, and he recommended approval of same. The motion to approve this agreement was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lange, and passed unanimously. (Document can be found in "Contracts & Agreements" file as C&A #19-27.)

11. **OTHER**

- A. **Employee Recognition.** Commissioner Grant said that since the budget process is over, the Board should again look at trying to recognize employees to show appreciation, such as for the extra work done during the aftermath of the recent tornado, so that the employees know they are appreciated. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the topic is on the agenda for the next Planning Session, which should take place mid August.

12. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business to discuss the motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Langston, seconded by Commissioner Lange, and passed unanimously.

Becky Langston, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk