

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION

June 1, 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.

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 May 18, 2021 Regular Session, the May 18, 2021 Budget Work Session II, the May 24, 2021 Joint UDC Meeting, and the May 25, 2021 Budget Work Session III, was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.
4. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **FY 21/22 Budget Public Hearing I.** Chairman Zuerner called the Public Hearing to order and said that this is the first of two public hearings regarding the proposed budget and asked if there were any comments from those in attendance. There being none, he asked for comments from the Board.

Commissioner Grant said that the \$1,500 added to Recreation, by consensus during Budget Work Session III, should be deleted. There were no objections to this deletion.

Commissioner Langston that she has concerns about the proposed budget as it is much higher than the current budget. Commissioner Andrews asked about the difference in the two budgets. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the proposed budget includes \$3.4 million in the CARES/ARP federal fund, \$1.2 million for the Water Works administration building, \$2 million to fully implement the CVIOG salary study increased, 2% COLA and 1% longevity for employees, the additional 25% increase in health care premiums, and \$3.2 million in TSPLOST for the continuation of the Man O'War Railroad Recreation Trail from behind the Callaway Country Store to a point in Hamilton.

Regarding the CVIOG study, Commissioner Langston expressed her concerns about moving the four directors in Grade 21 to Grade 23 and opening up "Pandora's box". Commissioner Grant said that the goal is to have all directors in Grade 23 and he doesn't see that making such a change will open the "box".

Chairman Zuerner said that the additional full-time position added to the Airport, by consensus during Budget Work Session III, should be deleted; that if business picks up and there is a need for an additional full-time person, it can be re-evaluated; and that the Airport can function with a pool of part-time employees. Commissioner Grant said that he agrees with the deletion of the additional full-time position at the Airport, as did Commissioner Langston.

There being no further comments, Chairman Zuerner closed the Public Hearing. Mr. Dowling said that the second Public Hearing on the FY 21/22 budget will be on June 15 and is scheduled to be adopted by resolution following the hearing.

- B. **Financial Statement: April 2021.** The motion to approve the April 2021 financial statement was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
5. **COUNTY MANAGER**
 - A. **Bid Award: Portions of the Mercer Med Community Medical Clinic.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the Board approved an MOU in October 2020 to assist Mercer Medicine, LLC, in developing the County's old library into a community medical clinic; that the County's contribution to the project was to lease the old library to Mercer Med and to fund the repairs/replacement of the building's roof and HVAC system; that bid specs and construction documents were prepared, bid out, and evaluated; that on May 21, 2021, five bids were received, as follows:

Company	Base Amount	Alt. 1 Roof	Alt. 2 HVAC	Alt. 3 Restroom Floors	Alt. 4 Restroom Wall Tile	Alt. 5 Restroom Partitions	Total
Principle Construction West Georgia LLC (LaGrange GA)	\$ 699,000.00	\$48,000.00	\$ 143,000.00	\$4,886.00	\$ 7,743.00	\$ 8,700.00	\$ 911,329.00
Fours Points Construction (Newnan GA)	\$ 716,000.00	\$ 92,086.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$3,200.00	\$3,200.00	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 972,886.00
Carlisle Construction (Pine Mountain, GA)	\$ 738,888.00	\$ 70,167.60	\$ 166,200.00	\$6,280.00	\$ 7,955.00	\$ 5,820.00	\$ 995,310.60
Astra Construction Services (Woodstock GA)	\$ 840,780.00	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 125,400.00	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 8,300.00	\$1,032,780.00
Thayer-Bray Construction (Phenix City AL)	\$ 825,258.00	\$ 65,100.00	\$ 129,667.00	\$ 4,199.00	\$9,308.00	\$ 5,624.00	\$ 1,039,156.00

Mr. Dowling said that the project's steering committee reviewed the bids and selected the low bidder, Principle Construction, for this renovation project for a total of \$911,329 with 150 days of construction, or about late November; that the County's share will be Alt. 1 (\$48,000) and Alt. 2 (\$143,000), for a total of \$191,000; that the remainder of the project cost of \$720,329 will come from donations that the steering committee has or will receive; that the project's architect, Southern A&E, will supervise the project; and that Morgan Marlowe, of the steering committee, is in attendance to respond to questions. Commissioner Langston asked about the funding source for the County's share of the project, and Mr. Dowling responded it would come from the County's SPLOST 2019 fund.

