

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PLANNING SESSION**

February 23, 2018

9:00 AM

Conference Room, Harris County Public Library
7511 GA Highway 116, Hamilton, GA

Commissioners Present: Harry Lange, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewning, Becky Langston, Jim Woods.
Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy McMichael, County Clerk. Also in attendance (around 11 AM to 1 PM) John Taylor, County Attorney; Matt Smith, Carter & Sloope, and Brian Kimsey, Carter Engineering & Consultants.

Call to Order. Chairman Lange called the meeting to order at 9 AM.

Sheriff's Substation in Ellerslie Park. Discussion included that no funding or plans are available to proceed with a substation for the Sheriff's office at Ellerslie Park.

General Funds for Current Fiscal Year. Discussion included that it is hoped the general fund expenses to revenue will break even.

Daesol Material. Discussion included that the estimated cost to relocate the stream bed is about \$1.5 million; that when approved in 2016, the full knowledge of what was needed was unknown, and such a cost was not expected; that there may be economic funds available from the State or possibly from EPA for moving state waters; and that the County has already purchased \$50,000 in stream credits.

Employee Handbook. Following discussion regarding the existing employee handbook, to include the vehicle policy, Mrs. McMichael said she would send the version she has with suggested changes for the BOC to review.

FY 18/19 Budget Calendar. There were no objections to the draft calendar. Times will be set for the public hearings and the calendar will be on the March 6 agenda for approval.

FY 18/19 Budget COLA Proposals. Discussion included that Springsted has indicated a 2% COLA for the minimum starting salaries effective July 1, 2018, and it is suggested that additional 1%, .5% or 1.5% be added for existing employees.

FY 18/19 Budget Compression Proposals. Discussion included giving employees .25%, .50%, .75% and 1% for each year of service with a 20 year cap, using the term "compression" rather than "longevity", and the possibility of providing a bonus at a flat rate per year for each year of service.

FY 18/19 Budget Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Discussion included that the CIP list consists of items Department Heads feel are needed over the next five (5) years; that it is a constantly changing list; and that the CIP and SPLOST mirror each other.

FY 18/19 Budget Road Improvement Program. Discussion included road resurfacing for two roads (Barnes Mill Road and Lower Blue Springs Road) at an estimated cost of \$1,035,000 with funding from 2019 LMIG and SPLOST 2014, the paving of one road (Holland Drive) at an estimated cost of \$955,000 with funding from TSPLOST; the striping of 20 roads for a total of 42.1 miles at an estimated cost of \$65,000 with funding from 2009 SPLOST, 2014 SPLOST or LMIG (if available); and a review of bridges in need of repair.

Melody Lakes Dam Proposal. Discussion included options to address the repairs that are needed on the dam (1) do nothing and face the possibility of fines from EPD, (2) repair the dam, (3) reduce the Category I designation by lowering the water level, or (4) breach the dam and do away with the dam and lake; that there are about 23 houses downstream from the dam; that the dam on Ski Lake, below Melody Lake, is not a high-hazard dam; that there is concern about sediment build up above the old pipe, which may cause the dam to breach on its own; repair would include removal of trees greater than 8", removing the stumps, and refilling the holes under the direction of an engineer of record; that Melody Lake Drive could be cul-de-sacked at each end should the dam be breached and removed; that it is estimated it would cost \$200,000 to \$300,000 to lower the level and make repairs; that breaching the dam could take four to six months; that depending on the option chosen, the cost could range from \$200,000 to \$1.5 million; and that a proposal from Carter & Sloope will be on the March 6 agenda to more fully study the options and provide more refined cost estimates.

Moratorium to Prevent Issuance of Building Permits Below Melody Lakes Dam. John Taylor, County Attorney, said that the moratorium to prevent the issuance of building permits below the dam has expired and needs to be revised during the March 6 meeting.

Rails to Trail Update. Matt Smith, Carter & Sloope, said that Moreland Altobelli is reviewing all the documents; that no utilities need to be relocated; and that funding probably won't be available until 2019. Discussion included that the trail is 12' wide and that Callaway Gardens has changed their plans and does not want golf carts to be used on the path; that the bridge over US Highway 27 is not yet part of the project; and that there may be a chance of getting GDOT assistance regarding the bridge at the appropriate time.

Right-of-Way Mowing Proposal. Discussion included changing the four part-time positions to full-time positions at the March 6 meeting, to increase the hourly salary to \$12.17, the possibility of adding two more full-time positions during the budget process, and installing AVLs on the tractors to monitor locations. Following discussion, consensus was to add changing the four part-time positions to full-time positions to the March 6 agenda.

Audit of CATV Franchise Fees, 911 Fees, and Hotel-Motel Tax Fees by Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). Regarding the CATV franchise fees, discussion included there are three cable franchises in the county, but only two submit the 2% fees; that the County can charge up to 5%; that the cost for the audit would be \$10,000 and could be completed within 45 to 60 days. Consensus was that the Board would like to see examples of such audits performed for other counties and cities. Regarding 911 fees, discussion included there aren't really any issues with the fees being collected, so an audit is not necessary. Regarding the Hotel/Motel Tax Fees, discussion included that only about seven businesses turn in the fees; that one business stays in arrears and that it may be possible to revoke the business license of that business or impose penalties and interest; and that the consensus was not to have an audit.

Planned Residential Development (PRD). Discussion took place and in addition to the typographical corrections, the following changes are needed:

- Line 14: insert "public" before "sewer"
- Line 19: change "Fifty" to "Seventy-five"
- Line 27: define "adequate parking"
- Line 37: insert "Minimum of" before "eight"
- Line 58: define "buffer" and indicate that it cannot be counted as Open Space
- Line 73: change title to "The Following are Open Space Amenities"
- Line 76: change "Playgrounds are" to "Playground is"
- Line 81: change "Squares are" to "Square is"
- Line 99: change "Greenways are" to "Greenway is"
- Line 105: change "Reserves shall be used for" to "Reserve is"
- Line 130: could change by law, not sure exactly how to word
- Line 141: HOAs must provide some type of guarantee so that if the HOA dissolves, open spaces won't become a burden to anyone

Mrs. McMichael is to make the above changes, send the revised document to John Britt, Planning Commission Chairman, for review by the Planning Commission, after which it will again be reviewed by the Board.

Valley Partnership. Discussion included that while the county has received some assistance from the Valley Partnership, the general consensus was that it currently is not; that it may be possible to get more assistance from West Point, since the business park is in the city limits of West Point; that Chairman Lange and Commissioner Woods will meet with West Point officials regarding same; and for the time being the County is to continue paying the Valley Partnership fee on a month to month basis.

Public Safety Employees. In reference to the Personnel handbook which includes a different accumulation of annual leave for EMS personnel, Mrs. McMichael was asked to research the issue as to the definition of public safety personnel.

Snow Day Pay. Discussion took place regarding the Sheriff's request to pay his deputies an additional \$500/day for working on the snow days during which other county employees were directed not to report to work but received regular pay. Consensus was that deputies were paid per policy and consistent with other employees.

Solar Farms. Discussion included there is state-wide interest regarding solar farms; that ACCG recently sent out a model ordinance; and that the Board might be interested in considering same. Mrs. McMichael was asked to send the model ordinance to the other Board members.

Zoning Ordinance. Discussion included there has long been a need to revise the Zoning Ordinance, and it was suggested that Nancy Segars, who retired from Troup County, be contacted for a proposal regarding same.

ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES APPROVAL. The motion to approve these Planning Session minutes was made during Regular Session of March 6, 2018, by Commissioner Chewning, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.