In response to questions, Mr. Marlowe said that the timeline for the project is for it to be completed by December, with grand opening in January or February 2022; that the project came in higher than expected due to increased material costs and the committee is in the process of trying to raise the difference of about \$165,000. Chairman Zuerner suggested that the County contribute additional funding from the CARES/ARP fund toward the project, to which Mr. Dowling responded that based on the information he has received regarding the allowed CARES/ARP expenditures, he believes the County could contribute such funds as the project could be considered as improvements to public health facilities. Commissioner Grant suggested the County contribute 50% of the difference, and consensus was to include that funding in proposed the CARES/ARP budget.

The motion to award the County's portion of the project, in the amount of \$191,000, to Principle Construction, was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and approved unanimously.

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

- (1) Replacement Ambulances for EMS. One ambulance has been received and the other is to be delivered this week.
- (2) Replacement 911 Consoles & Server. Equipment being installed this week.
- (3) Road Shoulder Spreader. Equipment has been located and is on order.
- (4) Melody Lakes Dam. Project is ongoing and should be completed by June 30
- (5) Ellerslie Park. Clean up continues by various crews for an opening later this year.
- (6) Rails to Trails Project. Phase IV of the project began this morning.
- (7) Soccer Field Lights. Project has started and is to be completed by June 30.
- (8) Renovation of Old Library. County's portion of the bid awarded this evening.
- (9) Land Use and Development Codes Update. Project is progressing; the next meeting of the Board and the Planning Commission takes place this Thursday at 4:30 at the Community Center.
- (10) Impact Fee Study. Project is on going.

6. **COUNTY ATTORNEY.** No business to discuss this evening.

7. **PUBLIC HEARING @ 7:00 PM**

- A. **Conflict of Interest.** The Conflict of Interest forms were completed at the request of Chairman Zuerner.
- B. **Explanation of Public Hearing Procedures.** Chairman Zuerner explained the procedures for the scheduled Public Hearing.
- C. **Application of Linda Camp to Rezone 1.0 acre on Map 081A, Parcel 030A, Land Lot 155, Land District 18, from C-4 (Highway Commercial) to R-1 (Single Family Residential), current use open field; proposed use to add to existing residential lot; property located about 2/10 of a mile north of intersection of Harris Road and Swint Loop, Ellerslie.** Chairman Zuerner called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application and said that both the Planning Commission and Planning Staff had recommended approval with no conditions. Linda Camp, applicant, appeared before the Board and said that the reason for the rezoning is to resolve a septic problem that is on her son's 6/10 of an acre lot. In response to a question, Mrs. Camp said that the subject property will be used for the necessary septic field lines. There being no further questions from the Board nor comments from those in attendance, either in favor of or opposed to this application, Chairman Zuerner closed the Public Hearing.

The motion to approve this rezoning request was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Irions, and passed unanimously.

- D. **Application of Christopher Nolan for a Special Use Permit for a Special Events Facility & Outdoor Wedding Venue on 5.36 acres of property located on Map 058, Parcel 049, Land Lot 121, Land District 21, at 15142 US Highway 27, Hamilton, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural & Forestry).** Chairman Zuerner called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application and said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval with no conditions and that the Planning Staff had also recommended approval but with two conditions regarding the driveway and lighting. Christopher Nolan, applicant, and his spouse, Sylvia, appeared before the Board and said that GDOT has indicated improvements will not be needed to the driveway and that any lighting will be focused away from the highway. In response to questions, Mr/Mrs Nolan said that they will hire off-duty deputies to ensure traffic safety during events, and that there would be no events after 10:00 PM. There being no further questions from the Board nor comments from those in attendance, either in favor of or opposed to this application, Chairman Zuerner closed the Public Hearing.

The motion to approve this rezoning request with the conditions of (1) any driveway improvements must be coordinated with GDOT to ensure they meet GDOT standards, for which the applicant shall provide letters to the County from GDOT to confirm the proposed improvements would result in modifications to the existing driveway that meet GDOT standards; and (2) that permanent exterior lighting must be directed away from all adjoining property and public roads, and shall not illuminate such roads directly or indirectly, with a level of intensity that is deemed to be potentially hazardous to vehicular traffic by GDOT or by the County, was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.

- E. **Application of Crystal Poe/Magnolia Estate at Blue Springs, for a Special Use Permit for a Special Events Facility/Reception Hall & Outdoor Wedding Venue on 10.0 acres of property located on Map 042, Parcel 023, Land Lots 116 & 167, Land District 20, at 5925 GA Highway 116, Hamilton, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural & Forestry).** Chairman Zuerner called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval with no conditions and that the Planning Staff had also recommended approval but with a condition regarding lighting. Crystal Poe, applicant, and her spouse, Nick, appeared before the Board and said that they would like to hold four to six weddings a year to start with, but could increase depending on the business; and that their price will be about three times higher than the competition. In response to questions, Mr/Mrs Poe said that they will hire off-duty policemen/deputies to control traffic and in order to provide alcohol at the events, a Special Events Facility permit is needed. There being no further comments, Chairman Zuerner asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the application.

Delores Quirk, citizen who lives across the road from the subject property, appeared before the Board and said that she is in favor of the application; and that there is no house within 100 to 150 acres of the subject location.

Michael Harris, citizen, appeared before the Board and said he is building nearby; that while he is in favor of the application, he would like to see a limitation on the number of events per year.

Charlie Quirk, citizen who lives across the road from the subject property, appeared before the Board and said that he is in favor of the application but is concerned about the condition of the road (Highway 116) due to current traffic.

Patrick Callaway, citizen of Columbus, appeared before the Board and said that his wedding was the last one held on the subject property when it was still in the Callaway family; that six events a year is adequate; that the property is on a conservation highway and is one of six high priority conservation zones; and that more than six times a year will become a nuisance with loud music, drunks, and litter.

There being no further comments in favor, Chairman Zuerner asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. There being none, he asked Mr/Mrs Poe if they had any additional comments.

Mr/Mrs Poe said that they are starting a business and limiting the number of events will not be in their favor; that events will end by 11:00 PM; that the location is near the Library, Community Center and Harris County High School; that the house is not a full time residence, but may be one day; and that the property is on over 100 acres. In response to questions, they said that they really don't want a limit as to the number of events per year, but plan on starting out with four to six and may increase in the future. There being no further questions or comments, Chairman Zuerner closed the Public Hearing.

The motion to approve this application with the condition that permanent exterior lighting must be directed away from all adjoining property and public roads, and shall not illuminate such roads directly or indirectly, with a level of intensity that is deemed to be potentially hazardous to vehicular traffic by GDOT or by the County, was made by Commissioner Grant, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

F. **Application of Josh Carter/CBF Holding for a Special Use Permit for Climate Controlled Storage Units on 1.97 acres of property located on Map 045, Parcel 189, Land Lot 48, Land District 19, at Lot 101 Mill Glen Subdivision, on northeast corner of intersection of GA Highway 315 and Mill Glen Way, Fortson, and zoned C-3 (Neighborhood Commercial).**

Chairman Zuerner called the public hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval with two conditions regarding buffer and lighting, and that the Planning Staff had recommended approval with five conditions regarding driveway access, buffer, lighting, perimeter lighting, and spillover lighting. Josh Carter, applicant with CBF Holding, appeared before the Board and said that the property is currently zoned commercial. There being no questions from the Board, Chairman Zuerner asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application.

Tom Carlisle, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that he is not opposed to the business but is opposed to the access being off Mill Glen Way; that such access is going to change how the people in the neighborhood live; and that the access is a safety factor.

Kathy DeWinter, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that while she is not opposed to the business, she is opposed to the proposed 24/7 access and to the access off Mill Glen Way; that access should be off GA Highway 315; and that the buffer should be increased.

Matthew DeWinter, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that while he is not opposed to business or growth, he is concerned about the safety of children and the unsafe entrance into the business; that unlimited access to the storage units will result in more vehicles coming into and out of the neighborhood; and that children have to be kept safe.

Carlos Rodriguez, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that the entrance to the neighborhood has never been safe; that the neighborhood needs to be kept as safe possible and additional traffic will create chaos; and that while he is okay with the business, he is opposed to the entrance off Mill Glen Way.

Rick Mattson, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that the safety of children is paramount; that you can't adapt children to traffic but most adapt traffic to children.

There being no further comments in favor of the application/business, Chairman Zuerner asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition.

Joe Hall, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that while he is not opposed to the business, he is concerned about the access off Mill Glen Way; that bringing commercial traffic into the neighborhood will result in a lot of traffic and make the road more dangerous; that people run businesses out of storage buildings, which will also increase traffic and noise issues; and that increased traffic leads to more theft.

Rusti Warner, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that while she has nothing against the business, this is not the right place; that there is a storage facility nearby and another is not needed; and that access from GA Highway 315 would resolve the issue of safety for children.

Theresa Paulk, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that the 24 hour access means more people driving through the neighborhood, lower the property values, and safety and security issues.

Alzadie Copeland Greer, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that she wanted to speak about item D (above), but arrived too late, but wanted to say that all applications needs to be treated equally and all concerns addressed; and that she is not really opposed to this application, but that all concerns should be addressed.

Adela Duncan, citizen, appeared before the Board and said that she is concerned about safety and that the driveway for the business should be off GA Highway 315.

There being no further comments in opposition, Chairman Zuerner asked Mr. Carter for rebuttal.

Mr. Carter, Scott Fowler, and Chad Bishop, all partners in CBF Holding, gave rebuttal and responded to questions from the Board to include: they plan to install surveillance cameras to see all traffic activity into/out of the neighborhood and business; that the business will a two-gate access and enough room for vehicles to pull into the business area and not park on the street; that their engineering will determine the safest and best location for the driveway to make it as safe as possible and to design the business so that it has low impact on the surrounding area; that they may have 200 units and at least 24 parking spaces; that there will be adequate room to allow vehicles to turn around rather than going further into the neighborhood; and that GDOT has denied driveway access of GA Highway 315. In response to questions, they said that while they haven't thought about sharing access with the nearby storage units, the topography of the area would be a deterrent; and that they are open to have limited access to the storage units. Discussion (among the Board) included that any access off GA Highway 315 has to be approved by GDOT; that GDOT should be approached to see if there is a way to reduce the speed limit on GA Highway 315 to a level that would allow a driveway access; that the business could impact the residential neighborhood as well as the ability of school buses to transport children to and from school; that there are many businesses that can go on this property without the need of a Special Use Permit or Rezoning to include retail businesses like Dollar General; that the average visits to storage areas appear to be about six times a year; and that during a recent visit to Knoxville, it was noticed that at any given time among the many storage unit locations, only three vehicles were on the properties.

There being no further questions, comments or discussion, Chairman Zuerner closed the Public Hearing.

The motion to table action on this application to June 15 in order to obtain a determination from GDOT as to if there is a way to reduce the speed limit in order to allow driveway access from GA Highway 315 was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**. There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Irions, seconded by Chairman Zuerner, and passed unanimously.

Andrew Zuerner, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk